

A Guide to Fundy Royal

Dashingly, the Bay of Fundy mimics *Majesty*—Shakespeare *Royalty*:
Its tides rise like kings—dramatic, but—like sad victims of *Disloyalty*,
Fall—twice per day, doubling Aristotelian poetic *Unity*—
For four-storey-high waves collapse, vanish, go; so mud shows impunity,
Twice per day clasping keels and prows that once knew an element disdainful
Of earth, as buoyant as monarchs (who know only *Policy* as painful).
But *Fundy Royal* is also royal because it originated
In the union of counties Queens and Kings, New Brunswick, as legislated
In 1914. This princely *histoire* and glistening geography—
Liquid in places, or liquid as gold, and sterling in photography—
Makes *Fundy Royal* “the crown jewel of southern New Brunswick,” and citizens
Are royals—from Quispamsis to Coverdale, and Sussex to St. Martins;
And that noun crowns *habitants* of Norton, Hampton, Kingston, Salisbury,
And Simonds, Riverview, Petitcodiac, Elgin, Alma: All quarry
Beauty—inch and centimeter, mile and kilometer.... Spy the Flowerpot
Rocks—those clay-tint cliffs and bits of mountain—eroded, corroded, by rot—
That look a combo of Stonehenge and Easter Island’s sea-facing, stone heads,
At Hopewell, on the Fundy coast, where a million shorebirds make sea-winds sleds—
Or beds (when not nesting). White-Rumped Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Red Knot,
And Sanderling can be ogled—binocular’d—in views never forgot—
Bonbon like Audubon. Next, tour Fundy National Park and waterfalls
That number 25, interspersed among fiddleheads (arboreal dulse),
Bogs, trout-lilies, black spruce, white birch, red maple, sugar maple, balsam fir—
And fauna: Eel, black bear, white-tailed deer, red squirrel, brown bat, blue heron, beaver,
And raccoon, moose, snowshoe hare, salmon, marten, fisher, coyote, skunk, shrew,

And cormorant. Wander through forest glen and traipse barefoot in moss or dew.

Jaunt to Sussex for the Atlantic Balloon Fiesta: Hot drafts uplift

A candy-coloured flock of inflated domes that, on azure zephyrs, drift—

Resembling upside-down, xmas-tree bulbs—lollipop zeppelins—rainbows

Gone lightbulb-shaped—or, rocketed off churches, onion-domes, inverted, close

To prismatic bubbles in tints, gaudy as baubles, bobbing on each breeze....

Or veer to Westmorland County's Agricultural Fair; there, jamborees

Of fiddle and banjo unfold, down near Petitcodiac, where 4-H

Allies *Head* to the A.T.V.-pull, lend *Hand* to “mutton bustin” (t'ain't *Kitsch*),

Show *Heart* at the lumberjack contests, and stand as *Healthy* as draft horses....

At Albert County's Fair, trick riding—horseback ballet *versus* g-forces—

Stages a galloping version of the midway's Ferris wheel. Hear rabbits

And roosters parliament the Critter Barn—sonorous as Orphic poets....

Get to St. Martins—in that province of “saints” (Stephen, Andrews, Léonard,

Quentin, George). Where vessels once saw launch, visitors view a picture postcard

Of pastel, florid-torrid, or neon-bright houses, flashy fishing boats,

And birdwatchers become spelunkers, resonant in caves where each voice floats....

From Harvey to Waterborough, Havelock to Waterford, *Fundy Royal*

Is English—and a tad French; and Caucasian—plus folks Aboriginal:

And wholly beautiful, which no citizen doubts (for seeing's believing),

And *Beauty's* eternal, when *Dreaming* inspires planting, building, achieving.

--George Elliott Clarke

7th Parliamentary Poet Laureate (2016-17)