

Demolishing Walls: Through Poetry, Prose, and Pictures

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Preface

Dear Readers,

When I floated the idea of publishing an anthology on the theme 'Walls', I had no idea that I would be flooded with poems, pictures and stories that are so unique that one has to ponder over each piece. Each artist has interpreted the theme according to one's own perspective helping me put together a collage which is diverse yet seems familiar. I was mulling over the theme of 'Walls' for quite some time. As an acute observer, I had noticed people who were overwhelmed by the walls (figuratively speaking) around them and others who surpassed the walls and other obstacles to create themselves anew.

As I went about my city I would see a stray climber clinging to a wall, crumbled walls with graffiti spray-painted over them adding a new dimension to the structure or painted walls circumventing busy streets and markets adding something uniquely new to the surroundings. I remember one particular day when I saw a child sitting loftily on a wall which was frayed at the edges. The child was lost in his thoughts, a smile

on his face with an air of one who was occupying the highest throne in the world. He made me smile.

As you read the work by different writers , you will need to pause to let the words sink in. Each poem will force you to ponder on the walls, if any, around you. The wall can be in your mind or heart. These poems and pics will shape your perspective and help see not only walls but any mundane object with renewed interest. It is only when we start observing, connecting with each other, with Nature and the world can we find and revel in the beauty of life.

It has been sheer pleasure and honour for me to compile this anthology. I am thankful to all the artists who have trusted me with their work.

Dr. Kanwalpreet Kaur
Editor

Foreword



Kanwal ji's anthology of writings by 25 creative contributors, is a very interesting compilation. The theme of 'Walls' which runs through these insightful creative expressions, is a most apt theme for today's times. The walls around us and in the outer environs have impacted our lives inexorably.

To find solace and even inspiration in such times, one needs to be resilient as well as innately powerful. Kudos to Kanwal ji and her work. My very best wishes

Vivek Atray

Ex IAS, Motivational Keynote TEDx Speaker,

Author of "Finding Success Within", Mentor,

Advisor, Columnist & Professor of Practice at Shoolini University

A Note by Dr. Sumeer Walia



Walls are among the oldest metaphors we inherit, quiet structures that define, divide, protect, and imprison, often all at once. In this collection, *Walls*, the poems move beyond brick and mortar to explore the many forms these boundaries take within and around us: emotional barriers, social divides, inherited silences, and the invisible lines we draw to make sense of belonging and distance.

What is compelling about this body of work is its refusal to treat walls as static. Here, they breathe, shift, and sometimes even listen. A wall may begin as a shield, but slowly reveal itself as a cage; it may stand as an obstacle,

only to become a surface for memory, longing, or resistance. The poems ask us to consider not only what walls keep out, but also what they hold within and at what cost. There

is a quiet intimacy in these verses, an attentiveness to the spaces between words, much like the spaces between stones. The poet does not simply dismantle walls or condemn them; instead, there is a careful negotiation with them. In some poems, walls are necessary, even tender. In others, they are questioned, pushed against, or eroded by the persistence of human connection.

As readers, we are invited to walk alongside these boundaries to trace their edges, to lean against them, to wonder what lies on the other side. And perhaps, in doing so, we begin to recognize our own walls: the ones we have built, the ones we have inherited, and the ones we are still learning to cross.

Walls is not merely a collection of poems; it is a meditation on separation and closeness, on silence and voice, on the enduring human desire to both protect and be seen. It leaves us with a quiet but urgent question: which walls do we choose to keep, and which are we ready to let fall?

Warm Regards,

Sumeer Walia, Ph.D.

Vice President,

Office of University Communication,

Chitkara University, Chandigarh

About The Editor



Dr. Kanwalpreet Kaur teaches Political Science at D.A.V. College, affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh, India. She has written more than 100 book reviews for various national newspapers. She has presented papers at George Masons University in U.S.A and at Bangladesh Liberation War Museum.

She is a political analyst and is associated with many channels like BBC, CNN, Zee TV, India Ahead, Samvaad etc. Her poems have been accepted in Syncopation, Double Speak, Mocking Owl Roost, Open Skies, Fevers of the Mind, Borderless Journals among others.

