

Surveying Winnipeg

I.

Wild wind city, pitiless with blizzards—
And black blues, never whited out, but wailed—
Authentic—like freight trains, those steel lizards
That, loco, veer Prairies, where settlers trailed.

Métis capital—backed with Fort Garry,
Saint-Boniface—where Louis Riel was jailed
Solely by his soul's work: To see, starry,
All First Nations flourish, none assailed.

Thus, Winnipeg's revolutionary:
The Golden Boy capping the parliament
Mirrors France's Bastille statuary.
(That 1919 Strike had *Commune* intent?)

Guess Who's a citizen of Winnipeg?
All fighters, who'll not, for civil rights beg.

II.

Wheat Board and Credit Union city, sweet
Hoard of gold grain and gold-heart socialites—
And socialists! Where forking rivers meet,
And mosquitoes torque to deliver bites

As hurtful as long bombs a Blue Bomber
Hurls, touching down as hard as Jets alight,
Slapping shots round goals. Not a bit calmer
Is ballet—where gravity's put to flight—

Royally, of course. Where bison congregate,
No hunter's hatred has em in his sights!
Where poets and folk singers legislate,
A museum consecrates Human Rights.

Winnipeg is citizens, Indigenous
And not, but striving all to live *Justice!*

--George Elliott Clarke
7th Parliamentary Poet Laureate (2016-17)

