

Where We Live

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Where we live, a man — a farmer, perhaps, in a sheepskin-lined coat with the collar up — might walk up his driveway on a cold winter afternoon, his breath coming out in clouds of vapor — an afternoon when there is, say, a trace of cancer in the air — might walk past the side of his house and notice how cold and still the field stones in the foundation look, and how dark brown the shingles of the house are (same color as the wooden gate that guards the turning area in the back of the house, next to the garage where the cars are kept) — might notice without thinking how silently the inch or two of snow lies on the driveway and on the ground in the woods to the right of the driveway, how the snow follows the contours of the driveway— might then notice, with a thrill of amazement, that orange poppies have been tied neatly to the top of the gate at one side. He wouldn't ask by whom, or even raise the question if the flowers might suddenly have grown there naturally, but instead, merely thinking of the light gray field stone of the foundation, the dark brown still-wet wood of house and gate, the white snow in the driveway, and the poppies, might well simply retire to his house and spend the afternoon watching the quiet orange flames of his fire.