

TEOW LIM GOH

Chinese Camp

—*Donner Pass, California, December 1866*

Winter has fallen on us again.
I crawl into my shed in the snow
and curl under my blankets in pain.

All day I shovel as the winds blow.
At night I pray the drifts will not crack
and collapse, carrying me as they mow

down the mountain and breaking my back.
I left a wife and two boys to come
to America, where I lay track,

blast rock, and try not to succumb
to the ghosts that visit me at night.
Some days I have to make myself numb

and blunt my vision of greater heights.
And I have lost the spirit to fight.