

Colum McCann Quotes

*Thinking, Stories, People, Writing, Years, Real, Heaven, Men, Memories, Cities,
Alive, Pain, Heart, Character, Sometimes, Looks, Book, World, Fiction, Lasts*

The world spins. We stumble on. It is enough.

~Colum McCann

I write about what I know; and I write about things that are new to me, and that I didn't know before.

~Colum McCann

The thing about love is that we come alive in bodies not our own.

~Colum McCann

Long ago, long ago. The simple things come back to us. They rest for a moment by our ribcages then suddenly reach in and twist our hearts a notch backward.

~Colum McCann

There are moments we return to, now and always. Family is like water - it has a memory of what it once filled, always trying to get back to the original stream.

~Colum McCann

There's a part of me that thinks perhaps we go on existing in a place even after we've left it.

~Colum McCann

We have to admire the world for not ending on us.

~Colum McCann

It was a silence that heard itself, awful and beautiful.

~Colum McCann

Even if people laughed at the notion of goodness, if they found it sentimental, or nostalgic, it didn't matter -- it was none of those things, he said, and it had to be fought for.

~Colum McCann

Give life long enough and it will solve all your problems, including the one of being alive.

~Colum McCann

People are good or half good or a quarter good, and it changes all the time- but even on the best day nobody's perfect.

~Colum McCann

She was tired of everyone wanting to go to heaven, nobody wanting to die. The only thing worth grieving over, she said, was that sometimes there was more beauty in this life than the world could bear.

~Colum McCann

I sit there thinking about how much courage it takes to live an ordinary life.

~Colum McCann

Stories are the best democracy we have. We are allowed to become the other we never dreamed we could be.

~Colum McCann

She's always thought that one of the beauties of New York is that you can be from anywhere and within moments of landing it's yours.

~Colum McCann

Literature can remind us that not all life is already written down: there are still so many stories to be told.

~Colum McCann

Part of the beauty of fiction is that we come alive in a body that we don't own.

~Colum McCann

Pain's nothing. Pain's what you give, not what you get.

~Colum McCann

We have to listen to other people's stories. That's the thing. And that's the only way that we eventually get to know ourselves.

~Colum McCann

The person we know at first, she thinks, is not the one we know at last.

~Colum McCann

The contemporary American novelist benefits in a way from being ignored. It makes you angrier and makes you want to go into all of those places where you shouldn't.

~Colum McCann

She likes the people with the endurance to tolerate the drudge, the ones who know that pain is a requirement, not a curse.

~Colum McCann

There are no days more full than those we go back to.

~Colum McCann

Novels are more difficult simply because they are longer and require more juggling, but short stories are closer to perfection, if you can get the language right.

~Colum McCann

We shape ourselves by our imaginative reach.

~Colum McCann

The world does not turn without moments of grace. Who cares how small.

~Colum McCann

The repeated lies become history, but they don't necessarily become

the truth.

~Colum McCann

People think they know the mystery of living in your skin. They don't. There's no one who knows except the person who carts it around her own self.

~Colum McCann

We stumble on, thinks Jaslyn, bring a little noise into the silence, find in others the ongoing of ourselves. It is almost enough.

~Colum McCann

Even if you're going to die, you might as well die pretty.

~Colum McCann

Personally, I like the social novel. I like writing that gets in and under the hood and looks about - at what's going on. But I don't say to any writer that that's absolutely what they should do.

~Colum McCann

Ultimately, you can only ever write what you know. It's logically and philosophically impossible to write what you don't know.

~Colum McCann

There are fewer and fewer Jews in Ireland, but we still have one of the most famous Jewish characters in literary history, of course, in Leopold Bloom.

~Colum McCann

One small cloud, cast out by the herd, limps away to the west.

~Colum McCann

And I suddenly think, as I look across the table at him, that these are the days as they will be. This is the future as we see it. The swerve and

the static. The confidence and the doubt.

~Colum McCann

She was forever tilted sideways by the notion that pain was inevitable, chance was cruel, and all human ingenuity should go towards the making of a good cup of tea.

~Colum McCann

There are rocks deep enough in this earth that no matter what the rupture, they will never see the surface. There is, I think, a fear of love. There is a fear of love.

~Colum McCann

The Irish are great for their tunes, but all their lovesongs are sad and their warsongs happy.

~Colum McCann

TÃ©a Obrecht is the most thrilling literary discovery in years

~Colum McCann

I'm only telling you on the truth," he said. "If you can't stand the truth, don't ask for it.

~Colum McCann

You can count the dead, but you can't count the cost. We've got no math for Heaven.

~Colum McCann

Whatever you say, say nothing.

~Colum McCann

One look at each other and it was immediately understood that they both needed a clean slate,,, The obliteration of memory.

~Colum McCann

...it was necessary to love silence, but before you could love silence you had to have noise.

~Colum McCann

He felt for a moment uncreated. Another kind of awake.

