

## *Sonnets for the Portuguese*

### I.

A Mex-Can-Ukrainian in accent,  
Privileged and proud I feel now to represent  
The gardens and gables of Davenport,  
Which may also be dubbed—I muse in sport—  
“Davenportugal,” because Portuguese—  
A Romance tongue that out-sweet-talks Dante’s  
(At least in Davenport)—outnumbers all  
Others; for immigrants *ex-Portugal*  
Voyaged to Toronto—17,000  
In the 1950s alone, plus-and—  
Multiple thousands since, to find *Freedom*  
And work, to build families and to dream,  
And clustered down Toronto’s St. Clair mall;  
Thus, Ontario’s capital hosts “Little Portugal.”

### II.

Portuguese transported to Canada  
To build up *Wealth via* the brouhaha  
Of *Construction*—painting and bricklaying,  
Sawing, hammering, nailing, pipe-laying,  
Or firing tiles, landscaping, roofing homes,

Reinventing gardens as floral poems,  
Or laboring long in dour factories  
To prosper Gold-blessed, precious families.  
Their work-ethic—of the Azores, also  
Madeira—profited all Toronto,  
Whose skyline and subway reflect this deft  
Aesthetic that wrests *Art* of simple *Craft*.  
That's the pride of each *Casa*—this achievement—  
*Culture* gone concrete—family tree roots trenched in cement.

### III.

The Portuguese of Davenport love *Sport*  
Because they value sweat, team work—on court  
And off—and community. They gather  
In cafés and ogle soccer—father  
And son, wife and daughter, to cheer F.C.  
Porto, Benfica, the game's beauty,  
And Sporting Clube de Portugal, and cheer  
Madeira's Ronaldo, Pauleta—dear  
To the Azores, while tabling potatoes  
And rice, wines as green as pistachios,  
Churrasqueira chicken, hot-sauce-slathered,  
Or briny seafood that's ocean-gathered.  
Such *Culture*—cuisine and *Casa*—sets free

Each Portuguese to vivify and share *Identity*.

#### IV.

There's much to share! Consider Shawn Mendes,

Keshia Chanté, Danny Fernandes,

Nelly Furtado, and Brian Melo,

Shawn Desman, and Justin Azevedo,

Drew Doughty, and Megan Benevides,

Anthony Gomez, and John Tavares,

*Et cetera: Excellence* is th'outcome.

The Portuguese Pioneers Museum

And the First Portuguese Canadian

Cultural Centre, prize each citizen,

Of Lusophone heritage, which is right.

I deem it my duty now to invite

Honoured Parliamentarians to name

June 10<sup>th</sup> the day, June the month, our Portuguese win acclaim.

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