

# Allen Tate

## Quotes

*Men, Twilight, Dark, Long, Lying, May, Faces, Heart, Christmas, Feet, Eye,  
Poet, Wall, Love You, Hands, Knows, Three, Age, Boys, Doe*

Men expect too much, do too little.

~Allen Tate

The dusk runs down the lane driven like hail; Far off a precise whistle is  
escheat To the dark; and then the towering weak and pale.

~Allen Tate

Poets are mysterious, but a poet when all is said is not much more  
mysterious than a banker.

~Allen Tate

Other psychological theories say a good deal about compensation.

~Allen Tate

The day's at end and there's nowhere to go, Draw to the fire, even this  
fire is dying; Get up and once again politely lying Invite the ladies  
toward the mistletoe.

~Allen Tate

The mission for the day is to encourage students to think beyond  
traditional career opportunities, prepare for future careers and entrance  
into the workplace.

~Allen Tate

In the cold morning the rested street stands up To greet the clerk who  
saunters down the world.

~Allen Tate

I have felt darkness lead me by the hand Over the hill to greet the  
singing dawn.

~Allen Tate

So face with calm that heritage And earn contempt before the age.

~Allen Tate

Peering, I heard the hooves come down the hill. The posse passed,  
twelve horse; the leader's face Was worn as limestone on an ancient  
sill.

~Allen Tate

Therefore with idle hands and head I sit In late December before the  
fire's daze Punished by crimes of which I would be quit.

~Allen Tate

Experience means conflict, our natures being what they are, and  
conflict means drama.

~Allen Tate

Genetic theories, I gather, have been cherished academically with  
detachment.

~Allen Tate

The innocent mansion of a panther's heart!

~Allen Tate

But in our age the appeal to authority is weak, and I am of my age.

~Allen Tate

In a manner of speaking, the poem is its own knower, neither poet nor  
reader knowing anything that the poem says apart from the words of  
the poem.

~Allen Tate

The twilight is long fingers and black hair.

~Allen Tate

The Spring I seek is in a new face only.

~Allen Tate

There is probably nothing wrong with art for art's sake if we take the phrase seriously, and not take it to mean the kind of poetry written in England forty years ago.

~Allen Tate

Religion is the sole technique for the validating of values.

~Allen Tate

Row after row with strict impunity  
The headstones yield their names to  
the element, The wind whirrs without recollection.

~Allen Tate

What is the flesh and blood compounded of  
But a few moments in the  
life of time? This prowling of the cells, litigious love,  
Wears the long claw  
of flesh-arguing crime.

~Allen Tate

Dramatic experience is not logical; it may be subdued to the kind of coherence that we indicate when we speak, in criticism, of form.

~Allen Tate

Venus knows country matters: country knows Venus: For Love, Dione's boy, was born on the farm.

~Allen Tate

But we shall not know the world by looking at it; we know it by looking at the hovering fly.

~Allen Tate

Serious poetry deals with the fundamental conflicts that cannot be logically resolved: we can state the conflicts rationally, but reason does not relieve us of them.

~Allen Tate

Antiquity breached mortality with myths. Narcissus is vocabulary.  
Hermes decorates A cornice on the Third National Bank.

~Allen Tate

Men expect too much, do too little, Put the contraption before the  
accomplishment, Lack skill of the interior mind To fashion dignity with  
shapes of air. Luxury, yes but not elegance!

~Allen Tate

The only real evidence that any critic may bring before his gaze is the  
finished poem.

~Allen Tate

There's precious little to say between day and dark, Perhaps a few  
words on the implacable will Of time sailing like a magic barque Or  
something as fine for the amenities.

~Allen Tate

We are afraid that we have not lived. We are not afraid of dying.

~Allen Tate

The poet is he who fights on the passionate Side and whoever loses he  
wins; when he is defeated it is hard to say who wins.

~Allen Tate

I had kept opaque Down deeper than the canyons undersea The sullen  
spectrum of a buried lake Nobody saw; not seen even by me.

~Allen Tate

A poem may be an instance of morality, of social conditions, of  
psychological history; it may instance all its qualities, but never one of  
them alone, nor any two or three; never less than all.

~Allen Tate

Poets, in their way, are practical men; they are interested in results.

~Allen Tate

Struck in the wet mire Four thousand leagues from the ninth buried city  
I thought of Troy, what we had built her for.

