

Alan Lightman

Quotes

Thinking, Book, Writing, World, Past, People, Years, Two, Long, Moving, Time, Believe, Ideas, Character, Law, Spiritual, Sadness, Country, Important, Real

The world is moving faster and faster, but where are we going? I think one of the reasons why things are getting blurry is because there is not much meaning.

~Alan Lightman

If a person holds no ambitions in this world, he suffers unknowingly. If a person holds ambitions, he suffers knowingly, but very slowly.

~Alan Lightman

We live in a highly polarized society. We need to try to understand each other in respectful ways. To that end, I believe that we should make room for both spiritual atheists and thinking believers.

~Alan Lightman

All writers have roots they draw from - travel, work, family. My roots are in science and it is fertile ground for fiction.

~Alan Lightman

-But rational thoughts lead only to rational thoughts, whereas irrational thoughts lead to new experiences.

~Alan Lightman

Sadness is no more than a bit of acid transfixed in the cerebellum.

~Alan Lightman

The urge to discover, to invent, to know the unknown, seems so deeply human that we cannot imagine our history without it.

~Alan Lightman

A person who cannot imagine the future is a person who cannot contemplate the results of his actions. Some are thus paralyzed into inaction.

~Alan Lightman

Everyone shares the same fate.

~Alan Lightman

Suppose time is a circle, bending back on itself. The world repeats itself, precisely, endlessly.

~Alan Lightman

Every reader gets something different from a book and every reader, in a sense, completes it in a different way.

~Alan Lightman

While people brood, time skips ahead without looking back.

~Alan Lightman

You've made something grand, but it will be grander if it has feeling and beauty and harmony.

~Alan Lightman

Imagine a world in which there is no time. Only images.

~Alan Lightman

The world is moving faster and faster, but where are we going?

~Alan Lightman

We're plugged in 24 hours a day now. We're all part of one big machine, whether we are conscious of that or not. And if we can't unplug from that machine, eventually we're going to become mindless.

~Alan Lightman

Faith is the ability to honor stillness at some moments, and at others to ride the passion and exuberance.

~Alan Lightman

The tragedy of this world is that no one is happy, whether stuck in a

time of pain or joy.

~Alan Lightman

The history of science can be viewed as the recasting of phenomena that were once thought to be accidents as phenomena that can be understood in terms of fundamental causes and principles.

~Alan Lightman

I have always loved magic realism as a form of writing. I have also been fascinated for a long time with the intersection of science and religion.

~Alan Lightman

You say, "Something important really happened here. I really had hold of something I was visited by the muse." And that's enough to make you continue the months and years to finish the whole book.

~Alan Lightman

Every essay - the subject matter of every essay - is ultimately about the essayist; him or herself. That ultimately, every essayist is writing about his or her view of the world.

~Alan Lightman

Music is, of course, a universal emotional experience, cutting across cultures and languages. I studied piano for ten years as a child and consider that experience one of the most valuable in my life.

~Alan Lightman

A life is a moment in season. A life is one snowfall. A life is one autumn day. A life is the delicate, rapid edge of a closing door's shadow. A life is a brief movement of arms and of legs.

~Alan Lightman

No one knows the nature of God, or even if God exists. In a sense, all

of our religions are literary works of the imagination.

~Alan Lightman

In this world, artists are joyous. Unpredictability is the life of their paintings, their music, their novels. They delight in events not forecasted, happenings without explanation, retrospective.

~Alan Lightman

As human beings, don't we need questions without answers as well as questions with answers, questions that we might someday answer and questions that we can never answer?

~Alan Lightman

It's not necessarily a large number of people that affect the culture. You don't count the number of influential voices, you weigh them. A hundred people can affect the culture.

~Alan Lightman

My second novel, "Good Benito", was not finished. I wished that I had spent another year with it.

~Alan Lightman

A writer is someone who has a one-man tent in the desert and occasionally he sees the footprint of an other writer - in the form of a review or something.

~Alan Lightman

I consider myself an essayist and a fiction writer. In the essays, I certainly have been influenced by some of the leading science essayists. Like Loren Eiseley, Stephen Jay Gould, Lewis Thomas.

~Alan Lightman

One day I'm going to write a book about osprey. It has really gotten deep into my bloodstream. So when you ask what else I do, I feel like

this is part of what I do....is to watch these birds.

~Alan Lightman

It's the Platonic philosophy in The Republic that philosophers should lead the country.

~Alan Lightman

Writers read essays and serious thinkers and serious readers... that is a small population.

