

VESTIGIAL

It is a still life of a Japanese country farm
the small farmhouse is still thatched the tall leafy carefully-pruned trees
overlooking it are so close they are growing out of it
the yard is full of rickety wooden fences running riot
without it being clear what is being fenced in or out this is what it would be like
after the next apocalypse nothing would be different
nothing would be strange except the strangeness that comes from there being
nothing but the silence in which voices once contended
here everything is abandoned
everything a sign
of human use or loss like the black old-fashioned bicycle
propped up against a smooth tree-trunk
its long thin shadow has been slanting against
the hard-packed earth for centuries now
in the distance there is a field wild with scraggly leafless trees
and slender black branches growing crazy in
the stillness and the silence
& beyond that
there are dark mountains and a sky growing blacker and blacker
as if it mattered to those who once knelt against the earth