

Walls

Walls go up.

They start as tiny rocks, tiny pebbles, mounds of dirt.

Child's walls, that divide a place in the sand, a fortress in the wood

They start as a line drawn in the sand, drawn down the middle of a room

This is your space, this is mine.

They start as words, phrases, bits of conversation

The child grows older: Don't come any closer.

I may cut you down, I may hurt you, I may say cruel things

The walls become groups of people: me against you, us against them, we're in, you're out

My group owns this space, my group plays here, my group sits here: yours doesn't

They become in groups and outgroups:

The child becomes an adolescent: I'm a jock, you're a geek.

This is my table, that one's yours. I'm in, you're out.

Walls become what defines us: Black, White, Brown, Male, Female, Christian, Jew, Muslim, Straight, Gay

Here is where the Chicanos eat, here is where the Blacks hangout,

Only God fearing people welcome here, no Jews allowed, this is a straight bar, this is a gay bar.

Walls become the colleges we attend; private, public, religious, Ivy League,

Where did you go to school? Oh, that was a good one

They become the jobs we take

White Collar, blue collar, skilled, unskilled, professional.

Walls get bigger; they become walls of fear: Let's keep these people out, these people in

White neighborhoods, Black neighborhoods, Mexican neighborhoods, poor neighborhoods,
middle class neighborhoods, rich neighborhoods

Walls of fear build walls of stone and barbed wire:

America, Mexico, Israel, Palestine, North Korea, South Korea

It all started as those tiny pebbles, those tiny rocks, those mounds of dirt, those lines

Where do we begin to take down the walls

Where do we begin to share the space

Where do we begin to learn words that build up, not take down

Where do we learn that groups are meant to include, not exclude

Where do we learn that what defines us is not our skin, not our religion, not our gender

Where do we learn that a White neighborhood or a Black neighborhood is not a community

Where do we learn that building walls of stone will only create more fear, more hate

Peace is the tearing down of each and every wall

Peace is the building up of one another

Peace is uniting, peace is gathering, peace is a coming together.

Walls come down.

Peace goes up.

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