

Derek Walcott

Quotes

*Mirrors, Language, Trying, Heart, Writing, Believe, Stars, Landscape, Memories,
Special, Art, Evil, Wine, Islands, Wind, Lemons, Real, Meter, Scream, Time*

For every poet it is always morning in the world; history a forgotten, insomniac night. The fate of poetry is to fall in love with the world in spite of history.

~Derek Walcott

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole.

~Derek Walcott

Summer for prose and lemons, for nakedness and languor.

~Derek Walcott

Good science and good art are always about a condition of awe. I don't think there is any other function for the poet or the scientist in the human tribe but the astonishment of the soul.

~Derek Walcott

The English language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination: it is the property of the language itself.

~Derek Walcott

The sigh of History rises over ruins, not over landscapes, and in the Antilles there are few ruins to sigh over, apart from the ruins of sugar estates and abandoned forts.

~Derek Walcott

The future happens. No matter how much we scream.

~Derek Walcott

Memory that yearns to join the centre, a limb remembering the body from which it has been severed, like those bamboo thighs of the god.

~Derek Walcott

The time will come when, with elation, you will greet yourself arriving at

your own door, in your own mirror, and each will smile at the other's welcome.

~Derek Walcott

If you know what you are going to write when you're writing a poem, it's going to be average.

~Derek Walcott

I come from a place that likes grandeur; it likes large gestures; it is not inhibited by flourish; it is a rhetorical society; it is a society of physical performance; it is a society of style.

~Derek Walcott

I read; I travel; I become

~Derek Walcott

Visual surprise is natural in the Caribbean; it comes with the landscape, and faced with its beauty, the sigh of History dissolves.

~Derek Walcott

I have never separated the writing of poetry from prayer. I have grown up believing it is a vocation, a religious vocation.

~Derek Walcott

Time is the metre, memory the only plot.

~Derek Walcott

Peel your own image from the mirror. Sit. Feast on your life.

~Derek Walcott

A culture, we all know, is made by its cities.

~Derek Walcott

There's always more to see.

~Derek Walcott

The truest writers are those who see language not as a linguistic process but as a living element.

~Derek Walcott

What are men? Children who doubt.

~Derek Walcott

The mirror is believed the way a poem is believed. It's believed because it's there.

~Derek Walcott

When you get a class reciting some great poems, it'll tear your heart out.

~Derek Walcott

Any serious attempt to try to do something worthwhile is ritualistic.

~Derek Walcott

To change your language you must change your life.

~Derek Walcott

Slowly my body grows a single sound, slowly I become a bell, an oval, disembodied vowel, I grow, an owl, an aureole, white fire poesia

"Metamorfosi, I. Luna

~Derek Walcott

The thing that is believed is a reality.

~Derek Walcott

The personal vocabulary, the individual melody whose metre is one's biography, joins in that sound, with any luck, and the body moves like a walking, a waking island.

~Derek Walcott

I try to forget what happiness was, and when that don't work, I study the stars.

~Derek Walcott

The poem is itself a mirror.

~Derek Walcott

The word and the shadow of the word / makes a thing both itself and something else / till we are metaphors and not ourselves . . .

~Derek Walcott

We make too much of that long groan which underlines the past.

~Derek Walcott

The English language is nobody's special property.

~Derek Walcott

The voice does go up in a poem. It is an address, even if it is to oneself.

~Derek Walcott

How can I turn from Africa and live?

~Derek Walcott

Damn wind shift sudden as a woman mind.

~Derek Walcott

Art is History's nostalgia, it prefers a thatched roof to a concrete factory, and the huge church above a bleached village.

~Derek Walcott

I look in the mirror. There's me. What's in the mirror is not real. So am I

unreal?

~Derek Walcott

We read, we travel, we become.

~Derek Walcott

We look and see what we see in a mirror, and we believe it. That's important, the question of belief. The question is: Should we believe what we see in a mirror?

~Derek Walcott

You can't write drunk.

~Derek Walcott

The classics can console. But not enough.

~Derek Walcott

In Eden who sleeps happiest? The serpent.

~Derek Walcott

She's a rare vase, out of a cat's reach, on its shelf.

~Derek Walcott

I too saw the wooden horse blocking the stars.

~Derek Walcott

The truth is that the poems are ecstatic.

~Derek Walcott

Who cares about a kid from the Midwest writing pentameter? It's stupid.

~Derek Walcott

All of Victorian verse is pentameter.

~Derek Walcott

Americans are not brought up with meter. They're not brought up with poetry. If you try to get them to recite, they're too embarrassed.

~Derek Walcott

When poems are no good they don't make any sense.

~Derek Walcott

The first thing we have to do is get rid of the pentameter. To ditch the pentameter.

~Derek Walcott

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