

Jane Smiley

Quotes

*Writing, Horse, Children, People, Thinking, Book, Years, Ideas, Novelists,
Novel, Art, Reading, Two, Ignorance, Views, Running, Self, Mind, Groups,
Knows*

Oh, that sound? I'm in the hot tub, reading a novel.

~Jane Smiley

Many people, myself among them, feel better at the mere sight of a book.

~Jane Smiley

Every first draft is perfect, because all a first draft has to do is exist.

~Jane Smiley

I suspected that there were things he knew that I had been waiting all my life to learn.

~Jane Smiley

In many ways, being honest about 'Huckleberry Finn' goes right to the heart of whether we can be honest about our heritage and our identity as Americans.

~Jane Smiley

Even if my marriage is falling apart and my children are unhappy, there is still a part of me that says, 'God, this is fascinating!'

~Jane Smiley

Take naps. Often new ideas come together when you are half asleep, but you have to train yourself to remember them.

~Jane Smiley

The only siblings I have are half-siblings. My nuclear family would have been an extra-suffocating threesome. Instead, I have an interesting brother and sister, in-laws, and darling nephews.

~Jane Smiley

Candy is my fuel. Ice cream, too.

~Jane Smiley

But what truly horsey girls discover in the end is that boyfriends, husbands, children, and careers are the substitute-for horses

~Jane Smiley

I'm a natural novelist. I'm interested in the person and the group, and how they mesh. And one of the ways I don't want them to mesh is for the person to be subsumed into the group.

~Jane Smiley

In every society, the artists will be the ones who set themselves up as contrary to whatever the society expects.

~Jane Smiley

If to live is to progress, if you are lucky, from foolishness to wisdom, then to write novels is to broadcast the various stages of your foolishness.

~Jane Smiley

The main thing about the novel that is totally fascinating: It's not possessed by the writer; it's possessed by the reader.

~Jane Smiley

Your sons weren't made to like you. That's what grandchildren are for.

~Jane Smiley

I loved the house the way you would any new house, because it is populated by your future, the family of children who will fill it with noise or chaos and satisfying busy pleasures.

~Jane Smiley

Men are competent in groups that mimic the playground, incompetent in groups that mimic the family

~Jane Smiley

An urban novelist never minds a little decay.

~Jane Smiley

Some people do wait their whole lives for something, and it's only when that thing arrives that they find out that they've been waiting rather than living.

~Jane Smiley

Ignorance and bloodlust have a long tradition in the United States, especially in the red states.

~Jane Smiley

In my experience, there is only one motivation, and that is desire. No reasons or principle contain it or stand against it.

~Jane Smiley

The fact is that the same sequence of days can arrange themselves into a number of different stories.

~Jane Smiley

I learned why 'out riding alone' is an oxymoron: An equestrian is never alone, is always sensing the other being, the mysterious but also understandable living being that is the horse.

~Jane Smiley

Art doesn't exist if you just do what you're told. It only exists as an exercise of individual taste and freedom.

~Jane Smiley

In his 30 years of broadcasting and publishing fiction, Garrison Keillor has set the laugh bar pretty high.

~Jane Smiley

Mom was a smoker. My grandfather was a smoker. My aunts were

smokers. My uncles were smokers. I don't know any smokers now, not even my mom.

~Jane Smiley

I spent part of my college years in a Marxist commune. I was not a Marxist. I wasn't even pretending to be one. I was a Marxist-in-law.

~Jane Smiley

I love to write about sex. You just have to make it idiosyncratic. You have to have a strong comprehension of your characters, and write it from their point of view. It's really fun. It's not erotic.

~Jane Smiley

Progressivism is usually seen as a stepping back from individualism into a progressive community...

~Jane Smiley

Because your goal is a complete rough draft of a novel, and every rough draft, by being complete, is perfect.

~Jane Smiley

Sinclair Lewis may be ripe for a revival; his books raise several interesting issues of art and fashion.

~Jane Smiley

When people leave, they always seem to scoop themselves out of you.

~Jane Smiley

There can never be such a thing as a free market, because it is human nature to cheat, monopolize, and buy off others so as to corner the market.

~Jane Smiley

We sort of read two or three big newspapers but we don't get the flavor

of the local events, the local news as much.

~Jane Smiley

Before I write a novel, images float around in my head that work like icons - they are meaningless in themselves, but serve as reminders.

~Jane Smiley

With preference came point of view; with point of view, personality; with personality, uniqueness; with uniqueness, grief.

~Jane Smiley

A novelist has two lives-- a reading and writing life, and a lived life. he or she cannot be understood at all apart from this.

~Jane Smiley

Twenty-five, he was. Twenty-five tomorrow. Some years the snow had melted for his birthday, but not this year, and so it had been a long winter full of cows.

~Jane Smiley

Another thing he told his customers was that one of the great accounting unknowns of the modern age was how to value knowledge. It was an exciting field.

~Jane Smiley

Respect and fear are two different things.

~Jane Smiley

People are quite frequently eccentric.

~Jane Smiley

The thing about Republicans is that they don't care so much about respect, but they love fear, at least in others.

~Jane Smiley

I don't know - is everything the U.S. does a shocking embarrassment?

~Jane Smiley

I think that the Cold War was an exceptional and unnecessary piece of cruelty.

