

Lillian Allen's *Toronto/Tkaronto* – pOetic

gEsture

TORONTO POEMS

This diverse alive in verse city
where trees grow around cement
Our self in concrete
Our feet against concrete
As we go about our ways
Percussion play echo, echoing
learning to love what we have made
softening between brick and cement
a built-up world, steeples and stairs
glass mirrors
sparing for social change. ~CAN YOU SPARE A LITTLE SOCIAL CHANGE,
PLEASE???

New voices roasted enwrapped in ice
My mother walked from the plane into a fridge
That is Toronto in winter
“The best of times” she says “and the coldest of times”
Incubating a whirl of creativity
And visionary relativities
Ideas swirl, cultural voices unfurl
Making us larger than we are becoming

Toronto in Excelsis!

For those who lived strident
and have gone before
Let their names not be forgotten
but be called who they truly are
Lovers of Justice, standing for peace, not war.

And to all the battles fought
Freedom sought on the grounds of Queen's Park
and Nathan Phillips Square, City Hall
or the roar of communities at Young & Bloor
'down with inequality, injustice, brutality'

International Women's Day parade, Caribana jump up
You have made our City strong
A republic of possibilities
A home to belong

We are trees standing in the water
A gathering of tribes
An abundance of hope
A destiny and a destination
from which a future must be forged
We were community before Simcoe
We are Hurons, and visitors and traders
Adventurers and underground railroaders
We are the Iroquois's promise of unity

And homelessness is us
Our little scar
That part split-off
Lost, hiding, frightened, too tired to fight
Or resolved too soon
Needing a way back to **"the promise"**

Oh yes, we are the "superman" Joe Schuster penned to paper

Fiber wave optics, print, radio
and Television originators

An experiment splashed by the waves of Lake Ontario
prancing for a great makeover
The postmodern too slow a nation
It was no slam-dunk from Hubbard to Zanana Akande

We are our parklands, winding creeks, nature preserves
We are free public spaces, ravines of lush graces
protected wetlands
We are the Humber and the Don

“fishing weir”

We are a thousand miles from our longings
Pinning dreams on over twenty thousand street corners
With many bridges yet to cross over
We are the beat, a city in heat
Alive, diverse and strutting verse

We are our peoples’ toil in this land
Our dreams alive in this land
A three-million-sided heart, is this land
We are Toronto, Toronto
an experiment gone grand

Lillian Allen, @2009

Revised 2023