

Edward Hirsch

Quotes

Thinking, Writing, Trying, Reading, Poet, Book, People, Needs, Feelings, Two, Space, School, Able, Sometimes, Art, Fiction, Different, Mean, Ideas, Character

Reading poetry is an adventure in renewal, a creative act, a perpetual beginning, a rebirth of wonder.

~Edward Hirsch

Language is an impure medium. Speech is public property and words are the soiled products, not of nature, but of society, which circulates and uses them for a thousand different ends.

~Edward Hirsch

There has never been a great poet who wasn't also a great reader of poetry.

~Edward Hirsch

But, something has to be worked through formally as well as emotionally. Now, when those two things come together I've got something, I think, that I can be proud of.

~Edward Hirsch

The way to become a poet is to read poetry and to imitate what you read and to read passionately and widely and in as involved a way as you can.

~Edward Hirsch

I put down these memorandums of my affections in honor of tenderness, in honor of all of those who have been conscripted into the brotherhood of loss.

~Edward Hirsch

The spiritual desire for poetry can be overwhelming, so much do I need it to experience and name my own perilous depths and vast spaces, my own well-being.

~Edward Hirsch

A poem is a hand, a hook, a prayer. It is a soul in action.

~Edward Hirsch

I was surprised recently to find a book called "Poetry in Persons" that's coming out about visit to poets to a class that Pearl London gave.

~Edward Hirsch

But, the best times I have found, in my life, are late at night or early in the morning and I think it's because you're outside the social realm.

~Edward Hirsch

think what you hope for is that at different times of your life you're able to write the poetry that reflects the moment that you're in on your own journey.

~Edward Hirsch

A great model for this is the way that Dante calls on Virgil at the beginning of 'The Inferno,' 'The Divine Comedy,' to help guide him through the underworld.

~Edward Hirsch

Now, that can be a traditional form or it can be something you're inventing. It can be the development of a metaphor, the working through of a metaphor.

~Edward Hirsch

And what I've found over time is that for me to write a poem that I think is worthy that I can live with, two things have to happen.

~Edward Hirsch

Sometimes I have a feeling that I just can't get rid of. Sometimes there's an experience that I want to write about that I have to get off my chest. Sometimes there are some words that appeal to you.

~Edward Hirsch

I think one of the things that distinguished my work from the beginning when I was in college was my turning towards poetry from other countries.

~Edward Hirsch

A certain kind of poetry looks back at experience from an older perspective.

~Edward Hirsch

It's hard to think that say Shakespeare could have written "The Tempest" when he was young. It seems to be reflective work or retrospective work.

~Edward Hirsch

I don't think poetry will die, but I think that poetry does demand a certain kind of attention to language.

~Edward Hirsch

And when I'm writing well and when I'm inside the feeling, then I can do fairly complicated things with some fluency.

~Edward Hirsch

Now, as I've gotten older I've been able to write more quickly. Sometimes I get in the space of something and I can do a lot in a day.

~Edward Hirsch

So, the result though is by the time I've got something, it's been worked over so many times that although I do make changes as the end, often by the time I've gotten it, it's pretty much completed.

~Edward Hirsch

So, it's a continual process of trial and error and then I find things and I throw it out and start again, but I keep writing it over again.

~Edward Hirsch

I wish I wrote drafts and then revised them, but I don't. What I do is I seem to revise as I go.

~Edward Hirsch

I didn't sit down then and start writing poems, but it was in the back of my mind.

~Edward Hirsch

I think the culture can absorb so many people writing poetry and trying to earn their living in poetry.

~Edward Hirsch

I would keep in mind to a young poet that you are entering into something that is very important, that has always been important in terms of human concerns.

~Edward Hirsch

I would be happier if people who went through MFA programs also were already, by then, deeply committed readers of poetry because we need readers of poetry as much as writers of poetry.

~Edward Hirsch

The very good thing about MFA programs is their democratizing. They bring a lot of different people to the table.

~Edward Hirsch

First of all I think that poetry is very noble and I always have with me the sense of the nobility of poetry.

~Edward Hirsch

I think the deepest thing is that many fiction writers tell stories but are not elegant writers. But, we're not writing journalism when we're making literature.

