

Garth Greenwell

Quotes

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Bulgaria is a fascinating, beautiful, difficult country, and I fell in love with it.

~Garth Greenwell

It does seem like between the groundbreaking writing of Edmund White's generation and the work of younger gay writers in their twenties and thirties there is a kind of gap.

~Garth Greenwell

My first months in Sofia were a time of intense disorientation: I had never been to that part of the world before; I could barely speak the language; everything seemed strange to me.

~Garth Greenwell

I think it's harder to avoid reflection on those larger patterns of history or society when they so insistently call into question your right to exist.

~Garth Greenwell

Being a high school teacher was wonderful, but unsustainable: I needed a way out.

~Garth Greenwell

I realized that there was an intellectual content in music, a kind of thinking, that I would never be able to hear.

~Garth Greenwell

The academy is an incredibly sheltered world, and I do think it's important for writers to get out from under that shelter, at least for a while, to see what the world looks like from outside it.

~Garth Greenwell

I went back to graduate school because I wanted to avoid being a professional, to try to piece together a life that would let me avoid the tenure race and full-time teaching.

~Garth Greenwell

I am a gay writer, absolutely. And in no way does that fact limit the reach or importance of what I write.

~Garth Greenwell

I often say that Bernhard, W.G. Sebald, and Javier Marías are my stylistic holy trinity, prose writers who amaze me with their notation of consciousness and voice.

~Garth Greenwell

I take pleasure as a reader in books that tease with a kind of urgency of the real, even if it's only a manufactured effect.

~Garth Greenwell

I do think that calling a book nonfiction affirms a kind of responsibility to an attempt at truth.

~Garth Greenwell

Where the novel makes use of material from my life it does so because it's aesthetically convenient, not because of any allegiance it has to any verifiable facts.

~Garth Greenwell

Teaching high school was my real training as a novelist: it got me out of my head, and (at least a little) out of books, and invested me in the lives of others and the world around me.

~Garth Greenwell

I felt a lot of ambivalence about going back to graduate school for a second MFA. The impulse was really the opposite from what it had been more than a decade before: I wanted to interrupt a career.

~Garth Greenwell

I'm not sure I can articulate any principles behind the decisions about what to cut and what to keep.

~Garth Greenwell

There are lots of big books that have gay characters - or, more commonly, a gay character - in secondary roles, but seldom are their lives, and especially their sexual lives, on center stage.

~Garth Greenwell

Woolf is an important writer for me, someone I read often and who forms part of my ideal of what literature can do.

~Garth Greenwell

I'm drawn to fiction that hints at nonfiction, that blurs or seems to blur the boundaries between invention and autobiography.

~Garth Greenwell

When I took my first poetry class, I felt that I could understand the relationships between words and the formal qualities of language in a way I would never understand music.

~Garth Greenwell

History is never invisible, finally, though some people seem to work very hard to be willfully blind.

~Garth Greenwell

I think history is only ever invisible when it abets your sense of self, your desires, your ambitions, when it carries your life along in a kind of frictionless way.

~Garth Greenwell

None of us sees history fully; none of us is adequately aware of how the arrangements of the present moment foreclose the possibilities of others to fully live their only lives.

~Garth Greenwell

I studied opera, and when I left conservatory I told myself I would never sing in public again.

~Garth Greenwell

Whenever I go to New York I try to soak up as much live music as I can, including as many nights at the opera as I can manage.

~Garth Greenwell

Even though I don't sing any more, singing was my first education in the arts, and it's clear to me that my training as a musician also shaped me as a writer.

~Garth Greenwell

I think one reason I'm drawn to expansive syntax is that arias are so often exercises in extending language as a means of intensifying feeling.

~Garth Greenwell

I'm not sure any narrative model has been more important for me than Benjamin Britten's chamber operas.

~Garth Greenwell

For me, music was always a second language. I didn't have a musical background, and I started studying very late, at fourteen.

~Garth Greenwell

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