

# Native Gardens

By Karen Zacarías



# About the Play

Karen Zacarías was inspired to write *Native Gardens* at a dinner party, after a pair of friends suggested that she write a play based on a neighborly dispute in which they were embroiled.



# About the Play in Karen Zacarías' Words

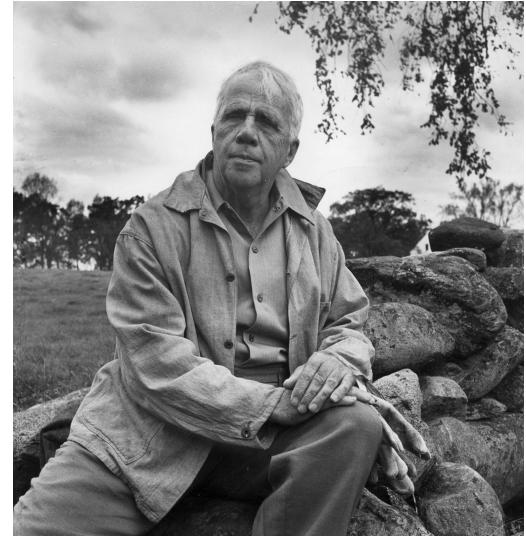


“I realized that almost every fight with your neighbor involves a couple of things: a fight over property and a fight over taste or culture. Almost every single war and almost every single fight that is going on within our community in the nation and in the world at-large has those things in common. I thought that there is something poetic, primal, and absurd about what makes us so triggered and angry that we lose sight about what’s important. So, I wanted to investigate that with humor.”



**There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'**

Excerpt from “Mending Wall” by Robert Frost



# About Karen Zacarías

Karen Zacarías was born in Mexico and moved to Boston, MA, with her family when she was ten years old. She originally started writing plays to help her cope after being bullied by a classmate.

*“I started writing a backstory for him...  
So, as a ten-year-old, playwriting was my  
understanding and humanizing of my  
immigration experience.”*



# About Karen Zacarías



- ❖ Zacarías lives in Washington, DC, and is committed to working in her community.
- ❖ She founded the Young Playwrights' Theater with the goal of empowering underserved students by helping them share their stories through playwriting classes.
- ❖ She also founded Latinx Theater Commons with seven other Latinx theater practitioners.



# About Karen Zacarías

- Zacarías' plays include *The Book Club Play*, *Destiny of Desire*, and *Mariela in the Desert*.
- She collaborates with composer Deborah Wicks La Puma on musicals for young audiences.
- In 2018-2019, she was named as of the Top 20 Most-Produced Playwrights.





**“Native plants feed the right bees and bugs, the right bugs feed the birds, and so on. We, the Individual Gardeners of America, have the opportunity, or dare I say, the responsibility in helping ensure biodiversity in our gardens. We can help save the planet.”**

Tania, *Native Gardens*



# What is a native garden?

- 🕒 A true native garden is essentially a plot of land left untouched.
- 🕒 Plants and landscaping found in the garden exist naturally and are not disturbed, manicured, or tended.
- 🕒 Cultivated native gardens, like the one Tania is planning, use native plants, but are intentionally designed, planted, and maintained.



# Benefits of Native Plants and Gardens



- ☞ Low maintenance
- ☞ Providing beautiful plants which change with the seasons
- ☞ Helping the climate
- ☞ Contributing to water conservation
- ☞ Serving the local wildlife



# English-Style Gardens

English-style gardens are all about order. Neatly clipped hedges, clearly defined bed edges, and healthy swaths of lush green lawn foster the ambience of this style of garden.



# Potomac, Maryland



While it's considered by many to be the "Beverly Hills" of Montgomery County, Maryland, Potomac offers more to visitors than a chance to ooh and ahh at the gorgeous homes that make up its neighborhoods. People who stay in Potomac praise its appreciation for the arts and convenient access to the Washington DC Metro area.



# The American Dream

- ❖ The American Dream is rooted in the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims that "all men are created equal" with the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."
- ❖ In 1931, James Truslow Adams was the first person to coin the term. He stated that "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" regardless of social class or circumstances of birth.



# Squatters Rights and Adverse Possession



In *Native Gardens*, the root of the conflict revolves around an improperly placed fence. Frank and Virginia become determined to try and maintain the current property line, and Virginia consults with a lawyer to see if there is any way to keep the property line where it is. Her lawyer suggests that the Butleys might have a case for squatters rights.



# Steps to Proving Adverse Possession

To prove adverse possession one must:

1. Have continuous possession of the property for a certain number of years.
2. Occupy the space without the permission of the owner.
3. Use the property openly and notoriously.
4. Use and care for the land as the property owner would.
5. Have exclusive control of the property.



# Fun Facts about *Native Gardens*

- ↳ *Native Gardens* was commissioned by Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.
- ↳ The World Premiere was in January 2016.
- ↳ During the 2018-2019 Season, *Native Gardens* was one of the Top 10 Most Produced Plays by American theaters.



**“You go in, and you’re judging each couple and changing your mind about who’s right, but at the end of the play, the person you’re judging is yourself. My hope is that people will take a moment to ponder what it will take for them to be a better neighbor. I want simple things out of my plays. You can still laugh, have fun, and talk about hard things in a way where nobody’s off the hook.”**

**Karen Zacarías**

