

On Lac-Saint-Louis: The Flux and Flow

Along boulevard LaSalle, rue Lakeshore, chemin Senneville, boulevard Beaconsfield
And rue Saint-Anne, seldom must the frothy, *le fleuve Saint-Laurent* ever yield
In April to dams—that *Damnation*, so perfect to electrify Montréal,
Via an environment of massive amounts of water. Moulin de LaSalle
Overlooks, still, overcharging waves, the highway unwinding the river—
From the Lachine Canal—those locks, those pipes—so old they go on forever,
Or seem to, though they’re made of wood, surging into and through a Spanish-tiled
Building, beautiful, but used to cleanse sewage, near Pont-Mercier, ensiled
During the Oka Crisis. Recall here Ellen Gabriel, Mohawk artist
And spokeswoman: She was Honoré-Mercier, reborn as a feminist,
First Nations militant, seeing Oka as not only okay for cheese,
But as the *rapprochement* site for Lachine proles, *bourgeois* cottagers at ease
(At LaSalle), and persons Indigenous. That’s the dream—like bait-and-tackle
Coupled; or the Lachine Locks, picturesque, levelling off—fine—each channel—
As integrated as is St. Stephen’s Anglican Church that sits beside
Collège Sainte-Anne Convent, where the canal navigates rapids—the wild tide
Of the old, fur-trade hub. Spy the ducks in decontaminated water—
Where the canal congresses with the St. Lawrence—and beaver, muskrat, otter
Flourished nearby LaSalle City Hall’s cupola, and *voyageurs* commenced
Commerce-de-la-fourrure, lucrative, and built Norman dwellings, each well-fenced,
Each tin-roof sloping, perfect for settlers, and later war vets, who could golf

Two courses, or moor at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club, or take an ale to quaff—
With quail, at the Forest and Stream Club's Scottish interior, the railway-hotel
Design, the 1878 fireplace, the river sparkling bright as Hell.
Or they could plunge into 22, outdoor, communal pools, including
Canada's first Olympic-grade pool. Here George Gate and Malcolm Knox, brooding
On Olympic potential, saw Lac-Saint-Louis as aquatic—as lighthouse,
Canoe, raft, yacht, rowing club, swimming from Pointe-Claire to Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue;
else,
It was wasted. Came then Pointe-Claire Yacht Club and synchronized swimming, two new
Yacht clubs at Beaconsfield, the pleasures of life among waters grey, white, blue—
Not to mention ancient, tin-roofed houses recalling Normandy's vistas.
Consider Lac-Saint-Louis a constituency of wild, watery vistas—
Floods not uncommon, but not *insupportable*, if uncommon, because
Incorporated in blueprints (plans cognizant of Marguerite Bourgeoys,
Her church rebuilding—twice since 1608), noting how *Resilience* is fluid:
One must respect the risk of flood—despite glorious, April rapids, the mood
Of winds, the scent of fresh water. The West Island resembles Vermont towns:
They're cute—with child-painted fire-hydrants, riotous in colour, and summer clowns
Playing Shakespeare, maybe at Stewart Hall or Baie d'Urfé or Sainte-Anne's hospice salve,
Pleasing veterans, near the Field of Honour, home to War of 1812
Patriots. But they're also *portages*, never forget, where water waves, *très* real—
As at Christopher Plummer's home town, none other than sea-side Senneville.

Lac-Saint-Louis ain't geography, but watery history, mystery:

The springs of Genesis, waters of life, and well-springs of *Citizenry*.

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