

## Pausing for Fences

---

*Jeff Arnold*

Waiting for Mike to tighten the wire,  
I heard the creek gurgle.  
For three days we had sweated and cursed  
wire and posts over steep hills  
to fence ground long loved,  
and mostly missed the murmur of creek  
and gentle smile of wildflowers.  
But then, in the failing light  
I had time to hear.

It had been whispering its secret message  
all three days, I'm sure,  
and as long before as I can fathom  
earthly eternity,  
but not to me.

This new fence was a sudden necessity  
that broke our quiet ordinaries  
and brought us to quiet fever,  
blended our several ways  
to common purpose.  
We told good stories, ate in fellowship,  
but mostly worked, together,  
and, in near dark, tied the last wire  
on a well made fence.

It will stand, most likely,  
through several snows, with little help.  
Trees will fall, cows will crowd, time will tell,  
but for many springs  
fence fixers will walk it proudly.

Before that, we will go back again,  
though probably not together,  
and walk those hills to see our work.  
In the bottom I will pause  
and hear the creek, alone.

It will speak of creation, perhaps,  
and small peace in a busy world.  
I will be soothed, almost,  
unto renunciation.  
But I will look up, and remember  
I helped good people do good work  
while the creek whispered on awhile  
without me.