

Canadian Literature in English – some suggestions for introductory background reading

W.J. Keith, *Canadian Literature in English* (Longman, 1985)

Eva-Marie Kröller, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Canadian Literature* (2004)

W.H. New, *A History of Canadian Literature* (Macmillan, 1989)

W.H. New, ed., *Canadian Writers Since 1960. First Series* (Dictionary of Literary Biography 53).

Second Series (Dictionary of Literary Biography 60)

David Staines, *Beyond the Provinces: Literary Canada at Century's End* (University of Toronto Press, 1995)

Kenneth McNaught, *The Penguin History of Canada* (Penguin, 1988)

Desmond Morris, *A Short History of Canada* (Fifth edition; McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2001)

“Canada. A country stretching over 3,000 miles (some 5,500 kilometers) from east to west and sometimes extending almost 3,000 miles from south to north, though most of its northern lands are unsettled and uninhabitable. In area the second largest country in the world, with a population less than half that of the United Kingdom. A country with two official languages, English and French, and many unofficial. A country that shares its vast east-west boundary with an English-speaking, culturally aggressive nation-state boasting almost ten times its population. A country in which the native peoples (Indian and Inuit) now constitute less than 2 percent of its total inhabitants. A country of close to 4 million square miles in which over three-quarters of the population live in towns and cities. A country which began to come together as a stable political unit in 1867 and whose present boundaries were established as recently as 1949. A country whose written history spans no more than 500 years (John Cabot entered the Gulf of St Lawrence in 1497), and whose English literary tradition can be traced back no further than the middle of the eighteenth century.”

From: W.J. Keith, *Canadian Literature in English*, p. 1

For further reading: some collections of Canadian Short Stories in English:

The Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English, selected by Margaret Atwood & Robert Weaver (1988); *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English*, selected by Margaret Atwood & Robert Weaver (1997)

From Ink Lake: Canadian Stories, selected by Michael Ondaatje (1990), also published as *The Faber Book of Contemporary Canadian Short Stories*, edited by Michael Ondaatje (1990)

Other Solitudes: Canadian Multicultural Fictions and Interviews, edited by Linda Hutcheon & Marion Richmond (1990)

The Penguin Book of Canadian Short Stories, selected and translated by Jane Urquhart (2007)

Penguin Book of Contemporary Canadian Women's Short Stories, selected by Lisa Moore (2009)

Some fun websites:

Rick Mercer, *Talking to Americans*:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Mercer

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhTZ_tgMUdo

Molson Canadian Beer Commercial:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRI-A3vakVg>

Arrogant Worms:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I49PI_MbNKI

“Canada’s Really Big”

Song lyrics by *Arrogant Worms*

(spoken)

thank you very much

now we're very, uh, we're very patriotic Canadians

and we'd like to take this moment to,

uh, to do our national anthem, that we wrote

When I look around me, I can't believe what I see
it seems as if this country has lost its will to live
the economy is lousy, we barely have an army
but we can still stand proudly because Canada's really big
we're the second largest country on this planet earth
and if Russia keeps on shrinking, then soon we'll be first!
(as long as we keep Quebec)

The USA has tanks, and Switzerland has banks
they can keep them thanks, they just don't amount
cause when you get down to it, you find out what the truth is,
it isn't what you do with it, it's the size that counts
most people will tell you that France is pretty large
but you can put fourteen Frances into this land of ours!
(it'd take a lot of work, it'd take a whole lot of work)

we're larger than Malaysia, almost as big as Asia
we're bigger than Australia and it's a continent
so big we seldom bother to go see one another
but we often go to other countries for vacations
our mountains are very pointy, our prairies are not
the rest is kinda bumpy, but man do we have a lot!
(we've got a lot of land, we've got a whole lot of land)

so stand up and be proud and sing it very loud
we stand out from the crowd, cause Canada's really big