

Alison Hawthorne Deming Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, Animal, Teaching, World, Important, Mind, Long, Discovery,
Way, Years, Loss, Focus, Giving, Artist, Teacher, Always Trying, Moments,
Ignorance, Stuff*

I like to use research to enlarge the poem. And sometimes a rhetorical or syntactical gesture stitches the poem along.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

It's extremely important that, as writers, we give a voice to those who don't have voices, including the other animals that we share the planet with and the places that are endangered or being lost.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

Once you realize that human actions affect every bit of earth and sky, you realize that the environment isn't just what surrounds us - it's all one whole.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I am a result of what has happened on this planet - how could I find the art to say that? I can't, and yet, I am drawn to it because of the enormity of it. That seems really important.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

Bringing science into poetry is one way of acknowledging some of the richest stuff that is in my cultural moment.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I've been accused of darkness by my inner light.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

What keeps me level is the refusal to let the best of human aspirations die in the face of the challenges. I make a moral decision to be hopeful.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I don't know much about death and the sorriest lesson I've learned is that words, my most trusted guardians against chaos, offer small comfort in the face of anyone's dying.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I'm filled with despair. We live in a pathological culture filled with rage and bitterness and greed. The hate-mongering and racism is reaching a frightening pitch.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I'm always trying to bring as many poetic properties as possible to the essay without making it too overburdened.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I grow very impatient with prose writers who don't pay attention to the cadence of the sentence. If you start as a poet, you're wooed by the music of language; you want to put that into your practice.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I like bringing poetry's focus on figurative language and compression into the essay. Of course, the musical properties of language, the cadence of the sentence, are really important to me in prose.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

Sometimes it gets talked about as if life is all about the individual, and I don't think it is. I'm really interested in what writing can contribute to a kind of cultural intelligence.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I'm always doing poems from a place of not-knowing, a place of ignorance in a way.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

Poetry is one of the most full ways of discovering what it feels like to be a human being in this particular moment, in this particular set of concerns. It's all about discovery.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

Life seems complicated to me; I feel confused a lot of the time by life. I feel confused about the fact that we can be so tender as creatures to one another, and so monstrous at the same time.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I think you have to live inside your contradictions and find a way to accept that that's the human condition - to be forced to live in contradiction.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I came to teaching late - not until my forties - which is one reason why I'm not burned out.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

What I like about teaching is the discipline of finding words to unpack the artistic process. And I admire the drive in students who want to write, the mystery of how artistic talent unfolds.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

For me teaching has provided community and livelihood and the satisfaction of passing along what I've learned to others.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

One needs to be on guard against expecting external powers to decide when you can take yourself seriously as an artist. It can be a long wait - and lead to endless appetite.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

Writers want recognition, audience, some corroboration that all those hours at the desk and in daydreams add up to something in the esteem of others.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

The countries that are the least responsible for causing climate change

are paying the heaviest price.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I'm really interested in culture because it is such a powerful human force, particularly in America where we think it's all about the individual.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

As writers, the world is not about individual expression entirely because we are producing works of literature and getting them out into the world.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I'm just really interested in the interface of the individual with the collective. I think that's where the arts live.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

When we're writing anything, we're bearing witness to the time we live in and how it's different from any other time in history.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I like the dance between sustained focus and digression that the long poem invites. A controlling metaphor helps to sustain the long poem.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

I like to joke that I started writing long poems out the anxiety over ending and starting poems. It just seemed easier to keep going.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

We're nature. Our minds are nature. Our desire to make poetry is nature.

~Alison Hawthorne Deming

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