

Key:D The Last Chinaman ©2018 Linda Allen

D

A

Bachelor buttons and chives mark the spot

E

D

A

Where the old lighthouse stood, near the home of Ah Fat

D

A

We knew he was there, he was alright,

E

D

As long as he stayed out of sight

Some of us knew how he'd come 'cross the Bay

To hide from the mobs chasing Chinese away

From the cannery where he had worked many years

A victim of hatred and fear

E

D

A

Then came the day on the beach near his home

E

D

A

Where the old man collected bamboo, shell and bone

D

A

He was dragging a hopelessly tangled up trove

E

A

Then like a phoenix, it rose

D

A

It was a most magnificent sight

D

Bamboo and red paper in the sparkling light

G

It swayed and it swerved to the heavenly heights

A

D

Old Charley's curious kite

Years later, he opened a restaurant in Blaine
He learned English, Charley was his Western name
He cut off his que and wore Western-style clothes
A lonely life, one would suppose

Old Charley died in 1915
I think of him there, building his dream
A kite made from memories and scraps from the Bay
To fly for friends driven away

CHORUS

This song and the next were written in 2018 for the “Opening Doors: From Prejudice to Inclusion” project. These songs reflect so much of the history of exclusion in Bellingham: Expulsions of Chinese, Sikhs, Japanese, Native-Americans and African-Americans. A cross burned at a migrant camp. The manager of a gay bar beaten up three times. Hate crimes still erupt all too frequently in our town.