

## **The Wild Life; or, An Intro to Canadian Philosophy**

*Inspired by the Rampaging Moose of Buttonville*

A moose is on the loose!  
A bull moose, maybe craving a mate,  
is tearing across the Tarmac  
of Buttonville (ON) Airport

(as if he is the horse streaking toward  
Alex Colville's painted locomotive,  
or as if he's a de-winged griffin),  
and tons of jet planes, jet fuel sloshing about,

gotta swerve to dodge the gangway moose--  
a half a ton of flesh, antlers jousting  
with shadows of cellphone antennae,  
as he now barges over some anti-terrorist fence,

And stampedes madcap cross a freeway:  
Only free for the moose (never motorists),  
as he dashes through parking-lots,  
scaring drivers as much as cop cars do

when they come up on a speeding bumper;  
for the moose is preternaturally wild,  
untamed, quite civilized in the woods,  
but insurgent amid neon and concrete,

and never seeking to card us, question us,  
we who are buckled into our trajectories,  
our debits, our debts, our duties, our routines,  
our staying within the lines

chalked and inked for us,  
as if we were still kids in Kindergarten,  
learning to crayon unerringly,  
following the kindly dictatorship

that tells us even how to scribble!  
But the moose is already free-ranging,  
occupying the suburbs,  
as much as they infringe on wilderness,

or the credit card companies  
infringe on our lives, surveilling us,  
ensuring that we never make a purchase  
that a thousand other companies never hear about....

So, I like this moose, his glory  
in gamboling and rambling,  
and his interfering  
with our interference in his habitat;

so that the TV news anchors  
take advantage of the chance to ignore satanic policies  
and sleazy presidents,  
and wonder, what would it be like

to burst free of the TV,  
to exit--escape--from the studio,  
and run, naked, across Tarmac and asphalt,  
to seek true love--

a mate--  
and checkmate every shackle, every prison?  
O Spirit of Liberty, let that moose stay free,  
slip away, liberated, chasing the North Star....

-- **George Elliott Clarke**  
**Parliamentary Poet Laureate (2016-17)**