

John Ashbery

Quotes

*Life, Inspirational, Writing, Thinking, Past, Art, Want, Beautiful, Mind, Trying,
Death, Poetry, People, Music, Way, Night, Growing Up, Reading, Flower,
Dream*

There is the view that poetry should improve your life. I think people confuse it with the Salvation Army.

~John Ashbery

The ellipse is as aimless as that, Stretching invisibly into the future so as to reappear In our present. Its flexing is its account, Return to the point of no return.

~John Ashbery

You stupefied me. We waxed, Carnivores, late and alight In the beaded winter. All was ominous, luminous.

~John Ashbery

Much that is beautiful must be discarded So that we may resemble a taller Impression of ourselves.

~John Ashbery

The first year was like icing. Then the cake started to show through.

~John Ashbery

I write with experiences in mind, but I don't write about them, I write out of them.

~John Ashbery

Reading is a pleasure, but to finish reading, to come to the blank space at the end, is also a pleasure.

~John Ashbery

The summer demands and takes away too much. /But night, the reserved, the reticent, gives more than it takes

~John Ashbery

And so we turn the page over. To think of starting. This is all there is.

~John Ashbery

In the increasingly convincing darkness
The words become palpable,
like a fruit That is too beautiful to eat.

~John Ashbery

I don't look on poetry as closed works. I feel they're going on all the
time in my head and I occasionally snip off a length.

~John Ashbery

So I cradle this average violin that knows
Only forgotten showtunes, but
argues The possibility of free declamation anchored
To a dull refrain.

~John Ashbery

Not until it starts to stink does the inevitable happen.

~John Ashbery

I think that in the process of writing, all kinds of unexpected things
happen that shift the poet away from his plan and that these accidents
are really what we mean when we talk about poetry.

~John Ashbery

What is the past, what is it all for? A mental sandwich?

~John Ashbery

Life is beautiful. He who reads that
As in the window of some distant,
speeding train Knows what he wants, and what will befall.

~John Ashbery

The sun fades like the spreading
Of a peacock's tail, as though twilight
Might be read as a warning to those desperate
For easy solutions.

~John Ashbery

In the evening Everything has a schedule, if you can find out what it is.

~John Ashbery

Poetry is mostly hunches.

~John Ashbery

Once you've lived in France, you don't want to live anywhere else, including France.

~John Ashbery

Life is not at all what you might think it to be A simple tale where each thing has its history It's much more than its scuffle and anything goes Both evil and good, subject to the same laws.

~John Ashbery

I always thought that writing poetry was in itself a political act.

~John Ashbery

The soul is not a soul, Has no secret, is small, and it fits Its hollow perfectly: its room, our moment of attention.

~John Ashbery

All beauty, resonance, integrity, Exist by deprivation or logic Of strange position.

~John Ashbery

The facts of history have been too well rehearsed.

~John Ashbery

What I like about music is its ability to be convincing, to carry an argument through successfully to the finish, though the terms of the argument remain unknown quantities.

~John Ashbery

I feel that poetry is going on all the time inside, an underground stream.

~John Ashbery

I don't want to read what is going to slide down easily; there has to be some crunch, a certain amount of resilience.

~John Ashbery

Just when I thought there wasn't room enough for another thought in my head, I had this great ideaâ€”

~John Ashbery

Part of the strength of Pollock and Rothko's art, in fact, is this doubt as to whether art may be there at all.

~John Ashbery

A perfect example of the new republic's urge to drape itself with the togas of classical respectability.

~John Ashbery

I lost my ridiculous accent without acquiring another

~John Ashbery

This whole moment is the groin Of a borborygmic giant who even now Is rolling over on us in his sleep.

~John Ashbery

Expecting rain, the profile of a day Wears its soul like a hat.

~John Ashbery

I like poems you can tack all over with a hammer and there are no hollow places.

~John Ashbery

The gray glaze of the past attacks all know-how...

~John Ashbery

Extreme patience and persistence are required, Yet everybody

succeeds at this before being handed The surprise box lunch of the rest of his life.

~John Ashbery

... the first step of the terrible journey toward feeling somebody should act, that ends in utter confusion and hopelessness, east of the sun and west of the moon.

~John Ashbery

Each servant stamps the reader with a look.

~John Ashbery

Things can harden meaningfully in the moment of indecision

~John Ashbery

A yak is a prehistoric cabbage; of that, we can be sure.

~John Ashbery

Somewhere someone is traveling furiously toward you, At incredible speed, traveling day and night.

~John Ashbery

Imagine a painter crucified by his subject!

~John Ashbery

To the poet as a basement quilt, but perhaps To some reader a latticework of regrets.

~John Ashbery

The soul establishes itself. But how far can it swim out through the eyes
And still return safely to its nest?

~John Ashbery

I am often asked why I write, and I don't know really--I just want to.

~John Ashbery

Death is a new office building filled with modern furniture, A wise thing, but which has no purpose for us.

~John Ashbery

I'm heading for a clean-named place like Wisconsin, and mad as a jack-o'-lantern, will get there without help and nosy proclivities.

~John Ashbery

The poem is sad because it wants to be yours, and cannot be.

~John Ashbery

It is written in the Book of Usable Minutes That all things have their center in their dying.

~John Ashbery

Once a happy old man One can never change the core of things, and light burns you the harder for it.

~John Ashbery

Silly girls your heads full of boys

~John Ashbery

Some certified nut Will try to tell you it's poetry, (It's extraordinary, it makes a great deal of sense) But watch out or he'll start with some New notion or other.

~John Ashbery

The winter does what it can for its children.

~John Ashbery

Where then shall hope and fear their objects find?

~John Ashbery

Will occur as time grows more open about it.

~John Ashbery

I tried each thing, only some were immortal and free.

~John Ashbery

The mind is so hospitable, taking in everything
Like boarders, and you don't see until
It's all over how little there was to learn
Once the stench of knowledge has dissipated.

~John Ashbery

I often wonder if I am suffering from some mental dysfunction because
of how weird and baffling my poetry seems to so many people and
sometimes to me too.

~John Ashbery

until only infinity remained of beauty

~John Ashbery

I want a bedroom near the sky, an astrologer's cave
Where I can fashion eclogues that are chaste and grave.

~John Ashbery

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