

## **Frontera, Inc.**

1. The border has an extension of 3,169 kilometers, some say more exactly 3,145 so there are twenty-four kilometers disappeared in the differences between both distances. In miles, there are 1,954. The line begins with a backbone of rusted metal bars that reach the sea of Tijuana like the bones of a sea serpent and end up in the Gulf of Mexico, after a winding road, in the bleeding green waters of the Gulf of Mexico, on a beach of white sand.

2. When Donald Trump announced that he would run for president of the United States, I was in a hotel in Wyoming, visiting Yellowstone Park, expecting to see wild animals. I was the only Mexican in the dining room and the only table available was in front of a sixty-inch monitor. There I sat with a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice more fake than the candidate's face on TV. My head was a brown dot on the monitor where they repeatedly transmitted the candidate's racist speech: "Mexicans are rapists, they are bringing drugs and crime." With each spoonful of cereal, they repeated the phrase and the dining room with white Americans saw the monitor and saw me, as the living embodiment of the speech, as natural evidence of what was said on television. The fly on the screen was the brown elephant in the room. I got up from that table and I heard old people with white hair who exclaimed: "He says what we all think". At that moment, I knew Trump would win the elections. The wall was the substantiation of their hatred, of their fear of migrants.

3. In the city of palm trees, Jericho, a wall was built that the Israelites found on their way to the promised land. They circled the wall seven times with their ram trumpets; they were silent during the first six days and in the seventh day they blew their trumpets and all the pilgrims shouted as loud as possible, and the walls tumbled. The migrants have been silent for many years, but now that the arrogance of the walls rises anew, you have to shout to collapse them.

4. The Chinese wall is 21, 200 kilometers long and was erected to contain the Mongols and Manchurians to the north. Seven meters high and five meters wide, a million people died building this "preventative" measure of war, making it the largest gravestone in the world, built in some sections with a mixture of rice during the Qin Dynasty. Even so, the wall could not do anything against Men Jiangnu's tears that crumbled the wall to expose the bones of her late husband. It is not true that this elongated crypt can be seen from space, it is just a tense tendon of rancor between the embrace of hills. Borders are built by removing bread from the mouth of citizens and leaving the roofless.

5. I built a wooden fence surrounding the only house I had bought. It was about six feet. I laid the cement foundations for the posts, then, plank for plank, I placed them to divide the patios. On the other side, a neighbor who lived in his mother's garage, wearing a T-shirt from the Oakland Raiders, threw empty beer cans on the other side of the fence. The six feet were useless.

6. The 187 kilometers of the Berlin wall was an ideological enclosure, an enzyme to measure the changing of world power. Walls are built not to separate, but to demonstrate. Walls rise to

remind others they are not welcome. Walls are the mirror gazing inwards. They are a sealed cement fists.

7. The Western Sahara fence is made of sand; the wind molds it with each storm. The true fence in the desert is the sun's rays. The barrier to overcome is thirst. The north is a mirage, a wet promise of palm trees and green grass, of sugary dates. It is an enclosure of scorpions and snakes.

8. I was crossing to the University of Texas at El Paso on a racing bike that my brother lent me. I climbed the Santa Fe bridge and from the top I saw the river swirling, the children swimming. On this side, Mexico, a second later, the United States. The calm landscape, the blue sky on both sides, the unbearable heat that does not discriminate country or nationality. When I reached the University, my shirt was sweat-soaked and the air conditioning in the Humanities building saved me from fainting. With a dry shirt, you can conquer the world, civilization begins with a clean shirt. There I sat to listen to the lecture. From the library I saw Mexico, the poverty of the Anapra district, the ramshackle streets, while I sat in that palace of books and imitation Bhutanese architecture.

9. The wall of Hadrian extended for 117 kilometers to keep out the Picts tribes. When it was abandoned in 383, its stones became houses, and chimneys to give shelter and heat. Like its twin, Antonio's wall, they were built to protect Britain by the Emperor Hadrian, whom Yourcenar portrayed in his novel of classic nostalgia. Flaubert wrote, it was a moment without gods, when Christ did not appear and the gods had perished, "when the only thing that man had was man himself".

