

# Gary Shteyngart Quotes

*Book, Thinking, Russia, Writing, Reading, People, Fiction, America, Country,  
Hands, Men, Drinking, World, Want, Needs, Mean, Home, Lying, Running,  
Personality*

Reading is entering into the consciousness of another human being.

~Gary Shteyngart

The love I felt for her on that train ride had a capital and provinces, parishes and a Vatican, an orange planet and many sullen moons -- it was systemic and it was complete.

~Gary Shteyngart

If you stop thinking, if you stop wondering, you die.

~Gary Shteyngart

Good fiction makes me turn off all the other parts of my brain, so that I become quiet and submissive, entirely at the mercy of the work at hand.

~Gary Shteyngart

The fading light is us, and we are, for a moment so brief (...) beautiful.

~Gary Shteyngart

She took my hand and pulled me after her, her shoulders giving off a sweet peppermint concoction that the bodies of young women sometimes produce to make my life more difficult.

~Gary Shteyngart

If my mother hadn't tried to sell me chicken Kiev cutlets for \$1.40 after I graduated from college, maybe I would've been the lawyer she wanted me to be.

~Gary Shteyngart

You are not what you want. You are what wants you back.

~Gary Shteyngart

Forget the fountain of youth, pal of mine. You can live to be a thousand, and it won't matter. Mediocrities like you deserve immortality.

~Gary Shteyngart

If you read only one memoir by a disaffected, urban, 20-something Jewish girl this year, make it this one. Shukert rocks the lulav.

~Gary Shteyngart

Satire always benefits when evil and stupidity collide.

~Gary Shteyngart

Italy has sun and tomatoes, and Russia just has real problems.

~Gary Shteyngart

Vodka has a huge history in Russia, in that it's almost like a currency. It's the one thing that keeps the country in the dark ages and having a rollicking good time.

~Gary Shteyngart

I am born hungry. Ravenous. I want to eat the world, and I can never be satiated.

~Gary Shteyngart

The radio station was playing Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, a sure sign that things were much worse than they appeared.

~Gary Shteyngart

I'm the fortieth ugliest man in this bar. But so what! So what!... Isn't this how people used to fall in love?

~Gary Shteyngart

By reading this message you are denying its existence and implying consent.

~Gary Shteyngart

Asthmatic immigrant learns to breathe by writing.

~Gary Shteyngart

My first book really did change my life. It allowed me to fully express myself. There was a sense that I was worth something as an artist.

~Gary Shteyngart

Michigan, with its delicious American name. How lucky one must be to live there.

~Gary Shteyngart

freedom is anathema to dreams nurtured in captivity.

~Gary Shteyngart

Getting out of Russia was the best thing my parents did. I mean, that country will never amount to anything.

~Gary Shteyngart

We're people of the Orient. We know everything. And what we don't know, we can sense.

~Gary Shteyngart

My parents were kind enough to spend hours talking to me.

~Gary Shteyngart

I write almost entirely in bed or on a couch with my feet up on the coffee table. I feel most creative when I'm looking out the window, and my bed and couch have nice views of the New York skyline.

~Gary Shteyngart

I have a great memory. And actually, I remember Russia in some ways better than I remember Queens.

~Gary Shteyngart

The only way to write about right now is to write about the future.

~Gary Shteyngart

That's what I always liked about science fiction - you can make the world end. Humour is my multiple warhead delivery system.

~Gary Shteyngart

The greatest books in Russian literature are satires. Gogol's *Dead Souls*, for example, is a very over-the-top satire about life in Russia. I think it's the thing we do best.

~Gary Shteyngart

I felt the weakness of these books, their immateriality, how they had failed to change the world, and I didn't want to sully myself with their weakness anymore.

~Gary Shteyngart

Remember this... develop a sense of nostalgia for something, or you'll never figure out what's important.

~Gary Shteyngart

In a strange way, I expected Russia to become more like America since the Soviet Union collapsed, but the reverse is true. America has become more like Russia: a kleptocratic society.

~Gary Shteyngart

That's what tyrants do, I guess. They make you covet their attention; they make you confuse attention for mercy.

~Gary Shteyngart

Communications devices were always used to effect change, to effect revolution. Telephone, telegraph - these all seemed like very big enhancements at the time.

~Gary Shteyngart

The best thing about the iPhone is this that tells me where I am all the time. There's never a need to feel lost anymore.

~Gary Shteyngart

A lot of the ways of advertising a book - the cover, whether somebody sees it on a subway or sees it in a bookstore - those things are going to rapidly diminish as we move to an electronic model.

~Gary Shteyngart

I don't have many possessions, apart from my books.

~Gary Shteyngart

My mother cranes her neck. Her ability to be fascinated by things is her best gift to me.

~Gary Shteyngart

A writer or any suffering artist-to-be is just an instrument too finely set to the human condition [...]

~Gary Shteyngart

I love librarians more than any other people in the world. When I was an immigrant kid, they've made me feel like a human being and they gave me books that taught me English.

~Gary Shteyngart

Let's see if I can write about something other than my heart.

~Gary Shteyngart

America should treasure its rare, true original voices and Mark Leyner is one of them. So treasure him already, you bastards!

~Gary Shteyngart

People always write on my Facebook that they've seen somebody they thought was me on the subway, and I was cursing badly.

~Gary Shteyngart

In America, the distance between wanting something and having it delivered to your living room is not terribly great.

~Gary Shteyngart

I have my own dying empire to contend with, and I do not wish for any other.

~Gary Shteyngart

It is a capital insult in this country not to make love to a naked woman, even if she is related to you.

~Gary Shteyngart

If I still lived in Russia, I'd be dead... or a really effective oligarch.

~Gary Shteyngart

American fiction is good. It would be nice if somebody read it.

~Gary Shteyngart

You could drown a kitten in her blue eyes.

~Gary Shteyngart

My parents were constantly afraid they would lose their jobs. The idea that we were always a paycheck away from disaster was drilled into me.

~Gary Shteyngart

I write five, six days a week. The thing is capturing the voice. I feel like I've been perfecting one voice - in different iterations, sure, but the Russian-ness has always been the undercurrent.

~Gary Shteyngart

I feel safe with him because he is so not my ideal and I feel like I can be

myself because I'm not in love with him.

~Gary Shteyngart

I just want fiction to remain a vital force for entertainment and not just for contemplation. Both things can exist.

~Gary Shteyngart

I always think that good writers should be growing up on the brink of death - it really lets them see mortality very clearly.

~Gary Shteyngart

Alcohol causes a lot of problems, and then to solve these problems, you drink more.

~Gary Shteyngart

We are now part of this giant machine where every second we have to take out a device and contribute our thoughts and opinions.

~Gary Shteyngart

I have some memories of certain things that happened in high school when I was stoned out of my mind, but I talked with other people about them, and I trusted the aggregated memories.

~Gary Shteyngart

I read real books. On paper. You know, those printed books? I feel like this is the last thing I do to support my industry. I think they smell great, too.

~Gary Shteyngart

You want to read a book? That requires introspection. It requires time away from people and time away from the constant need to communicate and to connect.

~Gary Shteyngart

The memoirs I love are all very intense. If you're going to do a memoir and protect yourself, what the hell's the point? Just do fiction.

~Gary Shteyngart

I was really not a good student, and I felt that shame every day. That's one of the reasons I started smoking pot and drinking daily.

~Gary Shteyngart

Before my first novel, I was dating a woman who later went to prison for bashing a guy with a hammer.

~Gary Shteyngart

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