

# Jim Harrison

## Quotes

*Literature, Writing, Book, Stories, Teaching, Lakes, Dog, Soul, People,  
Language, Fishing, Thinking, Forget, Fire, Moving, New York, Trying, Together,  
Advice, Rivers*

The simple act of opening a bottle of wine has brought more happiness to the human race than all the collective governments in the history of earth

~Jim Harrison

Barring love I'll take my life in large doses alone--rivers, forests, fish, grouse, mountains. Dogs.

~Jim Harrison

The wilderness does not make you forget your normal life so much as it removes the distractions for proper remembering.

~Jim Harrison

The danger of civilization, of course, is that you will piss away your life on nonsense.

~Jim Harrison

Some people hear their own inner voices with great clearness and they live by what they hear. Such people become crazy, or they become legends.

~Jim Harrison

In a life properly lived, you're a river.

~Jim Harrison

Beware, O wanderer, the road is walking too.

~Jim Harrison

Death steals everything except our stories.

~Jim Harrison

Fishing makes us less the hostages to the horrors of making a living.

~Jim Harrison

I would rather give full vent to all human loves and disappointments, and take a chance on being corny, than die a smartass.

~Jim Harrison

Life is sentimental. Why should I be cold and hard about it? That's the main content. The biggest thing in people's lives is their loves and dreams and visions, you know.

~Jim Harrison

I'm hoping to be astonished tomorrow by I don't know what.

~Jim Harrison

There is a neurologist, a woman over at Harvard who wanted me to come talk to them, and in France I have a lot of readers in the sciences. I can't tell you why.

~Jim Harrison

Poetry at its best is the language your soul would speak if you could teach your soul to speak.

~Jim Harrison

Michigan is two radically different places - the North and the South which makes for good drama and contrast.

~Jim Harrison

I remember my grandfather telling me how each of us must live with a full measure of loneliness that is inescapable, and we must not destroy ourselves with our passion to escape the aloneness.

~Jim Harrison

I was a dog on a short chain / and now there's no chain.

~Jim Harrison

One of the curious effects of a bad hangover is that you think you're

wrong whether you are or not. Not wrong in particulars, but wrong in general, wrong about everything.

~Jim Harrison

We Americans are trained to think big, talk big, act big, love big, admire bigness but then the essential mystery is in the small.

~Jim Harrison

Strangely, when I totally emerged from this slump I couldn't comprehend how I had almost drowned it it.

~Jim Harrison

The only advice I can give to aspiring writers is don't do it unless you're willing to give your whole life to it. Red wine and garlic also helps.

~Jim Harrison

We set this house on fire forgetting that we live within.

~Jim Harrison

You touch things lightly or deeply; you move along because life herself moves, and you can't stop it.

~Jim Harrison

The world that used to nurse us now keeps shouting inane instructions. That's why I ran to the woods.

~Jim Harrison

The answer is always in the entire story, not a piece of it.

~Jim Harrison

I can maintain my sense of the sacredness of existence only by understanding my own limitations and losing my self-importance.

~Jim Harrison

Sometimes the only answer to death is lunch.

~Jim Harrison

My advice is, do not try to inhabit another's soul. You have your own.

~Jim Harrison

Writers can write outside their ethnicity or sex depending how open and vulnerable they wish to be.

~Jim Harrison

What cannot be said, will get wept.

~Jim Harrison

Your kids inevitably want to move where they had their vacations when they were younger.

~Jim Harrison

I don't see gender as the most significant fact of human existence.

~Jim Harrison

Zen is the vehicle of reality.

~Jim Harrison

The old fun thing is when somebody typed up the first chapter of War and Peace. And then made a precis of the rest of it and sent it out and only one publisher recognized it.

~Jim Harrison

The reason to moderate is to avoid having to quit.

~Jim Harrison

A poet must discover that it's his own story that is true, even if the truth is small indeed.

~Jim Harrison

Wherever we go we do harm, forgiving ourselves as wheels do cement for wearing each other out. We set this house on fire, forgetting that we live within. (from "To a Meadowlark," for M.L. Smoker)

~Jim Harrison

Being a writer requires an intoxication with language.

~Jim Harrison

Dad said I would always be "high minded and low waged" from reading too much Ralph Waldo Emerson. Maybe he was right.

