

The Savage (K2)

by Tabatha Stirling

Rises monstrous out of the Baltoro Glacier

Playing poker with oxygen levels

Plays leap frog with embolisms.

Malice and vanity join forces so
murder guns the air even before
the Death Zone. Down suits, bold and cocky
registers the climber's ambitions.

The Serac , a crisp, white wall of kill,
threatens to round and pound for
days before it does so,
a devious cancer waiting for its moment.
Art's rescue was in full flow when
the avalanche took him and he faded into
powder.

All the boys gone, doing what they loved
Big Ger and Rolf, who left his Cecilie
on the ropes. Wilco's lust for his summit
saw the Koreans tangled and questions asked.
No answers, though, and ninety different stories
Crowded into a bottleneck of truth and
lies as the moans of Winter's
ghosts howled louder.

