## EVERY WINTER

only some leaves at the far end of the field, at the tops of some thin trees, yellow leaves, like hundreds of miniature yellow flags on top of flag poles that are crooked and waiting for the worst. it's surprising there is even one leaf left to be found on any tree, so reckless has the wind come through the valley these past nights of this past week. and, yes, the wind, it seems to always choose night to go about making its passage through these mountains. just now i found myself standing by the stove, after taking the kettle off to pour hot water into my teacup, soaking up the warmth of the still-glowing-orange electric coil. every winter i swear that i won't spend another winter in this place, but without fail such thoughts evaporate during the summer. i'll forget about the hostile months of winter, relax into another beautiful autumn, and then suddenly it's as though my fingers and toes were violently cut off and thrown across the hard ground for the crows to come and feed on. even as i scribble here in my old swollen notebook, i can hear rain drumming at the back door, cold rain which can age the face perhaps more viciously than the sun. last night i heard myself sniffling in bed, like some sad stupid man who had just lost a faithful dog. this morning when i came down from the upstairs bedroom i saw deer in the back field, and i was shocked at how black they had turned. and whether this was for reasons of camouflage or sheer anticipation of death, i don't pretend to know.