~Allen Tate

I thought I heard the dark pounding its head On a rock, crying: Who are  
the dead?

~Allen Tate

We know the particular poem, not what it says that we can restate.

~Allen Tate

Dark accurate plunger down the successive knell Of arch on arch,  
where ogives burst a red Reverberance of hail upon the dead Thunder  
like an exploding crucible!

~Allen Tate

Yevgeny Yevtushenko is a ham actor, not a poet.

~Allen Tate

Good manners, Madam, are had these days not For your asking, nor  
mine, nor what-we-used-to-be's. The day is a loud grenade that bursts  
a smile Of serious weeds in a comic lily plot.

~Allen Tate

Swimmer of noonday, lean for the perfect dive To the dead Mother's  
face, whose subtile down You had not seen take amber light alive.

~Allen Tate

I am not ridiculing verbal mechanisms, dreams, or repressions as  
origins of poetry; all three of them and more besides may have a great  
deal to do with it.

~Allen Tate

My darling boy whom I shall never know, My son, I love you in my deepest fears.

~Allen Tate

For often at Church I've seen the stained high glass Pour out the Virgin and Saints, twist and untwist The mortal youth of Christ astride an ass.

~Allen Tate

Ah, Christ, I love you rings to the wild sky And I must think a little of the past: When I was ten I told a stinking lie That got a black boy whipped.

~Allen Tate

Let us lie down once more by the breathing side Of Ocean, where our live forefathers sleep As if the Known Sea still were a month wide-- Atlantis howls but is no longer steep!

~Allen Tate

The dreary flies, lazy and casual, Stick to the ceiling, buzz along the wall. O heart, the spider shuffles from the mould Weaving, between the pinks and grapes, his pall.

~Allen Tate

There is a calm for you where men and women Unroll the chill precision of moving feet.

~Allen Tate

How does one happen to write a poem: where does it come from? That is the question asked by the psychologists or the geneticists of poetry.

~Allen Tate

we know our end A packet of worm-seed, a garden of spent tissues.

~Allen Tate

For intellect is a mansion where waste is without drain.

~Allen Tate

Let us begin to understand the argument. There is a solution to everything: Science.

~Allen Tate

All the sea-gods are dead. You, Venus, come home To your salt maidenhead.

~Allen Tate

So the dubbed conceit Played nursery of cheat To clear the I of sleet.

~Allen Tate

William Blake cursed the flesh for a clod, Yet of some of his sayings we Moderns have heard tell: 'The nakedness of woman is the work of God', Or that title--The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

~Allen Tate

Last night I fled until I came To streets where leaking casements dripped Stale lamplight from the corpse of flame; A nervous window bled.

~Allen Tate

Walk in this faithless grass with studious tread, Lest mice, weasels, germane beasts, too soon The tall hat and eyes, the fierce feet, for dead Descry, and fix you prone in their revelling moon.

~Allen Tate

The torrent of the reaching shade Broke shadow into all its parts, What then had been of shadow made Found exigence in fits and starts.

~Allen Tate

Death's long anabasis.



~Allen Tate

I say that what one loves is best: The midnight fastness of the heart.

~Allen Tate

Our loss put six feet under ground Is measured by the magnolia's root;  
Our gain's the intellectual sound Of death's feet round a weedy tomb.

~Allen Tate

Punctilious abyss, the yawn of space Come once a day to suffocate the sight.

~Allen Tate

And I have seen long fingers that would stare With fiery eyes, and then  
the eyes would crawl Deftly across the counterpane and fall Soundless,  
with a wink of mild despair.

~Allen Tate

What was I saying? An Egyptian king Once touched long fingers, which  
are not anything.

~Allen Tate

The idiot greens the meadow with his eyes, The meadow creeps  
implacable and still; A dog barks, the hammock swings, he lies. One  
two three the cows bulge on the hill.

~Allen Tate

Culture is the study of perfection, and the constant effort to achieve it.

~Allen Tate

What is the poem, after it is written? That is the question. Not where it  
came from or why.

~Allen Tate

Men cannot live forever But they must die forever.

~Allen Tate

I believe the term modulation denotes in music the uninterrupted shift from one key to another: I do not know the term for change of rhythm without change of measure.

~Allen Tate

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