Poem Read at Vancouver Olympic Opening Event

This is the poem read by Shane Koyczan at the opening of the Vancouver Olympics.

**We Are More**

by Shane Koyczan

When defining Canada  
you might list some statistics  
you might mention our tallest building  
or biggest lake  
you might shake a tree in the fall  
and call a red leaf Canada  
you might rattle off some celebrities  
might mention Buffy Sainte-Marie  
might even mention the fact that we've got a few  
Barenaked Ladies  
or that we made these crazy things  
like zippers  
electric cars  
and washing machines  
when defining Canada  
it seems the world's anthem has been  
" been there done that" and maybe that's where we used to be at  
it's true  
we've done and we've been  
we've seen  
all the great themes get swallowed up by the machine  
and turned into theme parks  
but when defining Canada  
don't forget to mention that we have set sparks  
we are not just fishing stories  
about the one that got away  
we do more than sit around and say "eh?"  
and yes  
we are the home of the Rocket and the Great One  
who inspired little number nines  
and little number ninety-nines  
but we're more than just hockey and fishing lines  
off of the rocky coast of the Maritimes  
and some say what defines us  
is something as simple as please and thank you  
and as for you're welcome  
well we say that too  
but we are more  
than genteel or civilized  
we are an idea in the process  
of being realized  
we are young  
we are cultures strung together  
then woven into a tapestry  
and the design  
is what makes us more  
than the sum total of our history  
we are an experiment going right for a change  
with influences that range from a to zed  
and yes we say zed instead of zee  
we are the colours of Chinatown and the coffee of Little Italy  
we dream so big that there are those  
who would call our ambition an industry  
because we are more than sticky maple syrup and clean snow  
we do more than grow wheat and brew beer  
we are vineyards of good year after good year  
we reforest what we clear  
because we believe in generations beyond our own  
knowing now that so many of us  
have grown past what used to be  
we can stand here today  
filled with all the hope people have  
when they say things like "someday"  
someday we'll be great  
someday we'll be this  
or that  
someday we'll be at a point  
when someday was yesterday  
and all of our aspirations will pay the way  
for those who on that day  
look towards tomorrow  
and still they say someday  
we will reach the goals we set  
and we will get interest on our inspiration  
because we are more than a nation of whale watchers and lumberjacks  
more than backpacks and hiking trails  
we are hammers and nails building bridges  
towards those who are willing to walk across  
we are the lost-and-found for all those who might find themselves at a loss  
we are not the see-through gloss or glamour  
of those who clamour for the failings of others  
we are fathers brothers sisters and mothers  
uncles and nephews aunts and nieces  
we are cousins  
we are found missing puzzle pieces  
we are families with room at the table for newcomers  
we are more than summers and winters  
more than on and off seasons  
we are the reasons people have for wanting to stay  
because we are more than what we say or do  
we live to get past what we go through  
and learn who we are  
we are students  
students who study the studiousness of studying  
so we know what as well as why  
we don't have all the answers  
but we try  
and the effort is what makes us more  
we don't all know what it is in life we're looking for  
so keep exploring  
go far and wide  
or go inside but go deep  
go deep  
as if James Cameron was filming a sequel to The Abyss  
and suddenly there was this location scout  
trying to figure some way out  
to get inside you  
because you've been through hell and high water  
and you went deep  
keep exploring  
because we are more  
than a laundry list of things to do and places to see  
we are more than hills to ski  
or countryside ponds to skate  
we are the abandoned hesitation of all those who can't wait  
we are first-rate greasy-spoon diners and healthy-living cafes  
a country that is all the ways you choose to live  
a land that can give you variety  
  
because we are choices  
we are millions upon millions of voices shouting  
" keep exploring... we are more"  
we are the surprise the world has in store for you  
it's true  
Canada is the "what" in "what's new?"  
so don't say "been there done that"  
unless you've sat on the sidewalk  
while chalk artists draw still lifes  
on the concrete of a kid in the street  
beatboxing to Neil Young for fun  
don't say you've been there done that  
unless you've been here doing it  
let this country be your first-aid kit  
for all the times you get sick of the same old same old  
let us be the story told to your friends  
and when that story ends  
leave chapters for the next time you'll come back  
next time pack for all the things  
you didn't pack for the first time  
but don't let your luggage define your travels  
each life unravels differently  
and experiences are what make up  
the colours of our tapestry  
we are the true north  
strong and free