~Colum McCann

I think one of the biggest political failures, and the biggest social failures, over the past few years has been the failure of empathy; not being able to look at the other person down the street.

~Colum McCann

It had never occurred to me before but everything in New York is built upon another thing, nothing is entirely by itself, each thing as strange as the last, and connected.

~Colum McCann

He said to me once that most of the time people use the word love as just another way to show off they're hungry. The way he said it went something like: Glorify their appetites.

~Colum McCann

The stars looked like nail heads in the sky--pull a few of them out and the darkness would fall.

~Colum McCann

Let this be a lesson to us all, said the preacher. You will be walking someday in the dark and the truth will come shining through, and behind you will be a life that you never want to see again.

~Colum McCann

Yet she likes complications. She wishes she could turn and say: I like people who unbalance me.

~Colum McCann

This is not my life. These are not my cobwebs. This is not the darkness I was designed for.

~Colum McCann

Let it be. Silly song, really. You let it be, it returns. There's the truth. You let it be, it drags you to the ground. You let it be, it crawls up your walls.

~Colum McCann

He might have been naive, but he didn't care; he said he's rather die with his heart on his sleeve than end up another cynic.

~Colum McCann

The job of the writer is to look at where he is now and make some sort of emotional sense of it, not only for that moment but for years to come.

~Colum McCann

It struck me that distant cities are designed precisely so you can know where you came from.

~Colum McCann

They told me Corrigan smashed all the bones in his chest when he hit the steering wheel. I thought, Well at least in heaven his Spanish chick'll be able to reach in and grab his heart.

~Colum McCann

I have the most charmed, most - I feel entirely blessed and lucky that I have the life that I have.

~Colum McCann

Everything was fabulous, even our breakdowns.

~Colum McCann

...and it strikes her, as she walks, that borders, like hatred, are exaggerated precisely because otherwise they would cease to exist altogether.

~Colum McCann

A book is completed only when it is finished by a reader.

~Colum McCann

Good days, they come around the oddest corners.

~Colum McCann

He looks like the sort of man who can't afford to leave, and doesn't want to stay, and so he is doing both at once.

~Colum McCann

I think the Northern Ireland accent is one of the most beautiful in the world.

~Colum McCann

What was a life anyway? An accumulation of small shelves of incident.

~Colum McCann

Anakana Schofield is part of a new wave of wonderful Irish fiction-international in scope and electrically alive.

~Colum McCann

I write articles, and I do profiles of members of organizations and associations.

~Colum McCann

That's what sons do: write to their mothers about recall, tell themselves about the past until they come to realize that they are the past.

~Colum McCann

Every man with his own peculiar vice. His will hardly rock heaven or hell.

~Colum McCann

I grew up sort of middle class, safe and suburban.

~Colum McCann

With all respects to heaven, I like it here.

~Colum McCann

If they ask you to stand still, you should dance.

~Colum McCann

Words are good for saying what things are, but sometimes they don't function for what things aren't.

~Colum McCann

How inevitable it is; we step into an ordinary moment and never come out again.

~Colum McCann

So much of her time spent like this: dreaming up things to say and never quite saying them.

~Colum McCann

I'm a complete and utter fiction. Then again, we all are.

~Colum McCann

The point of flight. To get rid of oneself. That was reason enough to fly.

~Colum McCann

Life must pass through difficulty in order to achieve any modicum of beauty.

~Colum McCann

It is not fashionable anymore, I suppose, to have a regard for one's mother in the way my brother and I had then, in the mid-1950s, when the noise outside the window was mostly wind and sea chime.

~Colum McCann

I don't know of a greater privilege than being allowed to tell a story, or to listen to a story. They're the only thing we have that can trump life itself.

~Colum McCann

The essence of intelligence was to know when, or if, to expose even the heart's deep need for instruction.

~Colum McCann

Sometimes, in life, nothing happens. But, sometimes, nothing happens beautifully.

~Colum McCann

I gave them all the truth and none of the honesty.

~Colum McCann

Pain is not wat you get, it is wat you give.

~Colum McCann

Memory has a heavy backspin, yet it's still impossible to land exactly where we took off.

~Colum McCann

There is always room for at least two truths.

~Colum McCann

You cannot read any image of the World Trade Center without thinking of 9/11.

~Colum McCann

Where happiness was not a possibility, the illusion of it was always more important.

~Colum McCann

He realized that he had thought only about the first step, never imagined the last.

~Colum McCann

Things in life have no real beginning, though our stories about them always do.

~Colum McCann

I have different books for different times of the day, let alone different seasons of the year!

~Colum McCann

The luxury of age was the giving up of vanity.

~Colum McCann

Cynicism is easy. An optimist is a braver cynic.

~Colum McCann

The real beauty in life is that beauty can sometimes occur.

~Colum McCann

I guess this is what marriage is, or was, or could be. You drop the mask. You allow the fatigue in. You lean across and kiss the years because they're the things that matter.

~Colum McCann

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