

Angel Island Blues [1939-SF, Chinese immigrants detained indefinitely, wrote poems on walls]

I hear that fog horn blowing, from somewhere on the bay;
Every afternoon my world turns cold and grey.
I'm stuck on Angel Island, time keeps dragging on,
Trying to get to California, just another Chinaman.

Please let me off this island, I've been here near a year,
My clan in San Francisco seems far and yet so near.
I'm stuck on Angel Island; time just seems to crawl.
I hear that lonesome fog horn call; I write a poem on my wall.

*"There are thousands of poems on these walls.
What can one sad person say to another?
Gain or lose, how is one to know what is predestined?
Rich or poor, who is to say it is not the will of heaven?"*

*"Idle in the wooden building, I opened a window.
Morning breeze and bright moon lingered together.
We know when the nation is weak, the peoples' spirit dies.
Why else would we come to this place to be imprisoned?"*

*"America has power but not justice.
On this island, we are victims as if we are guilty.
I bow my head in reflection, but there is nothing I can do.
From ancient times, heroes were the first to face adversity."*

*"The west wind ruffles my thin gauze clothing.
I wish to travel on a cloud far away to my wife and son.
Moonlight shines on me; the night seems even longer.
There is no flower beneath my pillow, and my dreams are not sweet."*

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