4

The gold and silver of America is very appealing.
Jabbing an awl into the thigh[4] in search of glory,
I embarked on the journey.
Not only are my one-thousand pieces of gold already depleted, but
My countenance is blackened. It is surely for the sake of the family.

[4]Su Qin (? - 317 B.C.), a scholar during the period of the Warring States (403 - 221 B.C.), was unsuccessful in gaining a post in the courts upon finishing his studies. Returning home, the contempt of his family drove him to study harder. To keep awake at night, he would hold an awl over a thigh so that as he became drowsy, his hand would drop, jabbing the awl into his flesh. Later, Su Qin became the prime minister to six states concurrently. The expression, thus, means to make a determined effort.

5

Four days before the Qiqiao Festival,[5]
I boarded the steamship for America.
Time flew like a shooting arrow.
Already, a cool autumn has passed.
Counting on my fingers, several months have elapsed.
Still I am at the beginning of the road.
I have yet to be interrogated.
My heart is nervous with anticipation.

[5]Better known as the "Festival of the Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon," the Qiqiao Festival is widely celebrated among the Cantonese. As the legend of the Cowherd (Niulang) and the Weaver Maiden (Zhinu) is told, the Weaver Maiden in heaven one day fell in love with a mortal Cowherd. After their marriage, her loom which once wove garments for the gods fell silent. Angered by her dereliction of duty, the gods ordered her back to work. She was separated from the Cowherd by the Silver Stream or Milky Way, with the Cowherd, in the Constellation Aquila and she, across the Heavenly River in the Constellation Lyra. The couple was allowed to meet only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh moon, when the Silver Stream is spanned by a bridge of magpies. On this day, maidens display toys, figurines, artificial fruits and flowers, embroidery and other examples of their handiwork, so that men can judge their skills. It is also customary for girls to worship and make offerings of fruits to the gods.

4

美洲金銀實可愛，
錐[1]股求榮動程來。
不第千金曾用盡，
犂黑面目爲家哉。

1 原作“椎”

5

乞巧少四日，
搭輪來美洲。
光陰似箭射，
又已過涼秋。
屈指經數月，
尚在此路頭。
至今未曾審，
懸望心悠悠。

6

Everyone says travelling to North America is a pleasure.
I suffered misery on the ship and sadness in the wooden building.
After several interrogations, still I am not done.
I sigh because my compatriots are being forceably detained.

By One from Xiangshan[6]

[6] A district in the Pearl River Delta. Xiangshan is the birth place of Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan, 1866 - 1925). After his death in 1925, the district name was changed to Zhongshan in Sun's memory.

7

Originally, I had intended to come to America last year.
Lack of money delayed me until early autumn.
It was on the day that the Weaver Maiden met the Cowherd[7]
That I took passage on the *President Lincoln*.
I ate wind and tasted waves for more than twenty days.
Fortunately, I arrived safely on the American continent.
I thought I could land in a few days.
How was I to know I would become a prisoner suffering in the wooden building?
The barbarians'[8] abuse is really difficult to take.
When my family's circumstances stir my emotions, a double stream of tears flow.
I only wish I can land in San Francisco soon,
Thus sparing me this additional sorrow here.

[7] See note 5.

[8] A Cantonese colloquial term for Westerner.

6

北遊咸道樂悠
船中苦楚木樓
數次審查猶未
太息[1]同胞被逼
香山

1 余本作“惜”

8

Instead of remaining a citizen of China, I
willingly became an ox.
I intended to come to America to earn a
living.
The Western styled buildings are lofty; but I
have not the luck to live in them.
How was anyone to know that my dwelling
place would be a prison?

9

I used to admire the land of the Flowery
Flag[9] as a country of abundance.
I immediately raised money and started my
journey.
For over a month, I have experienced enough
winds and waves.
Now on an extended sojourn in jail, I am
subject to the ordeals of prison life.
I look up and see Oakland so close by.
I wish to go back to my motherland to carry
the farmer's hoe.
Discontent fills my belly and it is difficult for
me to sleep.
I just write these few lines to express what is
on my mind.

[9] A Cantonese colloquial term for the United States.

