

Mending Wall by Robert Frost

No More Yadders

I remember Walt Whitman's poem involving fences. "Good fences make good neighbors." The Chinese, in this logic, were the best of friends with the thundering hoards from the north. The USSR loved the West. And the American Congress just can't love Mexicans more, it would appear, with stupendous amounts of money apparently going to fences or walls on the Mexican border. Of course, the Yadder economy the Hose brothers told me about is hard to ignore.

So while I was playing a little "look ahead eightball" at my favorite watering hole, the Castle in Manhattan Beach, I was really glad to see the Jose and Josb come in.

Well, they never actually "come in." They are a happening, barging in the bar door, singing some mariachi song at the top of their lungs, herding a bunch of innocent bystanders on Sepulveda Boulevard, doing some weird Aztec boogie. Great theater. The bartenders loved them...they brought in so much business.

They saw me, yelled "Hey *cabron!*," which I took as a term of endearment. They jumped up, banging chests, and came over. We hugged, kissed, great guys. I hadn't seen them for awhile, so I went over to the bar, ordered a dozen Dos Exxis, went back to a table, sat down, the three of us and the thirty or forty innocents they herded into the bar, still dancing and ordering God knows how many beers.

"Hey, amigos," I finally had the breath to say. "How's the Yadder business going?"

Josb looked at me very seriously. "It be pronounced 'ladder,'" he corrected me.

I forgot the Hose twins don't have a sense of humor. "Sorry," I said sincerely. I forgot you were taking English lessons. How is your ladder business coming?"

The two brothers looked at each other. Jose said, "Yadder business over. No yadder business anymore." It didn't seem strange to Josb that his brother

mispronounced the word. Sometimes their syntax and pronunciations are peculiar, but then my Spanish is too.

“Come on, you guys,” I said. “You thought the entire Mexican economy could be stimulated by building millions of...ladders....to get over the damn wall we were going to build along the entire border.”

“No more damn wall,” Josb said, “so no more yadder business. But now we make new economy on damn soldiers.” He took a swig of Dos Exxis, jumped up in synch with Jose, bumped chests, hit high fives, high tens, banged hips, did a little Aztec boogie and sat down.

“Soldiers?” I asked, completely at sea.

“Jes,” Jose explained to me. “We hear jou president say he get National Guard to patrol border. But 2,000 guys can’t do yob. Needs *mucho mas*. So we hear from guy high up in Mexico government Bush going to have draft. Going to have 200,000 Guard guys. Like World War draft.”

“Oh, *por favor, amigos*, that will never happen,” I said, laughing so hard I almost had a mouthful of Dos Exxis come out of my nose.

“Jes it will,” Josb said. “Draft coming soon, Guard guys coming like yerbils.”

“Yerbils?” I asked.

“*Si*,” Josb said. “*Pequiño ratones blancos*....little white mice.”

“Gerbils,” I said.

“Jes...what we said,” they said in unison.

“So if this preposterous thing actually happens, how is it going to help you guys in Mexico?”

“Mexican soldiers. Now we draft 200.000 Chicanos who can’t work on yadders.”

“And that helps the Mexican economy?” I said, totally perplexed.

“*Si*,” Jose said. “Jes,” said Josb at the same time.

“Ok”, I said, ordering a couple more beers, “but tell me how this is going to work.”

“Jou guys put a Guard guy or lady every one hundred meters along entire border. They stand there all jear looking for border sneakers. Now border be *bery* protected. No iyigos alienos either side.”

“Iyigos?” asked.

“Si...border sneakers,” Josb said.

“Illegal aliens,” I said.

“Jes. What we said,” they chorused.

“Big bill for coffee breaks, but border safe from Chicanos wanting to come help juse guys economy in border states with yadders. Nobody get in or out. But now Mexicanos need protection too, *verdad?* So we hire 200,000 amigos out of work to face jou guys. Nobody goes either way. Perfect deal. Jou guys get homeless to have jobs, we get jobs with better pay. Big deal for both countries.”

I was stunned. As dumb as the proposition was, it sounded to me like it might work.

They yumped up, hit chests, went out on Sepulveda and got a new posse of innocent bystanders to come into the Castle. My syntax was becoming yust like theirs now after many Dos Exxis.

A lineup of drafted National Guardsmen and women every hundred meters or so, facing some Mexican equivalent, each staring each in the face 24/7. Wow, I thought...this is a really great idea.....secure borders by throwing bodies at it. Full employment. No more homeless people.

And, I thought, the additional firearms needed for each border control person would stimulate some economies too. Way better than yadders.

By this time, the Hose brothers were leading another boogie and I was so blitzed I had to leave. After many hugs and chest bumpings, I left the Castle to

call my mom. I wanted her to convert her Halliburton stock into government bonds.

Both governments.