

The Village Corner –Old Yorkville, Toronto @ Lillian Allen

Pan down Cleve Street, Café El Patio
Neil Young and Rick James mainlining
Music like you've never seen guitar and hipster-kool
All those dreamy power riffs, verses curving, spinning
Duke Redbird's eloquence rooted in the land
down Hazelton Lane, Gordon Lightfoot whispers
"Canada we can"
Sylvia & Ian Tyson, a mood away
Folk, before folk was young

Cobble stoned streets and laneways huddle
With roomers too eager to accept free love
Like a panhandler's loot
Crawling all over time like there was
Never a clock or calendar invented
Time lived as easily as one should
Servant, not master

Let the building build themselves
Let the City managers go to their harried lives
We will take their children and turn them
Into freedom lovers, make them babble
And inhale holy grass.

Not far from the Riverboat
Saint Marie grooves inditements
soldiering-on universally,
Bruce Coburn calling us awake
As Joni Mitchell grooms flower-power
tuning strings in Vera's rooming house
readying to burn vocal tracks at the Penny Farthing

At the Bohemian Embassy/Easy, Dan Hill's afro stood out
Margaret Atwood, Milton Acorn, Gwendolyn McEwen
carving worlds out from the old
David Donnell already gone rouge
Michael Ondaatje's awkward tongue
finding the two Billys
Billy da Kid and Billy da Holliday, that is

bp Nichol channels Bissett; 'psst on it, we'll free the syllable
Liberate it from its puritan hell!
Poets making a joyful wave and foaming at the mouth
New voices, new-new voices, something wonderfully lush
New meaning to Canadian
'cause this land is promise
rich with raw rounding words
Flying out of skin
Shocking and comforting and at home all at once
- community

That was how we freed ourselves to be ourselves
With language storming the barricades
language flaming in our hands