

John Dufresne

Quotes

*Writing, Stories, Character, Reading, Thinking, Fiction, Love Is, Jobs, Memories,
House, Imagination, Gossip, Lovers, Understanding, Firsts, Desire, Heart,
Sleep, Fate, Guilt*

In revision, your imagination becomes deeply engaged with your material. It's when you come to know your characters and begin to perceive their motivations and values.

~John Dufresne

I grew up in a house without many books. The books the nuns made us read in school didn't interest me.

~John Dufresne

A pure love is a selfless love, but can desire ever be selfless?

~John Dufresne

Drug programs began to turn their attention and money away from prevention and into maintenance. Methadone was cheaper than social workers, I suppose.

~John Dufresne

The landscape of childhood shapes us as it shapes the characters in our stories. You never forget the sacred places of your childhood.

~John Dufresne

The purpose of the first draft is not to get it right, but to get it written.

~John Dufresne

Love is always a surprise and you never get it right.

~John Dufresne

Novels are written, not wished into existence. You have to sit your ass in the chair or nothing gets done.

~John Dufresne

A lack of narrative structure, as you know, will cause anxiety.

~John Dufresne

Actually, my first literary heroes were the Romantic poets, so I began to get serious by writing poems. I have notebooks full of them that I cherish but am afraid to look at.

~John Dufresne

Every act of loving affirms the goodness of the lover just because he is capable of loving and being loved.

~John Dufresne

Every person in therapy has a love disorder.

~John Dufresne

You lose a wallet or keys or something and you notice in a second, but your life can go missing and you don't even know it.

~John Dufresne

I lost my job and started painting houses with a friend. The marriage had ended about the same time the career did.

~John Dufresne

Pleasure is, after all, a luxury. It's love that's essential.

~John Dufresne

I was always writing. I just didn't know if I was any good.

~John Dufresne

If you think about it, fiction is nothing more than gossip about the people you've made up.

~John Dufresne

At the heart of all good fiction and at the heart of all good gossip is the same thing: trouble.

~John Dufresne

There were the fairy tales my father told to me at bedtime. All the standards. I thought my father invented wolves.

~John Dufresne

I learned to love stories by listening to them.

~John Dufresne

I revise like crazy. I start revising before the pen hits the paper.

~John Dufresne

I write with a fountain pen. And then revise word by word and line by line so that the first draft of a scene is usually the tenth or so draft.

~John Dufresne

With each draft, the work gets better, and usually that means tighter. It means getting the precise word, not the approximate word.

~John Dufresne

Writing a story, you understand, is not done by consensus. But we do learn from each other, and we remind ourselves how important this work we're doing is.

~John Dufresne

Reading is also a creative activity if you're doing it right. You can learn more from a story that's left the tracks than from a successful story.

~John Dufresne

I was reading for understanding. I wanted to do to a reader what Salinger did for me.

~John Dufresne

As a writer you can and should expect to hear conflicting responses to your story.

~John Dufresne

The regional tags are often pejorative and dismissive. Don't think of place-bound stories, in other words, but of stories with a strong sense of place.

~John Dufresne

The facts, however, are unimportant in fiction. It's not the events of my life that I mine, but the emotional experiences I've had.

~John Dufresne

It's easier to write about a place sometimes when you've left it, when you can apply your imagination to your memory and let your emotions guide the writing about a place.

~John Dufresne

Fiction begins with the senses, and the senses go to work in a place.

~John Dufresne

We all sleep with the corpses of our dead lovers.

~John Dufresne

Place is character. And all writing is regional.

~John Dufresne

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