

# Ben Lerner Quotes

*Thinking, Fiction, Art, Writing, Real, Book, Way, Past, Order, Cutting, Reading,  
Want, Firefly, Dream, Contemporary Fiction, Kind, Stories, Character, Lost, Self*

When the narrator feels like an octopus, when he says his limbs are starting to multiply, he means he has inklings of orders of perception beyond his individual body.

~Ben Lerner

Art has to offer something other than stylized despair.

~Ben Lerner

I'm defending fiction as a human capacity more than as a popular or dying literary genre.

~Ben Lerner

I'll work my way from irony to sincerity in the sinking city, a would-be Whitman of the vulnerable grid.

~Ben Lerner

Shaving is a way to start the workday by ritually not cutting your throat when you've the chance.

~Ben Lerner

The transpersonal is more awe-inspiring, more exciting than the thing we confuse it for.

~Ben Lerner

I came to realize that far more important to me than any plot or conventional sense was the sheer directionality I felt while reading prose, the texture of time as it passed, life's white machine.

~Ben Lerner

I have no interest in artists who are purely affirmative, who've made a commercialized fetish of the culture's stupidity.

~Ben Lerner

Many of the left thinkers that really matter to me - that formed a big part

of my thinking about politics and art - emphasize how capitalism is a totality, how there's no escape from it, no outside.

~Ben Lerner

Experiments with the "as if" of fiction are often more lively in poetry and criticism and other modes of writing than in weak short stories or novels.

~Ben Lerner

My concern is how we live fictions, how fictions have real effects, become facts in that sense, and how our experience of the world changes depending on its arrangement into one narrative or another.

~Ben Lerner

I didn't want to write another book about fraudulence.

~Ben Lerner

Are there are fireflies on the West Coast? I never saw any when I lived in California.

~Ben Lerner

Most of us start from that position of irony now and what I wanted to do - really felt like I had to do if I was going to write another novel - was move towards something like sincerity.

~Ben Lerner

Every relationship can feel saturated by market logic or at best purchased at the price of the immiseration of others.

~Ben Lerner

I like to think - knowing that it's an enabling fiction - of those moments as fragments from a world to come, a world where price isn't the only measure of value.

~Ben Lerner

Maybe that's the way I'm private - I respect the privacy of "my" characters? Anyway, we're getting close to the whole "relatability" and "likability" thing.

~Ben Lerner

I'm trying to be somebody on whom the experience is lost by supplanting it with its telling. I definitely do that in medical contexts, even in trivial ones.

~Ben Lerner

Henry James claim that if you want to be a novelist you should be somebody on whom nothing is lost.

~Ben Lerner

The story and the poem are obviously changed by being placed in the novel, so in a sense they're no longer the works that preceded the novel.

~Ben Lerner

I've been building a fiction in part around the Marfa poem since my brief residency there, which has kept it from receding into the past.

~Ben Lerner

The scare quotes burn off like fog.

~Ben Lerner

Just in case God isn't dead, our astronauts carry sidearms.

~Ben Lerner

What interests me about fiction is, in part, its flickering edge between realism and where a tear in the fabric of a story lets in some other sort of light.

~Ben Lerner

I guess when I'm frightened or in pain or maybe very bored I've tried to hold myself together by imposing a narrative order on the experience as it happens.

~Ben Lerner

I wasn't aware I'd write the novel when I wrote the New Yorker story either. And the narration of their construction in 10:04 is fiction, however flickering.

~Ben Lerner

I was a violent, bipolar, compulsive liar. I was a real American.

~Ben Lerner

I think the anti-intellectualism of a lot of contemporary fiction is a kind of despairing of literature's ability to be anything more than perfectly bound blog posts or transcribed sitcoms.

~Ben Lerner

### **Related Links:**

- Thinking Quotes
- Fiction Quotes
- Art Quotes
- Writing Quotes
- Real Quotes
- Book Quotes
- Way Quotes
- Past Quotes
- Order Quotes
- Cutting Quotes
- Reading Quotes
- Want Quotes
- Firefly Quotes
- Dream Quotes
- Contemporary Fiction Quotes
- Kind Quotes
- Stories Quotes
- Character Quotes
- Lost Quotes
- Self Quotes