

Chinese Wall Poem (from Angel Island)

<p>42.                  壁牆題詠萬千千，                  盡皆怨語及愁言。                  若卸此牢升騰日，                  要憶當年有個編。                  日用所需宜省儉，                  無為奢侈誤青年。                  幸我同胞牢緊念，                  得些微利早回旋。                   香山題</p>	<p><i>There are tens of thousands of poems on these walls                  They are all cries of suffering and sadness                  The day I am rid of this prison and become successful                  I must remember that this chapter once existed                  I must be frugal in my daily needs                  Needless extravagance usually leads to ruin                  All my compatriots should remember China                  Once you have made some small gains,                  you should return home early.</i></p>
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Directions:

1. **Annotate:** As you listen to the above poem read aloud, mark up the text with a pencil. Use circles, lines, stars (or any other marking system) to note important or striking words, related ideas, or confusing words or lines. Circle important or confusing words.
2. **Track initial impressions:**
  - a. What do you know about the **speaker** of the poem?
  - b. What **situation** is being described?
  - c. Who is the **audience** for this poem?
  - d. How would you characterize the **tone** of the poem?
3. **Examine language:** What patterns can you find in the words in the poem? List a few groups of two or more words that seem to go together in some way (related to the content of the poem) and label your groups. One example has been done for you

Words Related to Homeland			
China			
home			
compatriots			

4. Revisit initial impressions: Now that you've had a chance to discuss the poem with others and look more closely at its language, go back to your initial notes about speaker, situation, audience, and tone and add to or revise your ideas. Some extra space is provided here if needed.
  
5. Think about the "so what": What does examining this poem help you to understand about (a) who came to the United States at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, (b) why they came, and (c) what their experience was in doing so?