8

國民不爲甘爲牛，
意至美洲作營謀。
洋樓高聳無緣住，
誰知棲所是監牢？

9

夙慕花旗幾優哉，
即時籌款動程來。
風波閱月已歷盡。
監牢居所受災磨。
仰望屋崙相咫尺，
願回祖國負耕鋤。
滿腹牢騷難寢寐，
聊書數句表心裁。

10

Poem by One Named Xu From Xiangshan Encouraging the Traveler

Just talk about going to the land of the Flowery Flag[10] and my countenance fills with happiness.
Not without hard work were 1,000 pieces of gold dug up and gathered together.
There were words of farewell to the parents, but the throat choked up first.
There were many feelings, many tears flowing face to face, when parting with the wife.

Waves big as mountains often astonished this traveller.
With laws harsh as tigers,[11] I had a taste of all the barbarities.
Do not forget this day when you land ashore.
Push yourself ahead and do not be lazy or idle.

[10] See note 9.

[11] From "Tangong," a chapter in the 'Book of Rites': Confucius was passing Mt. Tai and saw a woman weeping and wailing at a grave. Confucius asked one of his disciples to ask why she was wailing so sadly. She said, "My father-in-law and my husband were killed by tigers. Now my son is also killed by a tiger." Confucius asked why she didn't leave this dangerous place. She replied that it was because there is no oppressive rule here. Confucius remarked, "Oppressive rule is surely fiercer than any tiger."

11

I think back on the past when I had not experienced hardship.
I resolved to go and seek Taogong.[12]
The months and years are wasted and still it has not ended.
Up to now, I am still trapped on a lonely island.

[12] Also known as Taozhugong, a wealthy merchant who lived during the 5th century, B.C. His name is symbolic of wealth. Taozhugong was also known as Fan Li, a minister who once served King Goujian of the state of Yue. After successfully aiding the King to defeat the enemy state of Wu, Fan resigned from his post to become a merchant.

10

香山許生勉客題

說去花旗喜溢顏，
千金羅掘不辭艱。
親離有話喉先哽[1]，
妻別多情淚對潸。

浪大如山頻駭客，
政苛似虎備嘗蠻。
毋忘此日君登岸，
發奮前程莫懶閒。

1 太平洋週報作"梗"

11

憶昔當年苦未從，
堅心出外覓陶公。
歲月蹉跎仍未了，
至今猶困島孤中。

12

Today is the last day of winter,
Tomorrow morning is the vernal equinox.
One year's prospects have changed to another.
Sadness kills the person in the wooden building.

13

Random Thoughts Deep at Night

In the quiet of night, I heard, faintly, the whistling of wind.
The forms and shadows saddened me; upon seeing the landscape, I composed a poem.
The floating clouds, the fog, darken the sky.
The moon shines faintly as the insects chirp.
Grief and bitterness entwined are heaven sent.
The sad person sits alone, leaning by a window.

Written by Yu[13] of Taishan[14]

[13]More commonly "Yee" in the United States

[14]A district southwest of the Pearl River Delta. The largest percentage of Chinese in continental U.S. and Canada came from this district.

14

Random Thoughts at Mid-Autumn Festival[15]

The night is cool as I lie stiff on the steel bunk.
Before the window the moon lady shines on me.
Bored, I get up and stand beneath the cold window.
Sadly, I count the time that's elapsed.
It is already mid-autumn.
We should all honor and enjoy her.
But I have not prepared even the most trifling gift and I feel embarrassed.

[15]The Mid-Autumn Festival is one of the major traditional festivals celebrated by the entire Chinese family together.

12

今日爲冬末，
明朝是春分。
交替兩年景，
愁煞木樓人。

13 **深夜偶感**

夜靜微聞風嘯聲，
形影傷情見景詠。
雲霧濛濛也暗天，
蟲聲唧唧月微明。
悲苦相連天相遣，
愁人獨坐倚[1]窗邊。

台山余題

[1] 原作“椅”

14 **中秋偶感**

夜涼僵卧鐵床中，
窗前月姊透照儂。
悶來起立寒窗下，
愁把時計已秋中。
吾儕也應同敬賞，
菲儀無備亦羞容。

15

The insects chirp outside the four walls.[16]
The inmates often sigh.
Thinking of affairs back home,
Unconscious tears wet my lapel.

