Amy Uyematsu: Three Quick Studies of Math Art [1]

March 28, 2016   Math Poetry [2]

i

My Northern Lights

—after a digital print of electrons, "Transport VI," by Eric J. Heller

Ethereal paths of electrons course my body's terrain. Brilliant
gossamers streaming through microscopic landscapes of canyons and cliffs,
their not so random swirl, thunder and flow, bursts of purple and arctic blue kindling
my interior sky so an eye, a tongue, a thigh can do what they must do. Too many
to count, fierce legions of travelers, wave upon wave, explosions of white
and crimson, sparkling beacons just under my skin.

ii

Even a Moon Crater Bears His Name

—after Reza Sarhangi and Robert Fathauer's "Buzjani's Heptagon"

No one's heard of Persian mathematician Buzjani, but we all know seven-pointed
stars. Some say, symbols of perfection and love. Over a thousand years ago,
he constructed a regular heptagon, seven equal sides and angles, with only a ruler
and compass. Revolutionary for his time. Buzjani worked in Baghdad's House
of Wisdom. We modern Westerns only see Baghdad as a blur of 9/11, Saddam, Bush,
roadside bombs, Obama, oil, ISIS, war without end. No House of Wisdom
in the world we've built, not one on our seven continents.
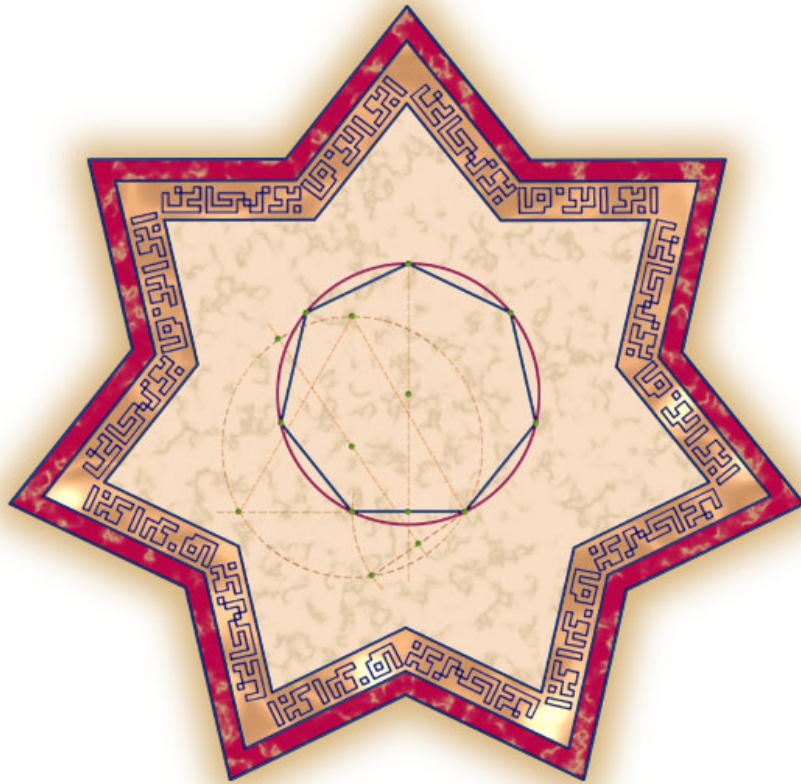
iii

Labyrinth

—after Robert Bosch's black-and-white "Knot?"

Have you heard the one about a traveling salesman who has to go to 5,000 cities?
Leave it to math whizzes to obsess about the shortest route. And guys like Bosch—
a little naughty perhaps—who answer the riddle by creating an elaborate
black cord shaped like a Celtic knot. But wait, is he tricking us? Now
the cord pops out from a continuous white line, zigging this way and that, tiny
steps of a drunken inchworm. How to move inside and out, black and white
so inextricably bound? Can any of us truly navigate this tangled
wonder of darkness and light?

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o),
m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-
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Publishing Information

- These poems are a response to three of the digital prints featured in <u>"Why the History of Maths Is Also the History of Art"</u> [3] by Lynn Gamwell, *Guardian*, December 2, 2015.

Art Information

- <u>"Buzjani's Heptagon"</u> [4] © Reza Sarhangi and Robert Fathauer; used by permission.
- <u>"Knot?"</u> [5] © Robert Bosch; used by permission.

Amy Uyematsu is a sansei poet and teacher from Los Angeles. She has four published collections: *The Yellow Door* (Red Hen Press, 2015); *Stone Bow Prayer* (Copper Canyon Press, 2005); *Nights of Fire, Nights of Rain* (Story Line Press, 1998); and *30 Miles from J-Town* (Story Line Press, 1992).

Amy was also co-editor of the widely used anthology *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (UCLA, 1971). Recently retired, she was a Los Angeles Unified Schools high school math teacher for 32 years.

She will read the three poems here and others at TW's panel "Wild Equations: A Math Poetry Reading" [6] for the AWP 2016 conference in Los Angeles.

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