

Der Lattenzaun by Christian Morgenstern

Translated from the German

by [James Stevens Curl](#) (July 2021)



Shadow of a Fence, Gabriele Münter, 1908

The Fence

Once there was a fence, whose failings

numbered spaces and straight palings.

A Modernist, who observed this sight
with stealth approached it in the night,

then pinched the spaces from the fence
and with them built a residence.

The fence, meanwhile, felt somewhat mean,
with rails, but nothing in between,

so, as the fence had had its day,
the Council took the thing away.

The architect, went off, heigh-ho,
to Afri-or-Americo.

Der Lattenzaun

*Es war einmal ein Lattenzaun
mit Zwischenraum, hindurchzuschauen.*

*Ein Architekt, der dieses sah,
stand eines Abends plötzlich da-*

*und nahm den Zwischenraum heraus
und baute draus ein großes Haus.*

*Der Zaun indessen stand ganz dumm,
mit Latten ohne was herum,*

*Ein Anblick gräßlich und gemein,
drum zog ihn der Senat auch ein.*

Der Architekt jedoch entfloh
Nach Afri-od-Ameriko.

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James Stevens Curl is the author of the devastating critique, [*Making Dystopia: The Strange Rise and Survival of Architectural Barbarism*](#) (Oxford University Press 2018), and was honoured with an 2019 Arthur Ross Award for Excellence in History & Writing within the Classical Tradition by The Institute of Classical Architecture & Art (USA).

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