~Edward Hirsch

I think it's true that that's something that poetry can go to school on fiction. I think poetry can go to fiction to learn.

~Edward Hirsch

When you find it you become the secret addressee of a literary text and I felt that their reader had been left out of this experience of reading poetry or what the experience of poetry was.

~Edward Hirsch

I think that's a connection that you can only hope for. It's not something that you can make because it needs someone else.

~Edward Hirsch

A stress on the system and I think a painful thing for many young poets who are looking to find a life in poetry that they're not going to be able to find.

~Edward Hirsch

The attention deficit disorder of the culture is very distressing in America now and I think it puts a lot of things at risk, not just poetry.

~Edward Hirsch

There's been no poet, no great poet in the history of poetry who hasn't also been a great reader of poetry. This is sometimes distressing to my students when I tell them this.

~Edward Hirsch

And sometimes you look at the first poems by someone and you go, "They have freshness and a sense of wonder that is never recaptured again by that poet."

~Edward Hirsch

But, that was the beginning, though I didn't start writing until I was in high school and when I was in high school I really began to write poetry

with great energy and enthusiasm.

~Edward Hirsch

In high school I was leafing through an anthology that our teachers had given up and I found a poem, I go, "That's so strange. This poem looks so much like my grandfather's poem."

~Edward Hirsch

I guess that would have been 1968. I was a freshman in college and I wasn't writing good poems, but I was at least trying to write poems then.

~Edward Hirsch

I think it's one of the things that drive lyric poetry, our sense of mortality.

~Edward Hirsch

Gertrude Stein said, "I write for myself and strangers." I would say I write for myself, strangers and the great dead.

~Edward Hirsch

I think fiction goes to poetry for the intensity of its use of language.

~Edward Hirsch

There's the brilliant audacity of youth that poets strike upon in their earliest work sometimes that they never can hit upon again.

~Edward Hirsch

I think that as long as you have other poets before you and that you can learn from them, then it's always open ended for you.

~Edward Hirsch

I don't think you can read poetry while you're watching television very well.

~Edward Hirsch

The poets needed to learn to pay greater attention to character and to narrative.

~Edward Hirsch

Sometimes the title comes to you at the beginning, sometimes it comes at the end. The very best way in my experience is when it comes in the middle.

~Edward Hirsch

And a lot of poetry is putting yourself back into the state of wonder that you have before things when you're a child. It's not only a joyous wonder, it's sometimes a grief stricken wonder.

~Edward Hirsch

As a reader you have a task to do, you have something to do. You bring your experience to it. It's not all inherit in the poem.

~Edward Hirsch

I am a tiny seashell that has secretly drifted ashore and carries the sound of the ocean surging through its body.

~Edward Hirsch

The poet wants justice. And the poet wants art. In poetry we can't have one without the other.

~Edward Hirsch

Civil religion gives American culture its direction and defines its fundamental values, but it does not determine the diversified contents of American national culture.

~Edward Hirsch

I did not know the work of mourning
Is a labor in the dark
We carry

inside ourselves

~Edward Hirsch

The idea of a poem as a message in a bottle means that it's sent out towards some future reader and the reader who opens that bottle becomes the addressee of the literary text.

~Edward Hirsch

You're alone with yourself and your own feelings and that gives you deeper access to what you need to get in touch with to write poetry.

~Edward Hirsch

Now, the process of writing poetry is very messy. Not systematic, never quite the same

~Edward Hirsch

It does demand a certain space in order to read it and I think that space is somewhat threatened by the lack of attention that people have and the amount of time that they give to things.

~Edward Hirsch

And when you are entering into poetry, whatever stage you're at, you are participating in something with a very long and noble tradition.

~Edward Hirsch

I need to live like that crooked tree--... that knelt down in the hardest winds but could not be blasted away.

~Edward Hirsch

I have tried to remember throughout that poetry is made by flesh-and-blood human beings. It is a bloody art. It lives on a human scale and thrives when it is passed from hand to hand.

~Edward Hirsch

There's always some place to go. You don't need workshops, you don't need friends necessarily, you can be befriended by literature itself.

~Edward Hirsch

Works of art imitate and provoke other works of art, the process is the source of art itself.

~Edward Hirsch

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