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## On Fences and My Dogs

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## On Fences and My Dogs

I helped my next door neighbor put up a fence today.  
Down the western slop, and off of my back porch,  
across what was a long endless field to the sun,  
the imaginary property line has been replaced  
with something more concrete: oak actually.  
It's not that Turbo and Charlie, my 2 springer spaniels,  
bothered him, and the wood fence won't stop them anyway.  
Besides, my neighbor loves my dogs,  
he just felt some sort of need to designate "his own".  
The dogs don't pay any attention to these human boundaries.

We laid the rough rods of oak, two across, into the joint posts,  
spaced every 10 ft. from the back woods up to the new road  
that they paved last summer. Every 10 ft. across the field.  
Gus, the man in the truck who brought the wood this morning,  
burned a cigarette, a rod he called it, and told us all about  
this here wood. "It's been pressurized and woolmanized,  
chemically treated to make it last a lifetime." As he finished  
his rod, he told us, "this fence will last forever."

Now I know these fields like I know my dogs, and I know  
"forever" is the blink of an eye to the sun. And it's a long way  
to that sun that stretches across one endless field. And the sun  
can see where the backwoods grew to the fragmented field.  
But don't tell me that fence will last forever. Because I've seen  
that sun fall for 50 years from my back porch, but it can't  
see me or my dogs or that new road. and I know damn well  
it can't see that "forever" fence, because next time the sun  
blinks, we'll all be gone.

– Christopher Harnish '94