[16] This poem imitates the "Mulan Ci" ("Poem of Mulan"), which some judge to be a work dating back to the 6th century, A.D.

16

Depressed from living on Island,[17] I sought the Sleeping Village.
The uncertain future altogether wounds my spirit.
When I see my old country fraught with chaos,
I, a drifting leaf, become doubly saddened.

[17] See note 2.

17

My belly is so full of discontent it is really difficult to relax.
I can only worry silently to myself.
At times I gaze at the cloud- and fog-enshrouded mountain-front.
It only deepens my sadness.

15

四壁蟲唧唧，
居人多歎息。
思及家中事，
不覺淚沾滴[1]。

[1] 余本作"襟"

16

悶處埃崙尋睡鄉，
前途渺渺總神傷。
眼看故國危變亂，
一葉飄零倍感長。

17

牢騷滿腹甚難休，
默默沉沉祇自憂。
時望山前雲霧鎖，
恰似更加一點愁。

23

This place is called an island of immortals,
When, in fact, this mountain wilderness is a prison.
Once you see the open net, why throw yourself in?
It is only because of empty pockets I can do nothing else.

24

I, a seven foot man, am ashamed I cannot extend myself.
Curled up in an enclosure,[22] my movements are dictated by others.
Enduring a hundred humiliations, I can only cry in vain.
This person's tears fall, but what can the blue heavens do?

[22] i.e., like a worm.

25

I have infinite feelings that the ocean has changed into a mulberry grove.[23]
My body is detained in this building.
I cannot fly from this grassy hill,
And green waters block the hero.
Impetuously, I threw away my writing brush.
My efforts have all been in vain.
It is up to me to answer carefully.
I have no words to murmur against the east wind.

By Ruan[24]

[23] i.e. great changes.

[24] More commonly "Yuen" in the United States.

23

埃崙此地爲[1]仙島，
山野原來是監牢。
既望張網焉投入？
祇爲囊空莫奈何。

[1] 余本作“如”

24

鬚眉七尺愧無伸，
蜷伏圈中俯仰人。
百般忍辱徒呼負，
斯人瀝[1]哭蒼天何？

[1] 原作“磨”

25

無限滄桑感，
羈身此樓中。
青山飛不去，
綠水阻英雄。
率爾投筆去，
徒勞反無功。
愼言誠在我，
無語怨東風。

阮題

[5]Wang Can (177 - 217 A.D.) was an official during a politically chaotic period. While a refugee in Jingzhou (in Hubei Province), he composed a verse in the "fu" form, entitled, "Denglou" ("Ascending the Tower"), expressing his own unfortunate circumstances and thoughts of home.

[6]Yu Xin (513 - 581 A.D.) was an official of the Liang dynasty (502 - 557 A.D.) He was sent as an envoy to the northern state of Western Wei (535 - 557 A.D.) and was subsequently detained there. Later, he served the succeeding Northern Zhou dynasty (557 - 581 A.D.). In his later years, he composed a verse in the "fu" form, "Ai Jiangnan" ("Bewailing Jiangnan"), reflecting his longing for his native south and describing the rise and fall of the Liang dynasty.

26

My grief, like dense clouds, cannot be dispersed.
Whether deliberating or being melancholy and bored,
I constantly pace to and fro.
Wang Can ascended the tower but who pitied his sorrow?[25]
Lord Yu who left his country could only wail to himself.[26]

27

Poem by One Named Xu, From Xiangshan, Consoling Himself

Over a hundred poems are on the walls.
Looking at them, they are all pining at the delayed progress.
What can one sad person say to another?
Unfortunate travellers everywhere wish to commiserate.
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?
Why should one complain if he is detained and imprisoned here?
From ancient times, heroes often were the first ones to face adversity.

26

愁似濃雲撥不開，
思量愁悶輒徘徊。
登樓王粲誰憐苦？
去國庾郎只自哀。

27

香山許生自慰題

壁上題詩過百篇，
看來皆是嘆迍邅。
愁人曷向愁人訴，
蹇客偏思蹇客憐。
得失豈知原有命，
富貧誰謂不由天。
此間困處何須怨，
自古英雄每厄先。

Cantonese colloquial term
hina.

