
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Amy Uyematsu: Three Poems

Amy Uyematsu · Saturday, July 18th, 2020

Heartroot

lately my eye stays
close to the ground

selecting the low, wide girth
of this ancient tree -

how long it has taken me
to finally savor

its gnarled sex,
the hard curve of roots

pushed up from the undergrowth,
past dirt and rock,

to break through the surface
as the heartroot opens -

stretching so far
from its seeded place

that the ground gives way
to the tree's full weight -

its bared, sinuous bark
knotting to earth's dark skin.

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Viral Briefs for the Farce of July, 2020

Covid-19 reminder -
racism, our murderous viral tradition.

Peaceful crowd gassed
so a criminal can pose,
Bible in hand.

What is freedom?
To be American & black
& still not know.

Reverend Sharpton's reminder -
400 years of America's knee
on black necks.

Civil War aftermath -
Confederate flags, torches, white hoods
never put away.

A dangerous disease
can not stop we millions -
chanting "George Floyd".

Meanwhile Trump's wall -
children still locked in jails,
families denied asylum.

Kung-flu mentality
a convenient excuse to attack
our Asian Americans.

Mt. Rushmore monuments -
all four presidents' shameful treatment
of first nations people.

Even these lies
in our "Declaration of Independence" -
"merciless Indian savages"

Yes, white "justice"
was never meant "for all" -
an empty pledge.

Gotta keep marching -
takin' it to the streets.

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LA Riots, Circa 1871

Invisible history for these
all too visible Chinese
17 to 20 immigrants hung
in 3 downtown locations

Wong Chin ran a store
Ah Long made cigars
Several cooks, including
Tong Won, also a musician

One victim discovered
without his trousers
and his finger missing
for its diamond ring

The mob of five hundred
includes women and children
of the ten who stood trial
not one sent to jail

A mass lynching forgotten
too minor to mention
in end-of-year recaps
no sign of these brutal facts

By 1876 the front page of the *Herald*
features the Anti-Coolie Club charter
a Who's Who of prominent citizens
membership a mere fifty cents

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