

# James Lee Burke

## Quotes

*Writing, People, Home, Rejection, Believe, Thinking, Artist, One Day, Men,  
Dream, Heart, Art, Way, Age, Country, Earth, Children, Choices, Tragedy,  
Reading*

There's nothing like rejection to make you do an inventory of yourself.

~James Lee Burke

I used to save all my rejection slips because I told myself, one day I'm going to autograph these and auction them. And then I lost the box.

~James Lee Burke

If there is any human tragedy, there is only one, and it occurs when we forget who we are and remain silent while a stranger takes up residence inside our skin.

~James Lee Burke

The system shaves the dice on the side of those with money and power, and anyone who believes otherwise deserves anything that happens to him.

~James Lee Burke

You do it a day at a time. You write as well as you can, you put it in the mail, you leave it under submission, you never leave it at home.

~James Lee Burke

And like most middle-aged people who hear the clock ticking in their lives, I had come to resent a waste or theft of my time that was greater than any theft of my goods or money.

~James Lee Burke

How do you explain to yourself the casual manner in which you threw your life away?

~James Lee Burke

...and I wonder if there is any way to adequately describe the folly that causes us to undo all the great gifts of both Earth and Heaven.

~James Lee Burke

When you find the right people, you never let go. The people who count are the ones who are your friends in lean times. You have all the friends you want when things are going well.

~James Lee Burke

That's one of the great advantages of age. You can say, I don't want to, I don't care, you can throw temper tantrums, and nobody minds.

~James Lee Burke

When people make a contract with the devil and give him an air-conditioned office to work in, he doesn't go back home easily.

~James Lee Burke

Humility is not a virtue in a writer, it is an absolute necessity.

~James Lee Burke

I wouldn't write anything autobiographical. If you've lived a life like Laurence of Arabia, it might be a consideration, but otherwise it's a little bit vain, it seems to me.

~James Lee Burke

God bless the Reference Librarians

~James Lee Burke

There is no higher form of artistic expression than film

~James Lee Burke

I feel blessed in the knowledge that I probably belong to the last generation that will remember what we call "traditional America."

~James Lee Burke

I think all good narration contains an element of mystery and suspense. If it didn't, if the storyline were predictable, we would have no interest in reading it.

~James Lee Burke

If we break promises to God, shouldn't we be allowed an occasional violation of our word to our friends and superiors?

~James Lee Burke

Every rejection is incremental payment on your dues that in some way will be translated back into your work.

~James Lee Burke

We gain no wisdom by imposing our way on others.

~James Lee Burke

THE ALLURE OF Montana is like a commitment to a narcotic; you can never use it up or get enough of it. Its wilderness areas probably resemble the earth on the first day of creation.

~James Lee Burke

Money can't buy happiness but it'll sure keep a mess of grief off your front porch.

~James Lee Burke

The only thing an artist has to remember is to never lose faith in his vision.

~James Lee Burke

And every good artist knows that the gift comes from somewhere else, and it's there for a reason, and that's to make the world a better place.

~James Lee Burke

If you put somebody on a crack pipe and give them a 9 mm Baretta, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out what's going to happen next.

~James Lee Burke

How do you caution a fawn about a cigarette a motorist has just flipped from his car window into a patch of yellow grass, or tell a sparrow that winged creatures eventually plummet to earth?

~James Lee Burke

Using a first-person narrator is simply a matter of hearing the voice inside yourself.

~James Lee Burke

The story of Ulysses and Agamemnon and Menelaus, of Jesus, of the Good Knight of Chaucer, lives in every one of us.

~James Lee Burke

I believe the causes that create them [serial killers] are theological in nature, rather than societal. I believe they make a conscious choice to erase God's thumbprint from their souls.

~James Lee Burke

My experience has been that people who die for causes have few friends in death.

~James Lee Burke

There's no substitute for loyalty.

~James Lee Burke

One day you'll have a quiet heart.

~James Lee Burke

Neither our own passing nor the passing of an era is a tragedy, no matter how much we would like to think it is.

~James Lee Burke

A lie is an act of theft. It steals peoples faith and makes them resent themselves

~James Lee Burke

We decry violence all the time in this country, but look at our history. We were born in a violent revolution, and we've been in wars ever since. We're not a pacific people.

~James Lee Burke

You have two choices in life. You either die or do something with your time. You're going to be doing something - why not write?

~James Lee Burke

What's the worst thing about getting old? Getting old.

~James Lee Burke

You do it a day at a time. You just put your rejection slips in a shoebox and tell yourself one day you're going to autograph them and sell them at auction.

~James Lee Burke

I could only wonder again at the white race's naïveté in always sending forth our worst members as our emissaries.

~James Lee Burke

Is there a design in the events of our lives? Or do things just happen, much like a junk yard falling down a staircase? If it's the latter, how do you deal with it?

~James Lee Burke

To misuse one's talent, to be cavalier about it, to set it aside because of fear or sloth is unpardonable.

~James Lee Burke

Age is a clever thief. It takes a little from you each day, so you're not aware of your loss until it'd irreversible.

~James Lee Burke

Don't undo a brave and noble deed. Don't rob yourself of your own virtue.

~James Lee Burke

Louisiana is a fresh-air mental asylum.

~James Lee Burke

Never read bad stuff if you're an artist; it will impair your own game.

~James Lee Burke

Write for the love of your art. Someplace down the road, the money, the fame, they'll come, but by that time you won't be thinking in terms of money or fame.

~James Lee Burke

Don't let anyone tell you that age purchases your freedom from fear of death.

~James Lee Burke

We all end up in the same place. Some sonner than others.

~James Lee Burke

Success, like fashion, is a fickle companion and can leave one in the wink of an eye.

~James Lee Burke

Why do I always feel like you're trying to staple my umbilical cord to the corner of your desk?

~James Lee Burke

The best thing about being a best-selling writer is being a best-selling writer. More seriously, today I can write full time and pay the bills.

~James Lee Burke



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