

WRITING, LIFE STORIES AND CREATIVITY IN LATER LIFE - QUOTATIONS

Why not start writing now for the joy of it?

~ Naomi Beth Wakan

You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours.

~ Florida Scott-Maxwell

God gave us memory that we might have roses in December.

~ James Barrie

Why didn't I ask my mother when I could?

~ Ellen S. Jaffe

Arts and aging is neither just about art, nor just about aging.

Rather, it is about creativity and positive engagement-

that is, creativity as both a goal

and a process for shaping the self and society.

~ Steven Dahlberg

Myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance.

We all need to tell our story and to understand our story.

We all need to understand death and to cope with death,

and we all need help in our passages from birth to life and then to death.

We need for life

to signify, to touch the eternal, to understand the mysterious, to find out who we are.

~ Bill Moyers

Keeping a journal thins my skin.

I feel open to everything, aware,

charged by the acquisition of intensity.

~ Doris Grumbach

I began this journal ten months ago

as a way of getting back to my self,

of pulling out of last year's depression,

and now I am truly on a rising curve.

~ May Sarton

"Writing has become a confirmation to me, of me, and by me.

Some people believe 'they think therefore they are.'

I write, therefore I am."

~ Richard Taylor

When a spouse dies, you retire,
 or your kids leave home,
 you interrupt your personal story.
 If you can figure out how this episode fits
 into the plot of your life,
 you'll be one step closer
 to seeing its purpose -- and yours.

~ Gregory A. Plotnikov

The best advice seems to be:
 move within all registers of time –
 present, past, and future –
 and from them draw rich resources for living.

~ Mary and Ken Gergen

Older people take time
 to contemplate their life journey,
 harvest the wisdom of their years,
 and transmit a legacy to future generations.

~ Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi

The content may not differ from writers of spiritual autobiographies or memoirs,
 but the intent makes an ethical will unique.

"The generic purpose of the ethical will is to pass on wisdom and love to future generations."
 Writing can include family history and cultural and spiritual values; blessings and expressions of love
 for, pride in, hopes and dreams for children and grandchildren; life-lessons and wisdom of life
 experience; requests for forgiveness for regretted actions; the rationale for philanthropic and personal
 financial decisions; stories about the meaningful "stuff" for heirs to receive; clarification about and
 personalization of advance health directives; and requests for ways to be remembered after death.

~ R. Taylor

Nothing is as effective in bearing witness,
 nothing is as immediate, as memoir.
 When, through the rare alchemy of experiences and artfulness,
 the personal becomes universal,
 there is nothing more powerful.
 And one never knows whose story will,
 through will or chance,
 give voice to a people or an age.

~ Dave Eggers

Ten years ago I wrote my autobiography, in two parts:
 A Fool in Paradise covered the first forty years of my life,
 and The Good Wine carried my story through the next forty years.
 These books were about what happened to me
 and about my response,
 what I chose to make happen,
 and how both shaped me.
 Since then people keep asking for my "secret."
 How am I so old and yet so well?

So happy? So productive?
 There is no secret.
 I am glad to tell everyone about the choices
 I make in my life and their results,
 the elements and attitudes
 that have added up to my zest for life and my joy in it.
 Come spend a few weeks with me during the summer
 when I turned ninety-two
 and you will know the answer.
 ~ Doris McCarthy

Writing and rewriting are a constant search for what one is saying.
 ~ John Updike

We die. That may be the meaning of life.
 But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.
 ~ Toni Morrison

Once life's story has been discovered,
 told and retold with everything in its proper place,
 there is then time to greet the true reasons for living.
 ~ Henri Nouwen

Sometimes
 everything has to be enscribed
 across the heavens
 So you can find
 the one line
 already written inside you.
 ~ David Whyte

Imagination grows by exercise.
 ~ W. Somerset Maugham

Life can only be understood backward,
 but it must be lived forward.
 ~ Soren Kierkegaard

It is looking at things for a long time
 that ripens you
 and gives you a deeper understanding.
 ~ Vincent Van Gogh

Listen, Make a way for
 Yourself
 Inside yourself
 Stop looking
 In the other way of looking.
 ~ Rumi

We must embrace pain and burn it as fuel for our journey.
~ Kenji Miyazawa

The best way out is always through.
~ Robert Frost

We must be willing
to get rid of the life
we have planned
so as to have
the life
that is waiting for us.
~ Joseph Campbell

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
~ T S Elliot

It seems, as one becomes older,
That the past has another pattern,
and ceases to be a mere sequence--

...

We had the experience but missed the meaning,
And approach to the meaning restores the experience.
~ T S Elliot

Experience is not what happens to a man.
It is what a man does with what happens to him.
~ Aldous Huxley

If writing is thinking and discovering
and selection and order and meaning,
it is awe and reverence
and mystery and magic.
~ Toni Morrison

My only weapon in this whole world now is words,
and I've spent my life sharpening that sword
and I just hope that I can stab a few more things, slice a few more.
It's an odd thing to realize that there is little time left.
I feel extremely live and alert and aware,
and all my senses are going clickity-click,
but I won't last much longer.
~ M. F. K. Fisher

My story is important not because it is mine, God knows,
but because if I tell it anything like right,
the chances are you will recognize that in many ways it is also yours.

