



Text Version of Audio Story: Wobbly

“Anyday now, that old wobbly thing’s gonna fall down.” It’s been standing there at the T in the road back behind town for as long as anyone can remember. As a matter of fact, that old wobbly barn and hearing people say, *“One of these days that old thing’s gonna fall down,”* is one of my earliest memories.

I call it a barn because I don’t know what else to call it. Some people call it a shack, but it’s too big to be a shack. Some people call it a shed, but it’s way too big to be a shed. I call it a barn even though it really doesn’t look like a barn. It’s just an old farm building. It’s a pole building. It’s old. I bet it’s been there since the civil war. It’s open on the one end and barn boards close up the other three sides. No matter who’s in the car with you when you drive past everyone agrees, *“One of these days that old wobbly thing’s gonna fall down.”* I couldn’t have been more than 5 years old the first time I heard someone say that and yet that old thing is still standing.

Throughout the 1990s, we had some pretty nasty winters around here. There was one winter where we had well over 100 inches of snow. It collapsed barns and carports and garages and houses and industrial buildings and porches. And yet that old wobbly barn back of town at the T in the road stood through it all. Go figure because one would have thought, you know, as wobbly as that old thing looks that it would’ve been the first thing to go. That old wobbly barn has been leaning well to the one side for as long as anyone alive can remember. And on my last trip by, I noticed someone hooked a giant yellow ratchet strap to it and anchored the other end to an oak tree.

Our little town has seen buildings come and go. They knocked down the Lutheran Church built in the 1880s to build a new church. All the men around town gathered to watch the giant wrecking ball slam into the big red brick walls. I was there. It all tumbled straight to the ground. Other buildings have come and gone too. But that old wobbly barn back of town at the T in the road is still standing in spite of all the people who had driven past it and at least the last 40 years saying, *“One of these days that old wobbly thing’s gonna fall down.”*

I stopped and looked at it the other day. There’s no trespassing sign nailed to one of the front posts, but I peeked inside anyhow. Don’t tell anyone. There’s an old World War II army jeep inside. It looks like – it looks like it was parked there at the end of the war and hasn’t been run since. It’s full of all kinds of junk, and someone parks their old Ford truck in there too, someone like a small contractor because there’s ladders and tools and extension cords on the truck. Maybe they parked their truck in there thinking that this old wobbly barn is going to fall down

any day now and they'll be able to collect the insurance money for their truck, you know, get a I was talking to an old guy the other day in his 80s and he said, *"It takes me all night long to do what I used to do all night long."*

I'm like everyone else. I don't want to get old, but I guess there isn't much I can do about it. If I could just figure out what that old wobbly barn's got, what keeps it standing, then maybe...well.

We placed a photo of the old wobbly barn at theamericanstoryteller.com. We thought you might want to see it because, well, that old wobbly thing is gonna fall down any day now.

From somewhere behind the radio with the music of Johnny X, I'm the American Storyteller.