

## ***On Calling for an Inquiry into Racism; Re: The Senate***

Brethren and sistren, most Honourable  
Senators, I also treasure this, our  
Citadel of Law, this venerable  
Body, the people's august arbiter

Of the House of Commons' legislation—  
To ensure "Good Government" is our wont,  
That our votes uphold regions and nation,  
That *Injustice*, this house, must never haunt.

Thus, I stand—as is my prerogative—  
To call on my colleagues to determine  
The extent to which this legislative  
Manse views "Negrophobia" as a given:

I refer to anti-black racism.  
I know that the terminology's ugly;  
But that raw word escapes *Escapism*—  
Our Canuck tendency to smile smugly

When being tasked to resolve—to address—  
Uncivil *Ugliness*. But our duty  
Is to pursue the *Truth*, *not* to suppress:  
There's no other way to exalt *Beauty*,

No better way to end an *Injustice*,  
No finer way to encourage true *Peace*,  
Than to research and reason out, advise  
And query, until we can cease

Because we have the *Truth*. Honourable  
Senators, as a social work professor—  
As a black woman—intolerable  
Is it for me to know that we're lesser

Than we need be, to tolerate anti-  
Black racism on these premises—  
The legacy of *Slavery*—slanty,

Crooked *Economics*, prejudices,

Borne out of—and bearing—torturous pains.

An Inquiry into Systematic

Racism, within The Senate, breaks chains,

Ends bars so stubbornly automatic.

I call upon The Senate to begin

The work of *Self-Emancipation*, of

Inquiring after *Virtue*, to end *Sin*,

So *Diversity* truly sounds like *Love*.

--George Elliott Clarke

7th Parliamentary Poet Laureate (2016-17)