

Diane Ackerman

Quotes

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Look in the mirror. The face that pins you with its double gaze reveals a chastening secret.

~Diane Ackerman

Nothing is more memorable than a smell. One scent can be unexpected, momentary and fleeting, yet conjure up a childhood summer beside a lake in the mountains...

~Diane Ackerman

I don't want to get to the end of my life and find that I lived just the length of it. I want to have lived the width of it as well.

~Diane Ackerman

It began in mystery, and it will end in mystery, but what a savage and beautiful country lies in between.

~Diane Ackerman

I swear I will not dishonor my soul with hatred, but offer myself humbly as a guardian of nature, as a healer of misery, as a messenger of wonder, as an architect of peace.

~Diane Ackerman

Wonder is the heaviest element on the periodic table. Even a tiny fleck of it stops time.

~Diane Ackerman

No matter how politely one says it, we owe our existence to the farts of blue-green algae.

~Diane Ackerman

Words are such small things, like confetti in the brain, and yet they are color and clarify everything, they can stain the mind or warp the feelings.

~Diane Ackerman

The heart is a museum, filled with the exhibits of a lifetime's loves.

~Diane Ackerman

We live on the leash of our senses. There is no way in which to understand the world without first detecting it through the radar-net of our senses.

~Diane Ackerman

Fear is danger to your body, but disgust is danger to your soul.

~Diane Ackerman

I don't want to be a passenger in my own life.

~Diane Ackerman

Hit a tripwire of smell and memories explode all at once. A complex vision leaps out of the undergrowth.

~Diane Ackerman

American writer 1803-1882 Play is our brain's favorite way of learning.

~Diane Ackerman

Knee-deep in the cosmic overwhelm, I'm stricken by the ricochet wonder of it all: the plain everythingness of everything, in cahoots with the everythingness of everything else.

~Diane Ackerman

Much of life becomes background, but it is the province of art to throw buckets of light into the shadows and make life new again.

~Diane Ackerman

Nature is more like a seesaw than a crystal, a never-ending conga line of bold moves and corrections.

~Diane Ackerman

Give a man enough rope and he'll wrap himself around your little finger.

~Diane Ackerman

I am a great fan of the universe, which I take literally: as one. All of it interests me, and it interests me in detail.

~Diane Ackerman

In the winter, I enjoy cross-country skiing and raising orchids and amaryllises. If I could grow tropical flowers as perennials, I would, especially hibiscus and mandavilla.

~Diane Ackerman

Not much is known about alligators. They don't train well. And they're unwieldy and rowdy to work with in laboratories.

~Diane Ackerman

Everyone admits that love is wonderful and necessary, yet no one agrees on just what it is.

~Diane Ackerman

We evolved as creatures knitted into the fabric of nature, and without its intimate truths, we can find ourselves unraveling.

~Diane Ackerman

Look at your feet. You are standing in the sky. When we think of the sky, we tend to look up, but the sky actually begins at the earth.

~Diane Ackerman

[On gardens:] I think they're sanctuaries for the mind and spirit. ... It's easy to feel wonder-struck in a garden, especially if you cultivate delight.

~Diane Ackerman

The senses don't just make sense of life in bold or subtle acts of clarity, they tear reality apart into vibrant morsels and reassemble them into a meaningful pattern.

~Diane Ackerman

habit, a particularly insidious thug who chokes passion and smothers love. Habit puts us on autopilot.

~Diane Ackerman

We can't enchant the world, which makes its own magic; but we can enchant ourselves by paying deep attention

~Diane Ackerman

Love is the best school, but the tuition is high and the homework can be painful.

~Diane Ackerman

For the longest time I didn't realize I was creative - I just thought I was strange.

~Diane Ackerman

Nature is also great fun. To pretend that nature isn't fun is to miss much of the joy of being alive.

~Diane Ackerman

Human beings are sloshing sacks of chemicals on the move.

~Diane Ackerman

People search for love as if it were a city lost beneath the desert dunes, where pleasure is the law, the streets are lined with brocade cushions, and the sun never sets.

~Diane Ackerman

Variety is the pledge that matter makes to living things.

~Diane Ackerman

Touch seems to be as essential as sunlight.

~Diane Ackerman

Success produces success, just as money produces money.

~Diane Ackerman

As a species, we've somehow survived large and small ice ages, genetic bottlenecks, plagues, world wars and all manner of natural disasters, but I sometimes wonder if we'll survive our own ingenuity.

~Diane Ackerman

To begin to understand the gorgeous fever that is consciousness, we must try to understand the senses and what they can tell us about the ravishing world we have the privilege to inhabit.

~Diane Ackerman

I'm sure civilizations will still evolve through play, or rather as play, since that seems to be a fundamental mechanism of our humanity.

~Diane Ackerman

In the absence of touching and being touched, people of all ages can sicken and grow touched starved. Touch seems to be as essential as sunlight.

~Diane Ackerman

There are well-dressed foolish ideas just as there are well-dressed fools.

~Diane Ackerman

Nature neither gives nor expects mercy.

~Diane Ackerman

Wonder is a bulky emotion. When you let it fill your heart and mind, there isn't room for anxiety, distress or anything else.

~Diane Ackerman

We are defined by how we place our attention.

~Diane Ackerman

Words are small shapes in the gorgeous chaos of the world.

~Diane Ackerman

A kiss is like singing into someone's mouth.

~Diane Ackerman

Don't just live the length of your life - live the width of it as well.

~Diane Ackerman

When I go biking, I am mentally far far away from civilization. The world is breaking someone else's heart.

~Diane Ackerman

Love is like a batik created from many emotional colors, it is a fabric whose pattern and brightness may vary.

~Diane Ackerman

... love is an act of sedition, a revolt against reason, an uprising in the body politic, a private mutiny.