~Alan Lightman

I love the fact publishers are still publishing unprofitable material. It's a challenge to the powers that be. It's saying there is a real literature in this country and we will keep publishing it.

~Alan Lightman

I think it is always a long shot getting a book made into a film. Making that book into a film is going to be quite a challenge.

~Alan Lightman

In fiction writing ideas have to be handled extremely carefully. You can't let your characters just be mouthpieces for your ideas. They have to live and breathe on their own.

~Alan Lightman

Franz Kafka is an idea person. His books begin and end in ideas. Ideas have always been important to me in my writing. To the point that I have to be careful that they don't take over.

~Alan Lightman

In fiction writing, I would say there are several different strands that have been woven through my own writing, and each influenced by a different group of writers.

~Alan Lightman

I wouldn't overall say that "The Diagnosis" is a funny book. I would say that it has comic moments. It's a modern tragedy.

~Alan Lightman

People are content to live in contradictory worlds, so long as they know the reason for each.

~Alan Lightman

I should have written books instead of reading them.

~Alan Lightman

I've taken a philosophical position on e-mail. Although I think it's a wonderful communication technology, and it has a lot of good uses, it is abused quite a lot.

~Alan Lightman

I have too many friends who tell me that they spend the first hour of every morning going through their e-mail messages. I'd like to use my time more carefully.

~Alan Lightman

I still will sit down at the piano and play when I am wrestling with something emotionally or just want to move into the musical world.

~Alan Lightman

As a scientist, I don't believe science will ever discover whether God exists. Nor do I believe religion will ever prove it.

~Alan Lightman

No one ever expects poetry to sell...

~Alan Lightman

I have a number of vague ideas where I just have the core or kernel of the idea. I feel like I need some time for my mind to fill up again. I feel

empty. Right now.

~Alan Lightman

Writers are a loosely knit community - community is an overstated word. Writers don't see each other very much.

~Alan Lightman

For my students who are trying to learn the craft of writing in a writing class - contemporary literature is what's most useful.

~Alan Lightman

That's the fine balance of a fiction writer...to be able to give your characters enough freedom to surprise you and yet still maintain some kind of artistic control.

~Alan Lightman

Continents of memory had been lost.

~Alan Lightman

As I understand it, a universe is a ... well, a totality. A universe is everything that is, as far as the inside of the thing.

~Alan Lightman

If you over-plot your book you strangle your characters. Your characters have to have enough freedom and life to be able to surprise you.

~Alan Lightman

The tragedy of this world is that everyone is alone. For a life in the past cannot be shared with the present.

~Alan Lightman

In a world in which time is a circle, every handshake, every kiss, every birth, every word, will be repeated precisely.

~Alan Lightman

Time is a rigid, bonelike structure, extending infinitely ahead and behind, fossilizing the future as well as the past.

~Alan Lightman

Events, once happened, lose reality, alter with a glance, a storm, a night. In time, the past never happened. But who could know? Who could know that the past is not as solid as this instant.

~Alan Lightman

Each time is true, but the truths are not the same.

~Alan Lightman

What sense is there in continuing when one has seen the future?

~Alan Lightman

A world with one month is a world of equality.

~Alan Lightman

Each person who gets stuck in time gets stuck alone.

~Alan Lightman

The target of power is more interesting than its quantity.

~Alan Lightman

With a background in science I am extremely interested in the meeting ground of science, theology, and philosophy, especially the ethical questions at the border of science and theology.

~Alan Lightman

Time is the clarity for seeing right and wrong.

~Alan Lightman

For it is only habit and memory that dulls the physical passion. Without memory, each night is the first night, each morning is the first morning, each kiss and touch are the first.

~Alan Lightman

I would think that you are more fluent with the rational. It has its appeal. But the irrational permits a greater exercise of ... shall we say, power.

~Alan Lightman

In a world without future, each moment is the end of the world.

~Alan Lightman

I think Joe Lieberman has been one of the leaders of the country... people have such a broad respect for him as a moral force.

~Alan Lightman

We often do not see what we do not expect to see.

~Alan Lightman

Scientists will forever have to live with the fact that their product is, in the end, impersonal.

~Alan Lightman

The time-deaf are unable to speak what they know. For speech needs a sequence of words, spoken in time.

~Alan Lightman

So many little lives, amounting to nothing. I ask you: What is infinity multiplied by zero? It is hardly worth our discussion.

~Alan Lightman

Except for a God who sits down after the universe begins, all other gods conflict with the assumptions of science.

~Alan Lightman

Where are the one billion people who lived and breathed in the year 1800, only two short centuries ago?

~Alan Lightman

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