34

For what reason must I sit in jail?
It is only because my country is weak and
my family poor.
My parents wait at the door but there is no
news.
My wife and child wrap themselves in quilt,
sighing with loneliness.
Even if my petition is approved and I can
enter the country,
When can I return to the Mountains of Tang[37]
with a full load?
From ancient times, those who venture out
usually become worthless.
How many people ever return from battles?

35

Leaving behind my writing brush and
removing my sword, I came to America.
Who was to know two streams of tears would
flow upon arriving here?
If there comes a day when I will have
attained my ambition and become
successful,
I will certainly behead the barbarians and
spare not a single blade of grass.

34

爲乜來由要坐監？
祇緣國弱與家貧。
椿萱[1]倚門無消息，
妻兒擁被歎孤單。
縱然批准能上埠，
何日滿載返唐山？
自古出門多變賤。
從來征戰幾人還？

[1] 舊金山週報作“楦”

35

留筆除劍到美洲，
誰知到此淚雙流？
倘若得志成功日，
定斬胡人草不留。

38

Being idle in the wooden building, I opened
a window.
The morning breeze and bright moon lingered
together.
I reminisce the native village far away, cut off
by clouds and mountains.
On the little island the wailing of cold, wild
geese can be faintly heard.
The hero who has lost his way can talk
meaninglessly of the sword.
The poet at the end of the road can only
ascend a tower.
One should know that when the country is
weak, the people's spirit dies.
Why else do we come to this place to be
imprisoned?

39

Twice I have passed through the blue ocean,
experienced the wind and dust of journey.
Confinement in the wooden building has
pained me doubly.
With a weak country, we must all join
together in urgent effort.
It depends on all of us together to roll back
the wild wave.[45]

[45] Quotation from an essay by Han Yu (768 - 824 A.D.), a scholar and official during the Tang dynasty (618 - 907 A.D.). "To return the violent wave that had fallen," i.e., to make an effort to restore declined fortunes.

38

木屋閒來把窗開，
曉風明月共徘徊。
故鄉遠憶雲山斷，
小島微聞寒雁哀。
失路英雄空說劍，
窮途騷士且登台。
應知國弱人心死，
何事囚困此處來？

39

兩經滄海歷風塵，
木屋羈留倍痛深。
國弱亟[1]當齊努力，
狂瀾待挽仗同羣。

1 余本作"極"

42

The dragon out of water is humiliated by ants;
The fierce tiger who is caged is baited by a child.
As long as I am imprisoned, how can I dare strive for supremacy?
An advantageous position for revenge will surely come one day.

43

I left the village well behind me, bade farewell to my father and mother.
Now I gaze at distant clouds and mountains, tears forming like pearls.
The wandering son longed to be wealthy like Taozhu.[51]
Who would have known I would be imprisoned on Island?[52]
I beat my breast when I think of China and cry bitterly like Ruan Ji.[53]
Our country's wealth is being drained by foreigners, causing us to suffer national humiliations.
My fellow countrymen, have foresight, plan to be resolute,
And vow to conquer the U.S. and avenge previous wrongs!

44

If the land of the Flowery Flag[54] is occupied by us in turn,
The wooden building will be left for the angel's revenge.

[51] See note 12.

[52] See note 2.

[53] See note 31.

[54] See note 9.

42

蛟龍失水螻蟻欺，
猛虎遭囚小兒戲。
被困安敢與爭雄，
得勢復仇定有期。

43

拋離鄉井別椿萱，
遠盼雲山淚盈珠。
遊子志欲陶朱富，
誰知被圄埃崙間？
椎[1]膺中華囊阮籍，
利權外溢國恥兼。
同胞知機圖奮志，
誓奪美國報前仇。

[1] 原作“撫”

44

花旗旗其轉吾人佔[1]據，
木樓樓留與天使還仇。

[1] 原作“占”

50

It is indeed pitiable the harsh treatment of
our fellow countrymen.
The doctor extracting blood caused us the
greatest anguish.
Our stomachs are full of grievances, but to
whom can we tell them?
We can but pace to and fro, scratch our
heads, and question the blue sky.

51

I hastened here for the sake of my stomach
and landed promptly in jail.
Imprisoned, I am melancholy; even when I
eat, my heart is troubled.
They treat us Chinese badly and feed us
yellowed greens.[67]
My weak physique cannot take it; I am truly
miserable.