~Diane Ackerman

Love, like truth, is the unassailable defense.

~Diane Ackerman

The knowing, I told myself, is only a vapor of the mind, and yet it can wreck havoc with one's sanity.

~Diane Ackerman

Who you are isn't tied solely to what you say, even though it may feel that way to you now.

~Diane Ackerman

Artificial intelligence is growing up fast, as are robots whose facial expressions can elicit empathy and make your mirror neurons quiver.

~Diane Ackerman

Though we marry as adults, we don't marry adults. We marry children who have grown up and still rejoice in being children, especially if we're creative.

~Diane Ackerman

Poetry is an act of distillation. It takes contingency samples, is selective. It telescopes time. It focuses what most often floods past us in a polite blur.

~Diane Ackerman

poetry had everything to teach me about life.

~Diane Ackerman

Because poets feel what we're afraid to feel, venture where we're reluctant to go, we learn from their journeys without taking the same dramatic risks.

~Diane Ackerman

After all, coffee is bitter, a flavor from the forbidden and dangerous realm.

~Diane Ackerman

Violets smell like burnt sugar cubes that have been dipped in lemon and velvet.

~Diane Ackerman

In Manhattan last month I heard a woman borrowing the jargon of junkies to say to another, 'Want to do some chocolate?'

~Diane Ackerman

Poetry reminds us of the truths about life and human nature that we knew all along, but forgot somehow because they weren't yet in memorable language.

~Diane Ackerman

It's essential to tailor rehab to what impassions someone. The brain gradually learns by riveting its attention-through endless repetitions.

~Diane Ackerman

The more we exile ourselves from nature, the more we crave its miracle waters.

~Diane Ackerman

Above all, we ask the poet to teach us a way of seeing.

~Diane Ackerman

Libraries change lives. They are the soul of a people.

~Diane Ackerman

A poem records emotions and moods that lie beyond normal language, that can only be patched together and hinted at metaphorically.

~Diane Ackerman

I'm certainly not opposed to digital technology, whose graces I daily enjoy and rely on in so many ways. But I worry about our virtual blinders.

~Diane Ackerman

There's no place you can go on the prairie that you don't hear the white noise of the wind, steady and rough as surf curling along a non-existent

shore.

~Diane Ackerman

Shaped a little like a loaf of French country bread, our brain is a crowded chemistry lab, bustling with nonstop neural conversations.

~Diane Ackerman

I like handling newborn animals. Fallen into life from an unmappable world, they are the ultimate immigrants, full of wonder and confusion.

~Diane Ackerman

What an odd, ruminating, noisy, self-interrupting conversation we conduct with ourselves from birth to death.

~Diane Ackerman

Like love, travel makes you innocent again.

~Diane Ackerman

We live on the leash of our senses.

~Diane Ackerman

Tranquillity hides in small spaces, and when found needs to be treasured, because you know it's a phantom that will slip away again.

~Diane Ackerman

For me, life offers so many complexly appealing moments that two beautiful objects may be equally beautiful for different reasons and at different times. How can one choose?

~Diane Ackerman

The visual image is a kind of tripwire for the emotions.

~Diane Ackerman

If cynicism is inevitable as one ages, so is the yearning for innocence.

To children heaven is being an adult, and to adults heaven is being children again.

~Diane Ackerman

Words are small shapes in the gorgeous chaos of the world. ... they bring the world into focus, they corral ideas, they hone thoughts, they paint watercolors of perception.

~Diane Ackerman

We're losing biodiversity globally at an alarming rate, and we need a cornucopia of different plants and animals, for the planet's health and our own.

~Diane Ackerman

One of the keystones of romantic love - and also of the ecstatic religion practiced by mystics - is the powerful desire to become one with the beloved.

~Diane Ackerman

And yet, words are the passkeys to our souls. Without them, we can't really share the enormity of our lives.

~Diane Ackerman

Smell is the mute sense, the one without words.

~Diane Ackerman

Our sense of safety depends on predictability, so anything living outside the usual rules we suspect to be an outlaw, a ghoul.

~Diane Ackerman

We have vexed and bothered every plant and every animal on every continent.

~Diane Ackerman

I hate the fearful trimming of possibilities that age brings.

~Diane Ackerman

Adventure is not something you travel to find. It's something you take with you, or you're not going to find it when you arrive.

~Diane Ackerman

It's animal by animal that you save a species.

~Diane Ackerman

the biggest threat to the religious experience may well come from organized religion itself.

~Diane Ackerman

I watched her face switch among the radio stations of memory

~Diane Ackerman

Life is a thing that mutates without warning, not always in enviable ways. All part of the improbable adventure of being alive, of being a brainy biped with giant dreams on a crazy blue planet.

~Diane Ackerman

Adult bats don't weigh much. They're mainly fur and appetite.

~Diane Ackerman

In the early years of the Uprising, we survived on one meal a day of horse meat and soup, but by the end we ate only dried peas, dogs, cats and birds.

~Diane Ackerman

Complexity excites the mind, and order rewards it. In the garden, one finds both, including vanishingly small orders too complex to spot, and orders so vast the mind struggles to embrace them.

~Diane Ackerman

Mystery causes a mental itch, which the brain tries to soothe with the balm of reasonable talk.

~Diane Ackerman

Nothing reveals more about the inner life of a people than their arts.

~Diane Ackerman

Who would drink from a cup when they can drink from the source?

~Diane Ackerman

Of all the errands life seems to be running, of all the mysteries that enchant us, love is my favorite

~Diane Ackerman

We humans are obsessed with lights...Perhaps it is our way of hurling the constellations back at the sky.

~Diane Ackerman

Horses have made civilization possible.

~Diane Ackerman

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