10. At a café in Italy, next to Lake Como, under the table I saw the border line between Switzerland and Italy. My sole in Italy, my big toe in Switzerland. The cup of coffee on the table between the two countries. A cosmetic streak between two similar countries. The borders fall when there is equality on both sides, they look at each other's faces. When there is economic differences, the walls are raised, to keep the condemned on the other side., When the ones on one side are dark and poor, they load their guns, they sharpen their knives, the first brick is set. When on each side there are two tongues, the grenades are prepared, the rifle are aimed, the gallows are prepared. The guillotine separates the body from its border.

11. "The shoulders of a woman are the first line of her mysticism, and her neck, if alive, has all the mystery of a border city. A no man's land in that battle between the mind and the body. " Said John Milton.

12. Border cities are like the dust that accumulates on both sides of the wall. A dust that hardens with the rain and keeps the bricks high. A two-sided mirror.

13. I was on the border between North Korea and South Korea. In the demilitarized zone. From the north side the speakers blast the propaganda: "We love our leader, he is the best". On the south side, K-Pop songs echo to make the north Koreans see that they are losing the honey of freedom. In between the two countries there is a bridge; if you cross the dividing line you are a

dead man. On the South Korean side, there is a train that was riddled with bullets, a remnant of the war. There is a new train station that has never been used, waiting for the train of history to join the two Koreas. It works now as a museum; there is a piano that instead of strings has barbed wire, the music of political tensions. At the train station, it reads: "Next: Pyongyang station" the train will depart someday. You can enter one of the tunnels that the North Koreans dug; they said they were looking for coal, but it is known that they were preparing an invasion. It is possible that there are many other tunnels. The border is fortified with nuclear weapons and with the closed fists of the guards, about to attack. The main ingredient of every wall is fear.

14. The dividing wall marks where civilization ends and where barbarism begins, the exact position of where one or the other is, is debatable. On that side are the undesirable, those who do not count, those who are not people, those who die in hundreds and nobody cares, those who kill themselves with any provocation, those who grind their teeth. On the other side are those who kick everyone, those who are convinced by a strange scale in their minds, those who are superior to all, claim to be the best, the chosen ones of God. Those who have threatened the planet with death, their needs first, if they kill one of them they count as if they were the whole population, they apologize to each other, they go to church and they forgive everything, they are good, they are saints. We owe them life, they let us live, they give us their presence, their indifference, their hate wrapped in cellophane.

15. The fence with shards of broken bottles, the barbed wire, the stone wall, the concrete wall, the metal fence, the wild river, the wild dogs, the crocodiles in the water, the machine guns stationed, drones with infrared vision, satellites, helicopters with searchlights, human heat detectors, yellow traffic announcements with the silhouette of a family that hurries across a street, with a family fleeing in haste from a tragedy, they flee from the bullets that the criminals bought from the other side.

16. Walls are erected in times of zombies. The apocalypse is announced with the appearance of these elevated structures. Fortifications of capitalism. Gated communities. Green zones.

17. The border is a device to convince us that we are different from others. It is the corral of the world's rejected. The border is the precipice of human kindness. It is the beach of humiliation. To find a wall is to reach the vestiges of the of the spirit's devaluation. The world does not work without the walls protected with guns, they protect an unjust world economic system. It is to keep the henhouse protected, the displaced on the margin. The border is a membrane so that the systems do not overflow, so that the status quo is strengthened. Where there are injustices to be protected, granite is summoned.

18. The borders fade away, when facing each other, reaching out, engaging in dialogue and helping each other as neighbors.

19. The Warsaw Wall was built brick by brick, as hate rose. The walls said there were "dangerous people on the other side." The paradox of the wall is that it has two sides, both are enclosed by hatred and fear.

20. Your skin is the first wall.