

Amending Wall

He is amiable but amused
when I say, "good fences make good neighbours."
I know he thinks we have no need of fences here,
thinks I am a simple rustic
whose reason stops at mimicry
of what my fathers did before me.

But I could tell him
I find kinship with the natural animals,
who mark their territories
through some instinct that keeps their lives
in better order than our own.

And I could tell him
that all history
has been a struggle over boundaries;
I learn from that
something of our greedy natures.
I admit the urge in us for ownership.

I could tell him this, do not,
repeat instead, "good fences make good neighbours,"
know any wise man
will see the weary truth in this.

—*Leona Gom*