[67] Salted cabbage.

52

The barbarian issued orders to change rooms.
Running up and down, my breath grew short.
It was like warfare, when people's minds are
bewildered.
The scene resembled a stampede set off by
beacon smoke.[68]

[68] In ancient China, towers with firewood were erected at strategic points along the frontier. When an invasion occurred, a fire was lit and people seeing the smoke would recognize that a state of war existed.

50

刻薄同胞實可憐
醫生刺血最心酸
寃情滿腹憑誰訴
徘徊搔首問蒼天

51

爲口奔馳馳到監
困愁愁食亦心煩
薄待華人黃菜餐
弱質難當實爲難

52

蠻夷發令把房遷
上下奔馳氣絶然
恰似干戈人心亂
聲勢猶如走烽烟

55

Shocking news, truly sad, reached my ears.
We mourn you. When will they wrap your corpse for return?
You cannot close your eyes.
Whom are you depending on to voice your complaints?
If you had foresight, you should have regretted coming here.
Now you will be forever sad and forever resentful.
Thinking of the village, one can only futilely face the Terrace for Gazing Homeward.[72]
Before you could fulfill your ambition, you were buried beneath clay and earth.
I know that even death could not destroy your ambition.

[72] During the political turmoil in China at the end of the Western Jin dynasty (265 - 316 A.D.), two princesses fled to a distant region for safety and ended up marrying commoners in a village. They were often unhappy and longed for their old homes. Their fellow villagers then built a terrace which they could ascend to gaze in the direction of their home.

56

The young children do not yet know worry.
Arriving at the Golden Mountain,[73] they were imprisoned in the wooden building.
Not understanding the sad and miserable situation before their eyes,
They must play all day like calves.

[73] See note 40.

55

噩耗傳聞實可哀，
弔君何日裹尸回？
無能瞑目憑誰訴？
有識應知悔此來。
千古含愁千古恨，
思鄉空對望鄉臺。
未酬壯志埋坏土，
知爾雄心[1]死不灰[2]。

1 余本作“志”
2 余本作“恢”

56

少年子弟未知愁，
來到金山困木樓。
不悟[1]眼前悲苦境，
還要終日戲如牛。

1 粤海春秋作“晤”

1

People who enter this country
Come only because the family is poor.
Selling their fields and lands,
They wanted to come to the land of the Flowery Flag.[118]
The family all looks to you.
Who is to understand it is the most difficult of difficulties!

1 入此國之人：
因爲家貧起。
賣田又賣地：
欲往來花旗。
家人向住[1]你：
誰知難上難。

[1] 舊金山週報作"治"

2

Living at home, there were no prospects for advancement.
The situation forced one to go to another country.
Separated from the clan, a thousand miles away,
Apart from the ancestors, we are no longer close to one another.

2 居家無步進：
他邦勢逼趁。
離宗千里遠：
別祖不相近。

3

It was four days before the Chongyang Festival[119]
When I transferred to a ship in Hong Kong.
Everybody is still here.
Our feet have been bound here for almost half an autumn.

Written by one going to Mexico

3 重陽少四日：
香港付輪舟。
大家仍在此：
繫足將半秋。

往墨僑題

4

My parents are old; my family is poor.
Cold weather comes; hot weather goes.
Heartless white devils,
Sadness and anger fill my heart.

4 親老家貧：
寒來暑往。
無情白鬼：
悲憤塡膺。

5

Abandoning wife and child, I crossed an entire ocean.
I do not know how much wind and frost I've
weathered; it was because my family was poor
that I searched for white jade.[120]
Bidding farewell to relatives and friends, I drifted
10,000 *li*.[121] It is difficult to keep track of all the
rain and snow I've endured; it is all due to a
harsh purse with a reverence for copper coins.

5

拋妻子，重洋歷盡，不知受幾多風霜，
祇爲家貧求白璧：
別親朋，萬里飄流，難計捱一切雨雪，
都緣囊澀重青蚨。

6

Flocks of fellow villagers do not refrain from
spending thousands of gold pieces to get
to America.
Several hundred compatriots invested huge sums but
are now imprisoned on Island.[122]

6

梓里成羣，千金不惜，圖走美：
同胞數百，巨資投擲，困埃崙。

7

The five-colored flag of China flies all over the globe;[123]
the nations under heaven all lose heart.[124]
Ten-thousand armies punish the foreign lands; the
states of Europe all tremble with fear.

