

James Arthur Quotes

*Thinking, Writing, Art, Country, Dream, Believe, Together, Reality, Want, Tools,
Book, Poet, Ideas, Polyglots, Imagine, Real, Worried, Language, Find Me,
Memories*

If poems very different from my own bring pleasure to a group of readers, who am I to say that the poems should have been written differently?

~James Arthur

For me, poetry is a way of thinking, and like many poets, I'm driven by the idea of trying to find the impossible, perfect words: the words that will hold my subject.

~James Arthur

When I started reciting my own poems in public, I worried that it would seem too theatrical, but now I find recitation very natural, because it allows me to address audiences directly.

~James Arthur

Maybe because I can't even put together an IKEA desk, I've never been tempted to think of my own poems as built objects - but I do sometimes imagine them as mathematical constructs.

~James Arthur

I don't see why a poem couldn't be spoken out a car window or written on the beach at low tide. In fact, I'm sure people are doing it.

~James Arthur

As a species, we create tools to control our environment. What excites my imagination is wilderness: our materials' ability to escape our control.

~James Arthur

Poetry isn't an efficient tool for preserving experience, any more than it's an efficient mode of communication, but who says that it should be efficient?

~James Arthur

Memorizing the work of others definitely made me a better writer.

~James Arthur

My ideal reader is somebody who reads my poems out loud.

~James Arthur

It makes sense to me that the polyglot wouldn't know what language he dreamed in.

~James Arthur

In my case, performance is part of the medium. Sometimes I feel that it's my main medium, and that the presentation of my poems on the page is secondary.

~James Arthur

I like poems that affect me emotionally and also provoke me to further, deeper thought. I enjoy challenge, but not, I think, for its own sake.

~James Arthur

I do own CDs by Neil Young, Leonard Cohen, and Joni Mitchell, but I don't think of them as being major influences on my writing.

~James Arthur

I want to reiterate that my understanding of the poem is not the poem's core, true meaning. Once a poem goes out into the world, the poet is just one more reader.

~James Arthur

When I'm most deeply involved in my writing, sometimes I do dream about poetry, and occasionally I wake up from a dream with a phrase that I like well enough to put it in a poem.

~James Arthur

I think that being mindful of your own biases tends to lead you into

ambiguity, not clarity, and that following those ambiguities is the only way to approach the universal.

~James Arthur

I often write from memory by walking around and talking to myself. Even when I'm working at a computer I write out loud, so that I can hear the poem's rhythm.

~James Arthur

For me, intuitive thinking means associative thinking; intuition causes us to introduce narrative or figurative elements into a poem before we're able to explain why those elements belong.

~James Arthur

William Shakespeare tried hard to see every facet of every question, probably because he was more interested in questions than in answers. That's a big part of what makes him great, in my opinion.

~James Arthur

I'm a mix; I'm sure some of my Canadian friends find me very American, both in person and on the page.

~James Arthur

Whenever I visit my family in Canada, I remind myself that what many Americans would consider forthright, many Canadians would consider overbearing.

~James Arthur

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