

Lydia Davis

Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, May, People, Long, Form, Believe, Stories, Pain, Ideas,
Trying, Vocabulary, Dream, Teaching, Heart, Character, Hard Work, Struggle,
Littles, Want*

Do what you want to do, and don't worry if it's a little odd or doesn't fit the market.

~Lydia Davis

Why don't you like the foods I like?" he asks sometimes. "Why don't you like the foods I make?" I answer.

~Lydia Davis

If you think of something, do it. Plenty of people often think, "I'd like to do this, or that."

~Lydia Davis

Like a tropical storm, I, too, may one day become "better organized."

~Lydia Davis

There seemed to be three choices: to give up trying to love anyone, to stop being selfish, or to learn to love a person while continuing to be selfish.

~Lydia Davis

My stories are sometimes closer to poems or meditations, but often there is at least a little narrative in them.

~Lydia Davis

I'm a fierce editor! I don't edit out things that I began by saying, usually. The editing is on the micro level - a comma here, a word there.

~Lydia Davis

I do see an interest in writing for Twitter. While publishers still do love the novel and people do still like to sink into one, the very quick form is appealing because of the pace of life.

~Lydia Davis

Often, the idea that there can be a wide range of translations of one

text doesn't occur to people - or that a translation could be bad, very bad, and unfaithful to the original.

~Lydia Davis

Art is not in some far-off place.

~Lydia Davis

Work hard and meticulously. When in trouble, look closely at a text that is a good example of what you're trying to do. And be patient.

~Lydia Davis

I think the close work I do as a translator pays off in my writing - I'm always searching for multiple ways to say things.

~Lydia Davis

I can talk for a long time only when it's about something boring.

~Lydia Davis

Because I'm not writing all the time (thank goodness), my mind is sometimes pleasantly blank.

~Lydia Davis

I am basically the sort of person who has stage-fright teaching. I kind of creep into a classroom. I'm not an anecdote-teller, either, although I often wish I were.

~Lydia Davis

I think a lot of what goes into writing can be taught - not mixing metaphors, etc.

~Lydia Davis

I don't pare down much. I write the beginning of a story in a notebook and it comes out very close to what it will be in the end. There is not much deliberateness about it.

~Lydia Davis

If I was writing about an academic or a more difficult person, I would use the Latinate vocabulary more, but I do think Anglo-saxon is the language of emotion.

~Lydia Davis

I started with small-press publishers, who were willing to publish all sorts of forms. I didn't move to the larger presses until they knew what they were getting in for.

~Lydia Davis

I find teaching - I like it, but I find just walking into the classroom and facing the students very difficult.

~Lydia Davis

That's the interesting thing about writing. You can start late, you can be ignorant of things, and yet, if you work hard and pay attention you can do a good job of it.

~Lydia Davis

I would recommend, definitely, developing a 'day job' that you like - don't expect to make money writing!

~Lydia Davis

Part of my mind is working on how to end the thing while I'm going on. You need at least two brains to write.

~Lydia Davis

I'm used to rereading e-mails, even, before sending them - a bit compulsive. So this is high speed roller coaster for me!

~Lydia Davis

I don't feel I have to struggle against allegory. I let the readers do the

interpreting.

~Lydia Davis

There is something very pleasing about the principles of science and the rules of math, because they are so inevitable and so harmonious - in the abstract, anyway.

~Lydia Davis

the translator, a lonely sort of acrobat, becomes confused in a labyrinth of paradox, or climbs a pyramid of dependent clauses and has to invent a way down from it in his own language.

~Lydia Davis

To be simple, I would say a story has to have a bit of narrative, if only "she says," and then enough of a creation of a different time and place to transport the reader.

~Lydia Davis

I don't like to hurt people's feelings, and I don't like to knock other writers as a matter of principle.

~Lydia Davis

When I'm trying a new form- trying to do something I'm not used to doing, which was true of the novel.

~Lydia Davis

As the writer, I may choose to ignore the emotional heart of the matter, and focus on details, and trust that the heart of the matter will be conveyed nevertheless.

~Lydia Davis

So the question really is, Why doesn't that pain make you say, I won't do it again? When the pain is so bad that you have to say that, but you don't.

~Lydia Davis

I never dream in French, but certain French words seem better or more fun than English words - like 'pois chiches' for chick peas!

~Lydia Davis

Samuel Johnson Is Indignant:that Scotland has so few trees.

~Lydia Davis

I don't believe a good poet is very often deliberately obscure. A poet writes in a way necessary to him or her; the reader may then find the poem difficult.

~Lydia Davis

But it is curious how you can see that an idea is absolutely true and correct and yet not believe it deeply enough to act on it.

~Lydia Davis

I am simply not interested, at this point, in creating narrative scenes between characters.

~Lydia Davis

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