7

五旗飄寰球，天下諸邦皆喪胆：
萬軍誅異蜮[1]，歐洲各國盡寒心。

1 原作"域"

8

Today, we brothers are imprisoned in a jail; it is only
because of our ancestral land.
If our countrymen want freedom in the future, then they
must make an effort.

8

今日兄弟困牢籠，祇爲祖國：
他日同胞欲自由，務須努力。

45

A thousand sorrows and a hatred ten-thousand-fold burns between my brows.
Hoping to step ashore the American continent is the most difficult of difficulties.
The barbarians imprison me in this place.
Even a martyr or a hero would change countenance.

46

I clasped hands in parting with my brothers and classmates.
Because of the mouth,[159] I hastened to cross the American ocean.
How was I to know that the western barbarians had lost their hearts and reason?
With a hundred kinds of oppressive laws, they mistreat us Chinese.[160]
It is still not enough after being interrogated and investigated several times;
We also have to have our chests examined while naked.
Our countrymen suffer this treatment
All because our country's power cannot yet expand.
If there comes a day when China will be united,
I will surely cut out the heart and bowels of the western barbarian.

47

Since my imprisonment here, the moon has once again waxed full.
I still do not know when I will be interrogated.
Family poverty forced me to come and endure hardships.
It is difficult to pour out all the anger and grief in my heart.
If I could land after only one interrogation,
It would be a slight mitigation of the barbarian's hundred oppressions.
If I could fulfill my life-long wish,
Even a little suffering would not matter.

45 千愁萬恨燃眉間：
望登美洲難上難。
番奴把我囚困此：
列士英雄亦失顏。

46 握別兄弟與同窗：
爲口奔馳涉美洋。
豈知西奴心理喪：
百般苛例虐我唐。
數次審查猶未了，
還須裸體驗胸膛。
我們同胞遭至此，
皆因國勢未能張。
倘得中華一統日，
定割西奴心與腸。

47 此間囚困月重圓：
審問何時尚未知。
家窮逼我來受苦：
難盡心中憤與悲。
若得一審能上埠：
稍減蛮夷百般欺。
倘能遂我平生願：
雖受苦楚亦唔拘。

48

I bowed farewell to my close friends and went abroad.
How was I to know the barbarians would imprison me?
From antiquity, users of brute force have had no sense of justice.
Are there any clever schemes to escape this prison?
If I am deported back to China one day,
Then several months' efforts will have been thrown into the water.
What a pity that Feng Tang aged so easily.[161]
Why was it most difficult for Li Guang to win honors?[162]

48 揖別知己出外洋：
豈知胡虜困我身？
自古强權無公理：
有何妙策出牢籠。
一旦撥回歸國去：
數月工程付水中。
可惜馮唐[1]容易老：
何其李廣最難封？

1 余本作"庚"

49

When I began reflecting, I became sad and composed a poem.
It was because my family was poor that I left for the country of the Flowery Flag.[163]
I only hoped that when I arrived it would be easy to go ashore.
Who was to know the barbarians would change the regulations?
They stab the ear to test the blood and in addition they examine the excrement.[164]
If there is even a shadow of hookworms, one must be transferred to undergo a cure.
They took several dozen foreign dollars.[165]
Imprisoned in the hospital, I was miserable with grief and sorrow.
I do not know when I will be cured.
If one day I can escape and rise to my aspirations.
I will leave this place for once and for all and not be dependent on her,
To avoid humiliation and oppression by the devils.
My fellow villagers seeing this should take heed and remember,
I write my wild words to let those after me know.

49 想起愁來題首詩。
因爲家窮走花旗。
只望來到登岸易：
誰知番奴轉例規？
刺耳驗血兼驗屎：
影有勾蟲須調治。
取得洋蚨數十餘：
困在醫房苦愁悲。
未知何日得痊愈。
若得脫身奮志日，
一排[1]走清唔向倚，
免至凌辱受鬼欺。
梓里一看宜謹記：
寫我狂言留後知。

1 余本作"派"