~Jane Smiley

My mom was paranoid about my safety.

~Jane Smiley

I thought I might write mysteries for the rest of my life.

~Jane Smiley

Vets do what doctors used to - diagnose the injury or the condition, patch it up as best they can and remind you that these things happen and that in life we are also in the midst of death.

~Jane Smiley

Gossip. The more you talk about why people do things, the more ideas you have about how the world works.

~Jane Smiley

I had spent years thinking about one thing while I was doing another. I had, in fact, prided myself on being able to do two things at once.

~Jane Smiley

A theory of creativity is actually just a metaphor. A pool of ideas, a well of memories, a voice.

~Jane Smiley

Another thing I learned is that novels, even those from apparently distant times and places, remain current and enlightening, and also comforting.

~Jane Smiley

There are several methods for introducing your children to driving, and all of them are bad. Probably the worst is to put it off.

~Jane Smiley

The essence of charity ... was not deciding what others needed and giving it to them, but giving them what they wanted.

~Jane Smiley

There weren't too many books by women that were taught in school, so I read those on my own, and the books I read were as accessible as the ones we were reading in school.

~Jane Smiley

Hungry ears are sharp ones.

~Jane Smiley

My characters never die screaming in rage. They attempt to pull themselves back together and go on. And that's basically a conservative view of life.

~Jane Smiley

Charles Dickens was an avid seeker of names - he read directories and looked for odd names on gravestones.

~Jane Smiley

Americans took a great deal too much credit for creating wealth, when most of the time they had really just been living off natural bounty unprecedented in the history of the world.

~Jane Smiley

A love story, at least a convincing one, requires three elements - the lover, the beloved, and the adventures they have together.

~Jane Smiley

everything is toxic. That's the point. You can't avoid toxins. Thinking you can is just another symptom of the toxic overload stage.

~Jane Smiley

Novelists never have to footnote.

~Jane Smiley

I was an only child. I've known only children. From this experience, I do believe that the children should outnumber the parents.

~Jane Smiley

Trollope wrote so many novels and other works that they tend to crowd each other out.

~Jane Smiley

Not every novel that wants to be a tragedy gets to be one.

~Jane Smiley

I have noticed before that there is a category of acquaintanceship that is not friendship or business or romance, but speculation, fascination.

~Jane Smiley

People with good intentions never give up!

~Jane Smiley

Whatever you love is beautiful; love comes first, beauty follows. The greater your capacity for love, the more beauty you find in the world.

~Jane Smiley

The fundamental condition of childhood is powerlessness.

~Jane Smiley

Write every day, just to keep in the habit, and remember that whatever you have written is neither as good nor as bad as you think it is. Just

keep going, and tell yourself that you will fix it later.

~Jane Smiley

Combined families often get bad reviews, but the family my children got when they traded away 'the suffocating four-person' nuclear one is one that has benefited all of them.

~Jane Smiley

Novelists of a conservative or more purely aesthetic bent hold up better on the surface, but their novels go in and out of fashion according to relevance or irrelevance.

~Jane Smiley

Some novelists are luckier than others in the eras of their formative intellectual years, but all Weltanschauungs return, which means that most novelists have at least a chance of a revival.

~Jane Smiley

My great fear is not that I'll run out of ideas. It's that I'll run out of time.

~Jane Smiley

Like most of the educated, I do harbor a fondness for the sins of my ignorant past.

~Jane Smiley

Love is a general emotion. Marriage is exactly specific.

~Jane Smiley

it still astounds me, after forty years, that there is no good bread between Chicago and San Francisco.

~Jane Smiley

A horse herd was, in its very essence, the manifestation of the expression 'It's always something.'

~Jane Smiley

Ignorance is a self-generating state of mind; one of its characteristics is that it doesn't recognize itself as ignorance.

~Jane Smiley

The desire to write a novel is the single required prerequisite for writing a novel.

~Jane Smiley

you know that the urge for revenge is a fact of marital life.

~Jane Smiley

Good intentions are wicked! As far as I can see, all they lead to are lies and delusions.

~Jane Smiley

How will you know a good farmer when you meet him? He will not ask you for any favors.

~Jane Smiley

Critical thinking is to a liberal education as faith is to religion. ... the converse was true also - faith is to a liberal education as critical thinking is to religion, irrelevant and even damaging.

~Jane Smiley

The one thing ... maybe no family could tolerate was things coming out into the open.

~Jane Smiley

There is something I have noticed about desire, that it opens the eyes and strikes them blind at the same time.

~Jane Smiley

As Fallingwater demonstrates, Wright's genius was always specific, but also always lively, always daring.

~Jane Smiley

Eavesdrop and write it down from memory - gives you a stronger sense of how people talk and what their concerns are. I love to eavesdrop!

~Jane Smiley

Writing novels is an essentially amateur activity.

~Jane Smiley

English majors understand human nature better than economists do.

~Jane Smiley

As soon as you bring up money, I notice, conversation gets sociological, then political, then moral.

~Jane Smiley

A novelist is on the cusp between someone who knows everything and someone who knows nothing.

~Jane Smiley

The brave view is that talking it out helps work it out. Maybe the realistic view is that talking it out inflames the issues further. But that is America, especially these days.

~Jane Smiley

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