When Ming arrives in San Francisco after the long boat journey from China, his older brothers waste no time warning him: Chinese should not go outside Chinatown. But Ming risks doing just that, and when he meets Patrick, he knows the young Irish boy has a kind heart, and begins a remarkable friendship that brings their two very different communities together. Illustrated in Chris Soentpiet’s richly detailed watercolor paintings, this long-awaited follow-up to the award-winning Coolies helps to tell the precious, rare story of the first Chinese immigrants and their pursuit of the American Dream.

My Personal Review:
The main character in this book is a young Chinese immigrant who comes to San Francisco to help his (slightly) older brothers. Like many immigrants, they live and stay in an isolated community- and like many immigrants, they have good reason to be afraid of those on the outside. However, the young boy yearns for companionship of people his own age, and soon makes a friend of a young Irish immigrant. The two form an instant friendship, and through that the boy is able to save his family's store and eventually reunite his brothers.

In adult American history, much stress is put on the competition for resources and the animosity, resentment and violence that immigrant groups suffered as a result- particularly the very unprotected Chinese. All of that is implied in the older brothers warning that the boy should stay with his own kind. However, it bears repeating, particularly in a childrens story, that cooperation is far better for groups than tooth-baring competition. We can only hope that these two continued their friendship as they grew older and found other ways of bringing such cooperation to both of their communities.