

Adrienne Rich

Quotes

*Art, Thinking, Children, Mean, Writing, People, Mother, War, Men, Political,
Lying, Dream, Believe, Body, World, Real, Voice, Mind, Self, Memories*

The connections between and among women are the most feared, the most problematic, and the most potentially transforming force on the planet.

~Adrienne Rich

Change is not a threat to your life, but an invitation to live.

~Adrienne Rich

There must be those among whom we can sit down and weep and still be counted as warriors.

~Adrienne Rich

My heart is moved by all I cannot save: so much has been destroyed I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.

~Adrienne Rich

We must use what we have to invent what we desire.

~Adrienne Rich

Courage is not defined by those who fought and did not fall, but by those who fought, fell and rose again.

~Adrienne Rich

The beauty of darkness is how it lets you see.

~Adrienne Rich

If you are trying to transform a brutalized society into one where people can live in dignity and hope, you begin with the empowering of the most powerless. You build from the ground up.

~Adrienne Rich

Until we know the assumptions in which we are drenched, we cannot know ourselves.

~Adrienne Rich

Language is power... Language can be used as a means of changing reality.

~Adrienne Rich

I believe that words can help us move or keep us paralyzed, and that our choices of language and verbal tone have something - a great deal - to do with how we live our lives.

~Adrienne Rich

Poetry is above all a concentration of the power of language, which is the power of our ultimate relationship to everything in the universe.

~Adrienne Rich

It is the suffering of ambivalence: the murderous alternation between bitter resentment and raw-edged nerves, and blissful gratification and tenderness

~Adrienne Rich

The most notable fact that our culture imprints on women is a sense of our limits. The most important thing a woman can do for another is to illuminate her actual possibilities.

~Adrienne Rich

Art means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of power which holds it hostage.

~Adrienne Rich

An honorable human relationship ... is a process, delicate, violent, often terrifying to both persons involved, a process of refining the truths they can tell each other.

~Adrienne Rich

A thinking woman sleeps with monsters.

~Adrienne Rich

It will take all your heart, it will take all your breath It will be short, it will not be simple

~Adrienne Rich

Most women have not even been able to touch this anger, except to drive it inward like a rusted nail.

~Adrienne Rich

When a woman tells the truth she is creating the possibility for more truth around her.

~Adrienne Rich

We can count on so few people to go that hard way with us.

~Adrienne Rich

If you think you can grasp me, think again: my story flows in more than one direction, a delta springing from the river bed with its five fingers spread.

~Adrienne Rich

The words are purposes./The words are maps./I came to see the damage that was done/and the treasures that prevail.

~Adrienne Rich

Any woman's death diminishes me.

~Adrienne Rich

Lesbian existence comprises both the breaking of a taboo and the rejection of a compulsory way of life. It is also a direct or indirect attack on the male right of access to women.

~Adrienne Rich

Lying is done with words and also with silence.

~Adrienne Rich

Every poem breaks a silence that had to be overcome.

~Adrienne Rich

Responsibility to yourself means that you don't fall for shallow and easy solutions-it means that you refuse to sell your talents and aspirations short.

~Adrienne Rich

Every journey into the past is complicated by delusions, false memories, false namings of real events.

~Adrienne Rich

The password is a flicker of an eyelash.

~Adrienne Rich

I keep coming back to you in my head, but you couldn't know that, and I have no carbons.

~Adrienne Rich

War is an absolute failure of imagination, scientific and political. That a war can be represented as helping a people to 'feel good' about themselves, or their country, is a measure of that failure.

~Adrienne Rich

Poetry can open locked chambers of possibility, restore numbed zones to feeling, recharge desire.

~Adrienne Rich

Writers matter in a society to the extent that we can help that society hear its unvoiced longing, encounter its erased and disregarded selves, break with complacency, numbness, despair.

~Adrienne Rich

Only where there is language is there world.

~Adrienne Rich

It's exhilarating to be alive in a time of awakening consciousness; it can also be confusing, disorienting, and painful.

~Adrienne Rich

Abortion is violence; a deep, desperate violence inflicted by a woman upon, first of all, herself.

~Adrienne Rich

The more I live, the more I think, two people together is a miracle.

~Adrienne Rich

Pride is a tricky, glorious, double-edged feeling.

~Adrienne Rich

False history gets made all day, any day, the truth of the new is never on the news.

~Adrienne Rich

How we dwelt in two worlds the daughters and the mothers in the kingdom of the sons.

~Adrienne Rich

To seek visions, to dream dreams, is essential, and it is also essential to try new ways of living, to make room for serious experimentation, to respect the effort even where it fails.

~Adrienne Rich

Life on the planet is born of woman.

~Adrienne Rich

The moment of change is the only poem.

~Adrienne Rich

It is important to possess a short-term pessimism and a long-term optimism.

~Adrienne Rich

When someone with the authority of a teacher describes the world and you're not in it, there's a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.

~Adrienne Rich

There is no 'the truth,' 'a truth'--truth is not one thing, or even a system. It is an increasing complexity.

~Adrienne Rich

I feel more helpless with you than without you.

~Adrienne Rich

As a society in turmoil, we are going to see more, and more various, attempts to simulate order through repression; and art is a historical target for such efforts.

~Adrienne Rich

I came to explore the wreck.

~Adrienne Rich

I long to create something that can't be used to keep us passive: I want to write a script about plumbing, how every pipe is joined to every other.

~Adrienne Rich

Grief held back from the lips wears at the heart; the drop that refused to join the river dried up in the dust.

