

Jonathan Raban

Quotes

*Cities, Book, President, Real, Dream, People, Father, Thinking, Night, Sides,
Distance, Art, Style, Sea, Islands, Party, House, White, Men, Rivers*

The Falklands held a mirror up to our own islands, and it reflected, in brilliantly sharp focus, all our injured belittlement, our sense of being beleaguered, neglected and misunderstood.

~Jonathan Raban

Travel. It was an intransitive verb. It didn't involve any destinations. It was going to the going's sake, to be anywhere but where you were, with motion itself as the only object.

~Jonathan Raban

Interstate highways dull the reality of place and distance almost as effectively as jetliners do: I loathe their scary monotony.

~Jonathan Raban

The mythical America? that marvellous, heroic, sentimental land was an object of faith. It challenged you to make the believer's leap over the rude facts at your feet.

~Jonathan Raban

In an underdeveloped country don't drink the water. In a developed country don't breathe the air.

~Jonathan Raban

Lincoln, steeped in the Bible and Shakespeare, set an impossibly high bar for presidential prose.

~Jonathan Raban

Over emphatic negatives always suggest that what is being denied may be what is really being asserted.

~Jonathan Raban

Critics? Don't talk to me of critics! You think some jackanapes journalist, his soul eaten away by the maggots of jealousy and failure, has anything worthwhile to say of art? I don't.

~Jonathan Raban

Seattle was built out on pilings over the sea, and at high tide the whole city seemed to come afloat like a ship lifting free from a mud berth and swaying in its chains.

~Jonathan Raban

Good travel books are novels at heart.

~Jonathan Raban

In novels and autobiographies, the first positive move that the immigrant makes towards assimilation is to buy himself a suit of city clothes.

~Jonathan Raban

Every White House has had its intellectuals, but very few presidents have been intellectuals themselves - Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Woodrow Wilson, the list more or less stops there.

~Jonathan Raban

To the newcomer who has not learned its language, a large city is a chaos of details, a vast Woolworths store of differently colored, similarly priced objects.

~Jonathan Raban

I've taught the better class of tourist both to see and not to see; to lift their eyes above and beyond the inessentials, and thrill to our western Nature in her majesty.

~Jonathan Raban

If we live inside a bad joke, it is up to us to learn, at best and worst, to tell it well.

~Jonathan Raban

Heartbreak comes in different sizes, and the departure of an 18-year-old child for a far college has to be treated as a very benign form of the disease.

~Jonathan Raban

Seattle is this curious liberal island.

~Jonathan Raban

Books admitted me to their world open-handedly, as people for their most part, did not. The life I lived in books was one of ease and freedom, worldly wisdom, glitter, dash and style.

~Jonathan Raban

The only book by a modern president that bears serious comparison with Obama's 'Dreams From My Father' is Jimmy Carter's short campaign autobiography, 'Why Not the Best?,' published in 1975.

~Jonathan Raban

I ain't sleeping. I'm just taking a good look at the insides of my eyelids.

~Jonathan Raban

Trouble defies the law of gravity. It's easier to pick up than to drop.

~Jonathan Raban

The city has always been an embodiment of hope and a source of feeling guilt; a dream pursued, and found vain, wanting, and destructive.

~Jonathan Raban

Because Washington state now votes by mail, elections here tend to play out, at an agonizingly slow speed, over many days and, sometimes, weeks.

~Jonathan Raban

I loved the audacity of that American principle which says. When life gets tainted or goes stale, junk it! Leave it behind! Go West!

~Jonathan Raban

Seattle is a liberal city, its politics not so much blue in the American, not the British, sense as deep ultramarine, and its manners are studiously polite.

~Jonathan Raban

No president has come near to rivaling Lincoln as a writer.

~Jonathan Raban

The north-south line of 'the mountains,' meaning the Cascade Range, forty miles east of Seattle, is a rigid political frontier.

~Jonathan Raban

Spells of acute loneliness are an essential part of travel. Loneliness makes things happen.

~Jonathan Raban

Inaugurals conventionally start with a history lesson and finish with a prayer.

~Jonathan Raban

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