

# 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.

\*

## 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.

\*

## 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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