

# John Drinkwater Quotes

*Men, Art, Expression, Perfect, Mood, Order, Poet, Way, Written, Failing, Desire,  
Two, Song, Essence, Epic, Imperfect, Should, Real, Long, Ifs*

When you defile the pleasant streams, And the wild bird's abiding place, You massacre a million dreams, And cast your spittle in God's face

~John Drinkwater

For while the subjects of poetry are few and recurrent, the moods of man are infinitely various and unstable. It is the same in all arts.

~John Drinkwater

Poetry being the sign of that which all men desire, even though the desire be unconscious, intensity of life or completeness of experience, the universality of its appeal is a matter of course.

~John Drinkwater

If it is an imperfect word, no external circumstance can heighten its value as poetry.

~John Drinkwater

Poetry is the communication through words of certain experiences that can be communicated in no other way.

~John Drinkwater

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel, Grant us the strength to labor as we know, Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel, To strike the blow.

~John Drinkwater

To know anything of a poet but his poetry is, so far as the poetry is concerned, to know something that may be entertaining, even delightful, but is certainly inessential.

~John Drinkwater

But in the finished art of the song the use of words has no connection with the use of words in poetry.

~John Drinkwater

This be my pilgrimage and goal Daily to march and find The secret phrases of the soul, The evangels of the mind.

~John Drinkwater

There can be no proof that Blake's lyric is composed of the best words in the best order; only a conviction, accepted by our knowledge and judgment, that it is so.

~John Drinkwater

In the corridors under tehre is nothing but sleep. And stiller than ever on orchard boughs they keep Tryst with the moon, and deep is the silence, deep On moon-washed apples of wonder.

~John Drinkwater

When the poet makes his perfect selection of a word, he is endowing the word with life.

~John Drinkwater

The poet's perfect expression is the token of a perfect experience; what he says in the best possible way he has felt in the best possible way, that is, completely.

~John Drinkwater

The musician - if he be a good one - finds his own perception prompted by the poet's perception, and he translates the expression of that perception from the terms of poetry into the terms of music.

~John Drinkwater

We recognise in the finished art, which is the result of these conditions, the best words in the best order - poetry; and to put this essential poetry into different classes is impossible.

~John Drinkwater

It should here be added that poetry habitually takes the form of verse.

~John Drinkwater

The written word is everything.

~John Drinkwater

Great men are rare, poets are rarer, but the great man who is a poet, transfiguring his greatness, is the rarest of all events.

~John Drinkwater

And not a girl goes walking  
Along the Cotswold lanes  
But knows men's eyes  
in April  
Are quicker than their brains.

~John Drinkwater

It is commonly asserted and accepted that *Paradise Lost* is among the two or three greatest English poems; it may justly be taken as the type of supreme poetic achievement in our literature.

~John Drinkwater

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