Her poem, 'Heartless Drops' was spoken at Yorick Radios, Scotland. Her poem was included in the anthology taken out by the Watercress Line Heritage Trust Community Project, United Kingdom. One of her poems was published in 'Stravaig 16' published by Scottish Centre for Geopoetics. Her poem

‘Travails in the Bedroom’ was published in ‘Sing, Slivered Tongue.’ The books published by her are-

- Looking back with a Twinkle, A biography of Oshima Zarenghez Samandri Rekhi.
- Rings of life, a collection of 13 short stories (Got a grant from Chandigarh Sahitya Academy, Chandigarh)
- A Magic Combo- 31 poems, and 13 short stories for children.
- Path makers and Protectors.
- Unlocking Minds, Covid-19
- Elections and Election Commissions across the world.
- She has also written 12 text books in Political Science for under-graduate classes for all the three Universities in Punjab
- ‘Bravehearts of Punjab’ released at the Military Literature Festival, Chandigarh on December 2, 2023. It occupies a place of pride in the Library of the Parliament of India.

She has been honoured at many prestigious podiums for her writings.

This book is lovingly dedicated to

My mother Mrs. Ravinder Grewal

And

My father

Late Lt. Col. D. S. Grewal

For encouraging my sister and me
to demolish all walls and myths

And

Blessed by Guruji

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ANDRENA ZAWINSKI



Andrena Zawinski, a second generation Polish-Ukrainian American, is a veteran teacher of writing and activist poet whose work has garnered accolades for lyricism, form, spirituality, and social concern. She has authored four full-length collections of poetry and one of short fiction along with several smaller collections.

Her writing embraces the worldwide condition of women, immigrants, and the working class alongside a reverence for nature. Born in Pittsburgh, she now resides in the San Francisco Bay Area.

TEARING DOWN THE WALL

You know he won't want to do it,
tear it down, not the wall,
not with his hands.
But you insist, and he will against his will.
You tempt him with the old claw hammer,
new Saws-all,
a tire iron charlatan tool from the car.
He takes the first swipe, near miss,
then determines one blow
upon the next, maybe even likes it.
You pry old boards up
from the floor,
the musk of pets you could not scrub away
when the roof cried down in Spring.
He slam bangs again.
You pound back the jam intruders jimmied.
He tears down the wall.
You put up a protest flier masquerade
of city work permit,
mark lines where it should stop at bearing
beam and studs,
pretend high deco print along new trim.

Dead plaster drops in chunks to the floor.
Then the lathe comes,
his saw clamoring unseen pipes after your chides
for using good scissors on brads and nails.
His blackened nostrils flare
against his dust masked face.
He yanks off gloves and screams,
“You tear down the goddamn wall.”
Blistering, breathless,
you clear the floor with shovel, broom,
and pan.
Pocket loose change the past threw in for luck.
Stuff boxes with mortar, wood, and mesh.
Haul out debris disguised in paper with ties trash
collectors might be tricked to take.
Other summers, you’ll walk by the house again,
the one that inhabited you for years,
and you will feel the pull of all
the muscle then, the weight of it,
tearing down the wall.

NOCTURNAL HAIBUN

I will think it a pity that you have
no way to remember tonight's play of light. -Kawabata
Caravaggio powdered his paints
with their iridescence.
In Frost's garden, they were real stars
to fill the skies.
Children contain their flickering dance
in Mason jars,
smear the emerald brilliance around
fingers and wrists.
sparks of fireflies
ignite summer's shimmering
nocturnal courtship
They are Cherokee torches turning dark
into starry nights,
Japanese hotaru of passionate love,
Chinese hing hoy
souls of the dead.
dancing dark heavens luminaries in shadows
make concerts of light.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

We tipped wine glasses to Paris,
Bastille Day, whirled and twirled
each other across the walk,
swung into the street—two women travelers
smiling and laughing
until the hems of our skirts
were singed by firecrackers tossed at our feet
by men demanding dances we would not give.
Women in hijabs pulled us into a cloistered
corner of sisters inside La Belle Equipe,
encircled us to show us how to position hands,
extend arms
as if to shove away looming shadows
of their guardians and husbands—crossing
boundaries of difference for what we share
and where years later
extremists with Kalashnikovs
would spray bullets
into crowds along that same
Rue de la Charonne, its sidewalk to turn altar
of flowers, candles, sentiments, and tears—
women embracing each other, trying to hold
the world together, bound in courage and fear.

ANNA MARIA MICKIEWICZ



Anna Maria Mickiewicz, is an award-winning poet, editor, translator and publisher. Founder of Literary Waves Publishing, London. Anna moved from Poland to California and then to London. She is a member of English Pen, the Polish PEN Club, the Association of Polish Writers Abroad.

She had the honour of presenting her works in the British Parliament. Her poetry has been published in many languages, in poetry collections and anthologies in the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Canada, Poland, Mexico, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Hungary, El Salvador, India, Chile, Peru, China and France. She has served as chair of the Jury of the Literary Award in California, the Jury of the K. M. Anthru International Literary Award in India.