

David Antin

Quotes

*Thinking, Ideas, Entertainment, Language, Giving, Stories, Mother, Writing,
Want, Way, Remember, Song, Memories, Chickens, Theory, Pay, Novel,
College, Together, James Watt*

When you grow up in a family of languages, you develop a kind of casual fluency, so that languages, though differently colored, all seem transparent to experience.

~David Antin

While I don't script and I don't use other performers, I think my taste for underlying precision gives me something in common with Allan and George Brecht.

~David Antin

I wanted to be an inventor, whatever I thought that meant then. I guess I was thinking of Edison or maybe James Watt. Or maybe even Newton.

~David Antin

From this entertainment industry, may the gods of language protect us.

~David Antin

The ancient Greek "oral poets" all had this anxiety about the deficiencies of their memories and always began poems by praying to the muse to help them remember.

~David Antin

I learned enough Hebrew to stagger through a meaningless ceremony that I scarcely remember.

~David Antin

I was very committed to the process of composing, working at poems, putting things together and taking them apart like some kind of experimental filmmaker.

~David Antin

I'm not sure what theory is, unless it's the pursuit of fundamental questions.

~David Antin

I tended to emphasize the secular, the casual, the colloquial, the vernacular against the sacred.

~David Antin

For several centuries what has passed for song in literary circles was any text that looked like the lyrics for a commonplace melodic setting.

~David Antin

When my mother left her second husband, she wrote her autobiography and presented it to him for his approval.

~David Antin

The self is an oral society in which the present is constantly running a dialogue with the past and the future inside of one skin.

~David Antin

I was trying to find out what it was that everybody else understood without giving up my stubborn and hard-won lack of understanding.

~David Antin

I reserve the right to tell shaggy dog stories or even common jokes as part of what I'm doing. I don't give a damn if half the audience walks out.

~David Antin

There are editing procedures for talks just as there are editing procedures in jazz improvisation.

~David Antin

The Sophists' paradoxical talk pieces and their public debates were entertainment in 5th century Greece. And in that world, Socrates was an entertainer.

~David Antin

A myth is the name of a terrible lie told by a smelly little brown person to a man in a white suit with a pair of binoculars.

~David Antin

I have spoken to expert audiences occasionally, but then no audience is expert over the whole range of things I want to explore.

~David Antin

My way of thinking is very particular and concrete. It doesn't follow a continuous path.

~David Antin

It's hard being a hostage in somebody else's mouth - or a character in somebody else's novel.

~David Antin

I am quite unsatisfied by the distinctions between the oral and literate.

~David Antin

My rejection of the idea of entertainment in its current form is based on the audience that comes with it.

~David Antin

I'm aware of my audience in a way, and I do try to engage with them while I'm trying to go about my business of thinking. I believe they help me by providing a focus.

~David Antin

Disney made a fortune out of inventing the businessman's idea of the imaginary as the contradictory of the businessman's idea of the real.

~David Antin

Stories are different every time you tell them - they allow so many possible narratives.

~David Antin

Children frequently sing meaningful phrases to themselves over and over again before they learn to make a distinction between singing and saying.

~David Antin

My mother turned into a professional widow. She couldn't understand why I wanted to be an engineer; she thought I should be a chicken farmer.

~David Antin

I'm standing up thinking. Anybody who wants to listen is welcome. If not, I'm happy to see them go.

~David Antin

I didn't think about whether I was writing poems. I was thinking. And the more I was thinking, the more there was I didn't understand.

~David Antin

An art machine is a system whose parts when put in motion act upon each other in such a way as to cause you to see things differently

~David Antin

While I've had a great distaste for what's usually called song in modern poetry or for what's usually called music, I really don't think of speech as so far from song.

~David Antin

I've always had a strong feeling for the Statue of Liberty, because it became the statue of my personal liberty.

~David Antin

You pay your money, you take your choice. I get the audience my language attracts and I lose the ones it repels.

~David Antin

I can manage a prose format as long as I keep closer to Laurence Sterne than to Henry James.

~David Antin

I had no idea where these kids at a small private college in the San Fernando Valley were coming from, why they were coming to hear me, or what they needed to know.

~David Antin

I hardly remember how I started to write poetry. It's hard to imagine what I thought poetry could do.

~David Antin

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