

IN NEED OF MENDING

A fence keeps the outside out;
for instance, if this a neat
house and there be cattle, we don't
want the cows to do away with
seven years of landscaping by
letting them in where they shouldn't
be. They leave cow-pies all over.
And think about new ideas!

The fence also keep the inside
in. This is not very important,
unless you have small children
or German shepherds. But then
one day you fly into Berlin
and see a hundred meters of cleared
earth, a wall, you feel the mines
there, waiting. . . And how would it
be if I told you I said something
stupid, or asked to be forgiven?

But now things get complicated.
The fence I see has stakes or
slats, so the fixity of intent
of the one to keep outside out or
inside in is undercut by this in-
sistence on letting in out (or out in).

And suppose the fence goes around
your friend's field too, so that you
two share a stretch, which may be
long. Then it becomes very confusing.
Part of your outside is someone
else's inside; and, what's worse,
it's even true the other way around!
There's more; those outside the two
of you see one single fence around,
not caring that you tend the part.

I'll tell you some fences I like:
membranes, assemblies of proteins
and lipids that define the outer
wall of cells, then fold into the in-
finitely crenelated surface of the
endoplasmic reticulum. Membranes

that bound organelles, the double
membranes of nuclei and mitochondria;
flexible molecular fences, replete
with gates, pumps, stylish chemical
conduits, responding to dim light,
firing neurons. It seems that in
this life to sequester is to free.

And I love: balustrades, because
they bound passages up or down,
because they hint of balconies,
ballrooms and terraces, and the word,
what a word, sings of the calyx
of a flower of a wild pomegranate.