

Marguerite Yourcenar Quotes

*Book, Men, Thinking, Lying, Writing, Years, Soul, Art, Mean, Hadrian, Law,
Play, People, Children, Love Is, Character, Doe, Memories, Destiny, Passion*

I knew that good like bad becomes a routine, that the temporary tends to endure, that what is external permeates to the inside, and that the mask, given time, comes to be the face itself.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Love is a punishment. We are punished for not having been strong enough to remain alone.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

A touch of madness is, I think, almost always necessary for constructing a destiny.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

age means nothing. If anything I feel that I'm still a child: eternity and childhood are my ages.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Everything turns out to be valuable that one does for one's self without thought of profit.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

To stay in one place and watch the seasons come and go is tantamount to constant travel: One is traveling with the earth.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

All happiness is a form of innocence.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

All happiness is a work of art: the smallest error falsifies it, the slightest hesitation alters it, the least heaviness spoils it, the slightest stupidity brutalizes it.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

We say: mad with joy. We should say: wise with grief.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

The true birthplace is that wherein for the first time one looks intelligently upon oneself; my first homelands have been books, and to a lesser degree schools.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

In the evenings the art of building gave way to that of music, which is architecture, too, though invisible.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Our great mistake is to try to exact from each person virtues which he does not possess, and to neglect the cultivation of those which he has.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Translating is writing.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Morals are a matter of private agreement; decency is of public concern.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

It is not difficult to nourish admirable thoughts when the stars are present.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

The written word has taught me to listen to the human voice, much as the great unchanging statues have taught me to appreciate bodily motions.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

The memory of most men is an abandoned cemetery where lie, unsung and unhonored, the dead whom they have ceased to cherish. Any lasting grief is reproof to their neglect.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Laws change more slowly than custom, and though dangerous when they fall behind the times are more dangerous still when they presume to anticipate custom.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Of all our games, love's play is the only one which threatens to unsettle the soul.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

nothing is slower than the true birth of a man

~Marguerite Yourcenar

I have never seasoned a truth with the sauce of a lie in order to digest it more easily

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Cruelty is the luxury of those who have nothing to do, like drugs or racing stables.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Every hour has its immediate duty, its special injunction which dominates all others.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Everything is too far away in the past, or mysteriously too close.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Books are not life, only its ashes.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

The mask, given time, comes to be the face itself

~Marguerite Yourcenar

I believe that friendship, like love, of which it is a particular kind, requires nearly as much art as a successful choreography.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

For me, a poet is someone who is 'in contact.' Someone through whom a current is passing.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

But happiness is brittle, and if men and circumstances don't destroy it, it is threatened by ghosts.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Our true birthplace is that in which we cast for the first time an intelligent eye on ourselves. My first homelands were my books.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

On the whole, however, it is only out of pride or gross ignorance, or cowardice, that we refuse to see in the present the lineaments of times to come.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

No one understands eternity. One simply recognizes its existence.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

If you love life you also love the past, because it is the present as it has survived in memory." Translation by David Downie

~Marguerite Yourcenar

This city belongs to ghosts, to murderers, to sleepwalkers. Where are you, in what bed, in what dream?

~Marguerite Yourcenar

I have come to think that great men are characterized precisely by the extreme position which they take, and that their heroism consists in

holding to that extremity throughout their lives.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Leaving behind books is even more beautiful â€” there are far too many children.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Men who care passionately for women attach themselves at least as much to the temple and to the accessories of the cult as to their goddess herself.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

One reads thousands of books, of poets, modern and ancient, as one meets thousands of people. What remains of it all is hard to tell.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

A young musician plays scales in his room and only bores his family. A beginning writer, on the other hand, sometimes has the misfortune of getting into print.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

[On travel:] Who would be so besotted as to die without having made at least the round of this, his prison?

~Marguerite Yourcenar

I think still that someone wiser than I might well have remained happy till his death.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

The world is big â€! May it please the One who perchance is to expand the human heart to life's full measure.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Every invalid is a prisoner.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

I am not sure that the discovery of love is necessarily more exquisite than the discovery of poetry.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

The founding of libraries was like constructing more public granaries, amassing reserves against a spiritual winter which by certain signs, in spite of myself, I see ahead.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

Any truth creates a scandal.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

There are books which one should not attempt before having passed the age of forty.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

A being afire with life cannot foresee death; in fact, by each of his deeds he denies that death exists.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

the press is too often a distorting mirror, which deforms the people and events it represents, making them seem bigger or smaller than they really are.

~Marguerite Yourcenar

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