~Jim Harrison

All artists as a type seem to suffer a great deal, but then so do miners.

~Jim Harrison

It is easy to forget that in the main we die only seven times more slowly than our dogs.

~Jim Harrison

I was on the verge of jumping into one of those holes in life out of which we emerge a bit tattered and bloody, though we remain sure nonetheless that we had to make the jump.

~Jim Harrison

Marriage is survived just on the basis of ordinary etiquette, day in and day out. Also cooking together helps a lot.

~Jim Harrison

I asked a French critic a couple of years ago why my books did so well in France. He said it was because in my novels people both act and think. I got a kick out of that.

~Jim Harrison

After a lifetime of world travel I've been fascinated that those in the third

world don't have the same perception of reality that we do.

~Jim Harrison

Every day I wonder how many things I am dead wrong about. -- True North

~Jim Harrison

No one else can hold your hand or take this voyage of the soul for you.

~Jim Harrison

When we were children we were errant enough to wish to be birds for the day but there's nothing easier to lose than playfulness.

~Jim Harrison

That is simply the most beautiful publishing office in the world, with that cranky old building in that wonderful park.

~Jim Harrison

That's my only defense against this world: to build a sentence out of it.

~Jim Harrison

Naturally we would prefer seven epiphanies a day and an earth not so apparently devoid of angels.

~Jim Harrison

I can write anywhere.

~Jim Harrison

Birthdays are ghost bounty hunters that track you down to ask, "Que pasa, baby?"

~Jim Harrison

Life is an honor, albeit anonymously delivered.

~Jim Harrison

We are all naturally xenophobic.

~Jim Harrison

I'm actually forced to write about Michigan because as a native of that state it's the place I know best.

~Jim Harrison

I should add that I very much enjoy certain cities especially Paris, New York and Chicago.

~Jim Harrison

Fishing tournaments seem a little like playing tennis with living balls.

~Jim Harrison

Short things are short all over and long things are long all over.

~Jim Harrison

I see more genuine sociability between the races in Mississippi than I see in Michigan. No question.

~Jim Harrison

New Yorkers are mostly interested in New York - in case you haven't noticed.

~Jim Harrison

Everybody has a gun in their car in Detroit.

~Jim Harrison

The days are stacked against what we think we are.

~Jim Harrison

I seek the substantial in life.

~Jim Harrison

I enjoy about 1 out of 100 movies, it's about the same proportion to books published that I care to read.

~Jim Harrison

I don't know what psychotherapy does. I have been seeing the same person for 26 years now.

~Jim Harrison

Writing as a woman presents enormous problems but I have attempted it several times and haven't had many complaints.

~Jim Harrison

I'm not rational enough to be a good journalist.

~Jim Harrison

I had let my disgust with teaching ruin my love of literature.

~Jim Harrison

The fact is, the media never gets off the interstate unless there's a major explosion.

~Jim Harrison

I've never felt influenced by Ernest Hemingway though I suppose there is something inevitable there.

~Jim Harrison

Success and money can really be quite blinding.

~Jim Harrison

How wonderful it was to love something without the compromise of language.

~Jim Harrison

I thought, frankly, that it would be more pleasant to write a memoir than

it was.

~Jim Harrison

I rarely read or buy a book because of a review.

~Jim Harrison

I used to get criticized for putting food in novels.

~Jim Harrison

I got \$30 from Nation magazine for a poem and \$500 for my first book of poems.

~Jim Harrison

Fate has never ladled out hardship very evenly, and this frequently trips our often infantile sense of justice.

~Jim Harrison

I write novellas because I don't like loose sprawling prose.

~Jim Harrison

Nothing on my trip thus far was as I expected which shows you that rather than simply read about the United States you have to log the journey.

~Jim Harrison

When we die we are only stories in the minds of others, I thought

~Jim Harrison

I'd rather get a brain tumor than go back to teaching.

~Jim Harrison

Yeah, but now suddenly - you know, universities are notoriously market oriented, too.

~Jim Harrison

I do have trouble with titles.

~Jim Harrison

So when I made some money, I didn't have any idea how one handled such a situation because no one in our family ever had any money.

~Jim Harrison

Because most writers have totally unrealistic concepts of how publishing works.

~Jim Harrison

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