~ Frederick Buechner

Everybody is a story.
 When I was a child,
 people sat around kitchen tables and told their stories.
 We don't do that so much anymore.
 Sitting around the table telling stories
 is not just a way of passing time.
 It is the way the wisdom gets passed along.
 The stuff that helps us
 to live a life worth remembering.
 Despite the awesome powers of technology
 many of us still do not live very well.
 We may need to listen to each other's stories once again.

~ Rachel Naomi Remen

I think the act of writing can change lives and save souls.
 I've seen it happen.

~ Elaine Farris Hughes

As I write I create myself again and again.

~ Joy Harjo

What is art: It is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the real.

~ Tagore

Two things make a story.
 The net and the air that falls through the net.

~ Pablo Neruda

The possible's slow fuse is lit by the imagination.

~ Emily Dickens

For any writer who wants to keep a journal,
 be alive to everything,
 not just to what you're feeling,
 but also to your pets, to flowers, to what you're reading.

~ May Sarton

A lot of healing lies in the recovery
 of a personal sense of meaning,
 that capacity which enables us to endure difficulties,
 to find and draw on unsuspected strength.
 In times of crisis, meaning is strength.
 But the deepest meaning is carried in the unconscious mind,
 whose language is the language of dreams, of symbols and archetypes.
 Poetry speaks this language,
 and helps us hear meaning in illness, i
 n the events of our lives often for the first time.
 Finding such meaning feels like revelation, like grace.

Writing poetry together heals loneliness.
 What is true for someone on the deepest level
 is often true for us all.
 Reading a poem aloud and listening to the poems of others
 can heal the alienation which is so much a part of our world.
 These days, much in life is masked.
 Poetry wears no mask.
 In taking off masks we have word to be safe,
 to protect ourselves, to win approval,
 we become less vulnerable. Less alone.
 Our pain becomes just pain.
 It is no longer suffering.
 ~ Rachel Naomi Remen

We live in story like a fish lives in water.
 We swim through words and images siphoning story through our minds
 the way a fish siphons water through its gills.
 We cannot think without language,
 we cannot process experience without story.
 ~ Christina Baldwin

Life hangs on a narrative thread.
 This thread is a braid of stories that inform us about
 who we are,
 and where we come from,
 and where we might go.
 The thread is slender but strong:
 we trust it to hold us
 and allow us to swing over the edge of the known
 into the future we dream in words.
 ~ Christina Baldwin

Journal writing is the ongoing creation of the story of a life,
 in the littlest and largest sense.
 ~ Christina Baldwin

Story makes community.
 Communities make story.
 ~ Christina Baldwin

The unexamined life is not worth living.
 ~ Socrates

Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation.
 They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life;
 they feed the soul.
 ~ Anne Lamott

Journal -- the friend at the end of the pen

~ K Adams

My poems influence my life just as much as my life influences my poems.
I have to make time to write about what makes me smile,
even if it is as small and simple as pink jellybeans at Easter.
I've found that the more I write about what makes me happy
the happier I feel.

~ Wendy Nyemaster

Though life may be painful,
there is a joy and power in writing,
even when you're dealing with something
that is hard to live through day by day.
You're trying to understand what you're living through
by using the tools of words
and the beautiful inner structure of language.

~ Sandra McPherson

Take one blank sheet...take risks.

~ Ellen Jaffe

I wanted to choose words that even you would have to be changed by.

~ Adrienne Rich

The great value of art is that it can be medicine.

~ Ted Hughes

There are a thousand thoughts lying within a man
that he does not know until he takes up a pen to write.

~ William Makepeace Thackeray

As you begin to pay attention to your own stories
and what they say about you,
you will enter into the exciting process of becoming, as you should be,
the author of your own life,
the creator of your own possibilities.

~ Julia Cameron

The quest for a story is the quest for a life.

~ Jill Johnston,

Art enables us to find ourselves
and lose ourselves at the same time.

~ Julia Cameron

First thoughts have tremendous energy.
It is the way the mind first flashes on something

~ Natalie Goldberg

Appreciating poetry is probably like appreciating anything else.
It means having the generosity to let a thing be what it is,
the patience to know it,
a sense of the mystery in all living things,
and a joy in new experience.

~ M. C. Richards

Poetry is the voice of the soul,
whispering, celebrating, singing even.

~ Carolyn Forché

I don't create poetry;
I create myself, for my poems are a way to me

~ Edith Sodergran

Anytime is a good time to write a poem.

~ Gertrude Stein

My ideas usually come not at my desk writing
but in the midst of living.

~ Anais Nin

We write to taste life twice,
in the moment,
and in retrospection.

~ Anais Nin

A poem begins in delight ...
and ends in a clarification of life ...
a momentary stay against confusion

~ Robert Frost

When you finally get it, there's no place for it but in a poem.

~ Wu Pen

I can shake off everything if I write.
My sorrows disappear; my courage is reborn.

~ Anne Frank

Every poem is an episode to that great poem,
which all poets, like the cooperating thoughts of one great mind,
have build up since the beginning of the world.

~ Percy Bysshe Shelley

Imagination is more important than knowledge
Knowledge is limited
Imagination encircles the world.

~ Albert Einstein