

UNTITLED

Robert Frost wrote
a poem
about misgivings.

Every year he built a wall
between land and land
tree and tree
man and man
renewing the barrier Time had stealthily contrived
to bring low.

And then one year he wondered
why he wanted that wall up.
We style ourselves Holy Bearers of Reason, unique among beasts,
but Robert Frost
could find no reason for the wall to be,
no force but of habit keeping it up.

The man on the other side
had been taught
that good fences make good neighbors

by his father.
These things are often passed down through generations,
but I worry
that if we teach our young
to build these walls
higher and higher
then a day will come
when the walls cannot be breached
from either side
and the gates are barricaded with a mighty quagmire of social taboo
such that its crossing becomes more inconceivable
with every passing year.

Robert Frost wrote his poem, a warning dire
but the world heeded only the man
blinded by his well-meaning forebears
who said:

“Good fences make good neighbors.”
I don’t want, in my haste to help my children see what I deem “right,”
to place before their eyes sun-shades so vividly the hue of my choosing
that they are blinded

to the world around them.
It is up to us—the youth of today—to guide those who follow us
but to let them decide for themselves
to help their neighbors,
to build trust with their neighbors,
and to think twice
before building a wall.

—LAURA ARIMOND SCHEFF, 8TH GRADE STUDENT, BELL SCHOOL, CHICAGO