

Contemporary Literary Fiction

Literary fiction can be distinguished from genre fiction (such as mystery, romance, science fiction, etc.) in a number of ways. A work of literary fiction usually introduces us to seemingly real characters who speak in believable voices and suffer and rejoice over the same things we might. Well-crafted fiction will often spark a sense of recognition in a reader, give expression to a feeling we have had but were unable to articulate. And rather than being driven by plot, that is, developing and resolving a simple series of events, literary fiction tends instead to traffic in universal truths—the abiding human need for love, for example, or the fear we all have of failure and death, or even our occasional moments of triumph. And perhaps most of all, literary fiction is recognizable for the quality of the author’s writing. A “good” book absorbs us completely, is worth returning to over and over again (and will yield something new every time), and will make our lives richer, deeper, better. Most of the authors listed here have produced several novels and many have won prestigious literary awards.

Ansary, A. Manette
Atwood, Margaret
Ballard, J.G.
Bausch, Richard
Berg, Elizabeth
Berry, Wendell
Boyle, T.C.
Brooks, Geraldine
Brown, Larry
Brown, Rosellen
Canin, Ethan
Chabon, Michael
Conroy, Pat
Cunningham, Michael
DeLillo, Don
Didion, Joan
Doctorow, E.L.
Dooling, Richard
Ellis, Bret Easton
Enger, Leif
Erdrich, Louise
Ford, Richard
Gaddis, William
Godwin, Gail
Hamilton, Jane
Hansen, Ron
Harrington, Donald
Haruf, Kent
Hegi, Ursula
Irving, John
Jones, Edward
Kingsolver, Barbara
Lamb, Wally
Lurie, Alison
McCarthy, Cormac
McDermott, Alice

McMurtry, Larry
Martel, Yann
Miller, Sue
Moore, Lori
Morgan, Robert
Morris, Mary McGarry
Morrison, Toni
Morton, Brian
Oates, Joyce Carol
O’Brien, Tim
Patchett, Ann
Proulx, Annie
Russo, Richard
Roth, Philip
Shields, Carol
Shreve, Anita
Smiley, Jane
Smith, Zadie
Sontag, Susan
Spragg, Mark
Styron, William
Tan, Amy
Tyler, Anne
Updike, John
Walker, Alice
Watson, Larry
Wouk, Herman

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