I—Background Paper

1) Educate the electorate.

2) *Illiteracy rots Democracy.*

3) Equality? Fine schools, fine teachers, in *every* district.

4) The *Arsenal of Reason?* The Library.

5) Good governors cite *History;* quote *Scripture;* Recite *Poetry.*

6) Do not plague the people by shouting opinions. Do not demonize opponents. Do not mislead or confuse. *Produce Facts.*

7) *Honesty is State Treasure.*

8) A governor’s speech must be as clear as water.

9) *Clarity is a branch of Charity.*

10) To be decisive, First be incisive.

11) *Judgment* must be as cool as steel, as sharp as steel.

12) To convince is better than to conquer.

13) *Complaint is Revelation.*

14) *News* perpetually startles, Yet its truths are ancient: To the *Perceptive.*

15) Do not pander; also, do not puff up superiors.

16) *Flattery is bribery;* it is slush.

17) *Excuses enshrine Cowardice.*

18) Remember: Great *Thought* leaps upward—To try to discern *Divinity.*

II—On Lawmaking

1) Political success? A silver tongue and a heart of gold.

2) Elected? Serve the people.

3) *Sobriety, Punctiliousness, Generosity, and Intelligence:* These qualities demand allegiance.

4) *Ethics is a scythe,* Separating the correct from the corrupt.

5) Even the bad governor envies good policies.

6) The heedless governor is soon headless.

7) Good laws set themselves good examples.

8) *Extremism* is good only for thermometers.

9) *Excess breeds Dysfunction.*

10) *Egoism is Inefficiency.*

11) *Envy fosters conspiracies.*

12) Err in one law? Correct it in the next.

13) The law suit never fits.

14) First, comprehend *Justice;* Then, apprehend criminals.

15) Dust dwells and swells—When the broom is stayed.

16) Police secrecy equals *Sedition.*

17) Citizens must be activists; Lest they be oppressed.

18) Plant vineyards, not prisons. Plant vineyards; cart home the city wine.
III—On Economy

1) The Treasury is for the citizens’ convenience.

2) Sacrosanct is Renminbi.

3) Capital flows; Labour pools.

4) Greatness? Public works, public art.

5) Spend: Do not let potholes become sinkholes.

6) Beauty demands Maintenance.


8) Beauty rouses Diversity. (Light does not discriminate.)

9) Nurture Infrastructure, Agriculture, Manufacture, Architecture, Arts & Culture—To prosper.

10) Create, profit; save, invest; Create, profit; save, invest.

11) To secure heaven, help the lowly.

12) Benevolence staves off Violence.

13) Plutocracy breeds black bread, black flags, and black batons.

14) Arms dig Deficits.

15) Spending should be like planting, Never like eating.

16) Taxation should be transfusion, Not vampirism.

17) Squander revenues, spark revolts.

18) Paltry is that government careless of Poetry.

IV—On Beauty

1) Youth creates; Age preserves.

2) Revere children; respect elders.

4) Sun is balm; rain is ointment.

5) Light allows no doubt.

6) Good Style wins popularity; Good Deeds inspire reverence.

7) Be a Sphinx to peers and Caesar to adversaries.

8) Beauty escapes Chastisement.

9) Good wine precedes good Poetry. Good wine succeeds good Poetry.

* By George Elliott Clarke, Poet Laureate of Toronto (2012-15).

Note: The poem riffs on Confucius (via Pound), Machiavelli, Sun Tzu, several T’ang Dynasty and Song Dynasty poets.