

## A Quiet Pier Where Old Boats Sway in Slow, Uneven Rhythms

The pier looks almost half-asleep when I step onto it. Wood planks stretch out in a long line, rough under my shoes and slightly warped from years of sun and storms. A soft creak rises from somewhere beneath me, the kind that blends into the slow push of water against the posts. The sound settles into the air like it belongs here.

Old boats rest along both sides, drifting in motions that never match each other. One leans forward, another shifts back, and the ropes tighten and loosen in small breaths. Paint flakes in curled edges, revealing layers that hint at past colors and past owners. When a ripple catches the hull of the nearest boat, its reflection bends into shaky shapes that last only a moment.

A salty taste lingers on my lips. The breeze moves across the pier in light strokes, carrying hints of seaweed and old nets drying somewhere farther down the harbor. Sunlight slips between the gaps in the planks and creates thin, shifting stripes on the water below. Those stripes break apart whenever the tide shifts, almost like the light has a mind of its own.

A single gull lands a few feet away and studies the water. It ruffles its wings once, then settles into stillness with the kind of patience only birds seem to have. Another gull calls out from somewhere near a buoy, and the sound stretches across the harbor in a long echo. The pier feels even quieter after that call fades.

I sit near the edge with my legs hanging over the water. The wood feels warm where the sun hits it, and the grain presses into my palms in tiny ridges. A loose rope taps against a metal hook in an uneven rhythm that reminds me of someone knocking lightly on a door. The tapping gives the moment a slow, steady beat.

Evening approaches without making a big entrance. The light shifts to deeper colors, and the boats drift in wider arcs as the tide pulls them along. The air cools in gentle steps, and each breath feels easier than the last. Something about the whole scene makes time feel slower, almost stretched.

This pier always feels honest. Nothing tries to impress you. The water moves, the boats sway, the wind carries whatever scent it wants. Sitting here brings a sense of calm that follows me long after I leave the edge of the planks.