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Exploring Border Walls Poems

In spring, 2021, Students at Pueblo High School and City High School in Tucson, Arizona wrote these poems at the end of a six-session workshop exploring walls and borders in association with the exhibit *A History of Walls: The Borders We Build*.

Pueblo High School, Taylor Cleland's class

Walls are not perfect

Walls work positively yet sometimes negatively

Walls are our protection

Walls can be used to protect and defend they can be used to keep people in or out.

Walls shut people out, they keep people confined, they divide us as a nation

Walls are made to separate us, but just because we've been separated by the higher ups and governments, doesn't mean we can't get along, we are both humans, and the governments can't control us and form our opinions.

If you are angry at the wall, be angry

Even though walls can protect us from the bad nature of the world, they also make an end to the beginnings that people continue to make

Walls are our protection but yet it can be other things within us.

We build walls around ourselves to block out the people around us

Walls are put up not to separate but to see who cares enough to knock them down.

Walls are everlasting

The structure may stay the same, but the meaning will always change

Walls separate us and keep many secrets, instead of looking straight at the wall, look around it

We can jump walls and barriers if we can't go over it we can go under it

Walls separate us, but we work with what we have

No matter what the government does they can't stop us from being happy

Walls never work forever.

A wall isn't just a wall,
or a barrier isn't just a barrier.
There are reasons why they're there.

Walls can bring communities together
whether it's in a form of protests
or in the form of gatherings.

Walls weren't meant to keep people away
from their family and community,
they were made to bring them together

Walls stop,
Walls are meant to be breached,
Climbed,
Grown over with life.

Walls have kept people apart
but have also helped places flourish
in a way

The barrier that we create in our hearts
must be broken
to heal and grow

Walls can give hope
in a hopeless world
but they can also damage those
with a restless soul.

Walls can take away happiness,
and freedom.

Walls are meant for many reasons
but walls can hear everything we say about them,
just like the saying
"It feels like I'm talking to a wall."

Wall,
will we be able to see a world without you?
because I HATE YOU.

I want you to know
the wounds that have been created across the landscape will eventually heal
because you cannot keep people
from moving
and loving
and surviving.

Walls weren't meant to keep people away;
walls shouldn't be a way of separation between families.

So although these walls may rob,
conquer,
and divide us all—they
cannot and will not
ever take our voice.

City High School, Annie Holub's class

Walls can divide anyone

It's more gray than it is black and white

Walls are a neutral force
whose purpose is only to separate;
whether they be man from monster,
or mother from child.

Walls are only barriers if you see them that way

Walls can be used to protect or restrict.
They are both open and closed.
Walls are built on purpose never on accident,
but sometimes that purpose gets lost along the way
corrupting the original desire of the person building the wall.
But even so
it is what the wall actually does that is important
not what the original intention was,
'cause an intention does not affect others
it is the outcome that does.

Walls soak up blood,
but my tears simply
slip down.

It's more gray than it is black and white

Balloons and voices float over like the monarch butterfly.

Culture can reach across physical boundaries.

The border inspires resistance and altruism.

It's more gray than it is black and white

The land we stand on holds border-less stories.

We can re-name the land,

scrape lines in the dirt,

put up darting metal walls,

but the thick roots in the dirt will always be indigenous,

the land will never be the colonizers',

the land will never know that it is "mexico" or "america"

it just is.