

Poetry from Barrak Walls – Angel Island

Detained in this wooden house for several tens of days,
It is all because of the Mexican exclusion law which implicates me.
It's a pity heroes have no way of exercising their prowess.
I can only await the word so that I can snap Zu's whip.

From now on, I am departing far from this building
All of my fellow villagers are rejoicing with me.
Don't say that everything within is Western styled.
Even if it is built of jade, it has turned into a cage.

– *From the walls of Angel Island Immigration Station, author unknown, Poem 69 from Island, p. 134.*

Imprisoned in the wooden building day after day,
My freedom is withheld; how can I bear to talk about it?
I look to see who is happy but they only sit quietly.
I am anxious and depressed and cannot fall asleep.
The days are long and bottle constantly empty;
My sad mood even so is not dispelled.
Nights are long and the pillow cold; who can pity my loneliness?
After experiencing such loneliness and sorrow,
Why not just return home and learn to plow the fields?

– *From the walls of Angel Island Immigration Station, author unknown, Poem 32 from Island, p. 68.*