

## Big Up for Little Burgundy

Deep Soul Montreal? That's Little Burgundy--  
Sunday Gospel and Solomon Gundy--  
Where saints are, like devils, alert to *Stn*,  
What hurts a priest but helps a musician....

Who be these *citoyens*? Why need you ask?  
Their faces--too famous--pooh-pooh a mask;  
Their deeds--too dazzling--can't be hid from sight--  
Little Burgundy's Montreal at its height.

Hear that train porter's son--first name, Oscar--  
He come from the hood and he gone real far.  
His keyboard's spiky, spunky, sporty fun:  
Sprightly's the key of snazzy Peterson.

Bobby White was the knight of *Persuasion*;  
Dreamt up the West End Association--  
To make athletes scholars, and schools of gyms:  
His basketball courts were symposiums.

From Union United Church to Cafe'  
Michel, Oliver Jones was never blase',  
Never okay: He had to be stellar--  
Celestial chevalier--in each cellar

Where jazz dazzles. After all, he was taught  
By Daisy Sweeney Peterson, sure thought  
By all a genius--just like her brother,  
And those hoofers where the night-clubs gather.

Recall Rufus Rockhead, his Paradise  
Of feathered show-girls, rum *et* coke on ice--  
With curry chicken and next rice *et* peas,  
or the Coloured Women's Club's hymns and teas.

Little Burgundy be bluesy *Sud-Ouest*,  
*Montre'al--La Petite-Bourgogne* (en francais),  
Where Micha'elle Jean could think, "Marcus Garvey  
Brought home--to Hochelaga--my Haiti,

Via the Negro Community Centre;  
Here, Tyrone Benskin won votes to enter  
Parliament, and represent Jean-Le Ber.  
Here is History that all souls must hear!"

Little Burgundy is Montreal's soul--  
From Griffintown to the Lachine Canal;

Pass the C.N.R. and C.P.R. tracks,  
Its smart peoples strut, startling Stats Can facts.

**--George Elliott Clarke**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Poet Laureate**