~Adrienne Rich

The repossession by women of our bodies will bring far more essential change to human society than the seizing of the means of production by workers.

~Adrienne Rich

All new learning looks at first like chaos.

~Adrienne Rich

The serious revolutionary, like the serious artist, can't afford to lead a sentimental or self-deceiving life.

~Adrienne Rich

Art, whose honesty must work through artifice, cannot avoid cheating truth.

~Adrienne Rich

They can rule the world while they can persuade us our pain belongs in some order is death by famine worse than death by suicide, than a life of famine and suicide...?

~Adrienne Rich

A life I didn't choose chose me: even my tools are the wrong ones for what I have to do.

~Adrienne Rich

I choose to love this time for once with all my intelligence -from
"Splittings

~Adrienne Rich

You have to give your art everything you can - I don't mean only writing, but studying other poets and poetics, thinking, reading what poets have written other than their poetry.

~Adrienne Rich

The mind's passion is all for singling out. Obscurity has another tale to tell.

~Adrienne Rich

The channel of art can only become clogged and misdirected by the artist's concern with merely temporary and local disturbances. The song is higher than the struggle.

~Adrienne Rich

Experience is always larger than language.

~Adrienne Rich

Our personalities seem dangerously to blur and overlap with our mother's; and, in a desperate attempt to know where mother ends and daughter begins, we perform radical surgery.

~Adrienne Rich

A decade of cutting away dead flesh, cauterizing old scars ripped open over and over and still it is not enough.

~Adrienne Rich

The moment when a feeling enters the body/ is political. This touch is political

~Adrienne Rich

I don't think we can separate art from overall human dignity and hope.

~Adrienne Rich

If the imagination is to transcend and transform experience it has to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives, perhaps to the very life you are living at the moment.

~Adrienne Rich

It is the thirtieth of May, the thirtieth of November, a beginning or an end, we are moving into the solstice and there is so much here I still do not understand.

~Adrienne Rich

Your mind now, moldering like wedding-cake, heavy with useless experience, rich with suspicion, rumour, fantasy, crumbling to pieces under the knife-edge of mere fact. In the prime of your life.

~Adrienne Rich

We who were loved will never unlive that crippling fever.

~Adrienne Rich

Sleeping. Turning in turn like planets rotating in their midnight meadow: a touch is enough to let us know we're not alone in the universe, even in sleep.

~Adrienne Rich

Love, our subject: we've trained it like ivy to our walls.

~Adrienne Rich

Motherhood, in the sense of an intense, reciprocal relationship with a particular child, or children, is one part of female process; it is not an identity for all time.

~Adrienne Rich

We move but our words stand become responsible for more than we intended and this is verbal privilege

~Adrienne Rich

It's as if, in the mother's eyes, her smile, her stroking touch, the child first reads the message: 'You are there!'

~Adrienne Rich

In the interstices of language lie powerful secrets of the culture.

~Adrienne Rich

You must write, and read, as if your life depended on it.

~Adrienne Rich

The unconscious wants truth. It ceases to speak to those who want something else more than truth.

~Adrienne Rich

and I ask myself and you, which of our visions will claim us which will we claim how will we go on living how will we touch, what will we know what will we say to each other.

~Adrienne Rich

When my dreams showed signs of becoming politically correct no unruly images escaping beyond borders ... then I began to wonder

~Adrienne Rich

For now, poetry has the capacity - in its own ways and by its own means - to remind us of something we are forbidden to see.

~Adrienne Rich

I am an instrument in the shape/ of a woman trying to translate pulsations/ into images for the relief of the body/ and the reconstruction of the mind.

~Adrienne Rich

No one sleeps in this room without the dream of a common language.

~Adrienne Rich

TV has created a kind of false collectivity.

~Adrienne Rich

Poetry is the liquid voice that can wear through stone.

~Adrienne Rich

I touch you knowing we weren't born tomorrow, and somehow, each of us will help the other live, and somewhere, each of us must help the other die.

~Adrienne Rich

A patriot is one who wrestles for the soul of her country as she wrestles for her own being.

~Adrienne Rich

When one woman tells her truth, it makes a space for other women to tell their truths.

~Adrienne Rich

Poems are like dreams: in them you put what you don't know you know.

~Adrienne Rich

No woman is really an insider in the institutions fathered by masculine consciousness.

~Adrienne Rich

Young people know they are being betrayed by the mass electronic media. It caricatures them, caricatures others. It is not really about them though it targets them as consumers.

~Adrienne Rich

I define "politics" as the on-going collective struggle for liberation and for the power to create - not only works of art, but also just and nonviolent social institutions.

~Adrienne Rich

What we see, we see and seeing is changing

~Adrienne Rich

The vixen I met at twilight on Route 5 south of Willoughby: long dead. She was an omen to me, surviving, herding her cubs in the silvery bend of the road in nineteen sixty-five.

~Adrienne Rich

One line typed twenty years ago can be blazed on a wall in spraypaint to glorify art as detachment or torture of those we did not love but also did not want to kill.

~Adrienne Rich

Despair, when not the response to absolute physical and moral defeat is, like war, the failure of imagination.

~Adrienne Rich

I wanted him [my father] to cherish and approve of me, not as he had when I was a child, but as the woman I was, who had her own mind and had made her own choices.

~Adrienne Rich

War is an absolute failure of imagination, scientific and political.

~Adrienne Rich

Go back so far there is another language go back far enough the language is no longer personal.

~Adrienne Rich

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