

Mark Strand

Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, Poetry, Language, Air, Moving, Giving, Book, Self, Want,
Believe, House, People, Space, Light, Culture, Shadow, Mother, Sleep, Reading*

The future is always beginning now.

~Mark Strand

We're only here for a short while. And I think it's such a lucky accident, having been born, that we're almost obliged to pay attention.

~Mark Strand

If every head of state and every government official spent an hour a day reading poetry we'd live in a much more humane and decent world.

~Mark Strand

Pain is filtered in a poem so that it becomes finally, in the end, pleasure.

~Mark Strand

Once you start describing nothingness, you end up with somethingness.

~Mark Strand

Poetry is, first and last, language - the rest is filler.

~Mark Strand

I feel that anything is possible in a poem.

~Mark Strand

And at least in poetry you should feel free to lie. That is, not to lie, but to imagine what you want, to follow the direction of the poem.

~Mark Strand

Ink runs from the corners of my mouth. There is no happiness like mine. I have been eating poetry.

~Mark Strand

Poems not only demand patience, they demand a kind of surrender. You must give yourself up to them. This is the real food for a poet: other poems, not meat loaf.

~Mark Strand

But I tend to think of the expressive part of me as rather tedious - never curious or responsive, but blind and self-serving.

~Mark Strand

The reality of a poem is a very ghostly one. It suggests, it suggests, it suggests again.

~Mark Strand

Each moment is a place you've never been.

~Mark Strand

When I walk I part the air and always the air moves in to fill the spaces where my body's been.

~Mark Strand

A life is not sufficiently elevated for poetry, unless, of course, the life has been made into an art.

~Mark Strand

For some of us, the less said about the way we do things the better.

~Mark Strand

I certainly can't speak for all cultures or all societies, but it's clear that in America, poetry serves a very marginal purpose. It's not part of the cultural mainstream.

~Mark Strand

I tend to like poems that engage me - that is to say, which do not bore me.

~Mark Strand

From the reader's view, a poem is more demanding than prose.

~Mark Strand

Nothing is the destiny of everyone, it is our commonness made dumb.

~Mark Strand

And yet, in a culture like ours, which is given to material comforts, and addicted to forms of entertainment that offer immediate gratification, it is surprising that so much poetry is written.

~Mark Strand

I believe that all poetry is formal in that it exists within limits, limits that are either inherited by tradition or limits that language itself imposes.

~Mark Strand

I think the best American poetry is the poetry that utilizes the resources of poetry rather than exploits the defects or triumphs of the poet's personality.

~Mark Strand

It's very hard to write humor.

~Mark Strand

It hardly seems worthwhile to point out the shortsightedness of those practitioners who would have us believe that the form of the poem is merely its shape.

~Mark Strand

The burial of feelings has begun.

~Mark Strand

And what does it matter when light enters the room where a child

sleeps and the waking mother, opening her eyes, wishes more than anything to be unawakened by what she cannot name?

~Mark Strand

I am not concerned with truth, nor with conventional notions of what is beautiful.

~Mark Strand

I have been eating poetry.

~Mark Strand

We are reading the story of our lives As though we were in it As though we had written it.

~Mark Strand

Life makes writing poetry necessary to prove I really was paying attention.

~Mark Strand

To open the dictionary of the Beyond and discover what one suspected, that the only word in it is nothing.

~Mark Strand

The number of people writing poems is vast, and their reasons for doing so are many, that much can be surmised from the stacks of submissions.

~Mark Strand

I would say that American poetry has always been a poetry of personal testimony.

~Mark Strand

When we walk in the sun our shadows are like barges of silence.

~Mark Strand

We all have reasons for moving. I move to keep things whole.

~Mark Strand

Even this late it happens: the coming of love, the coming of light.

~Mark Strand

Sometimes he did not know if he slept or just thought about sleep.

~Mark Strand

It came to my house. It sat on my shoulders. Your shadow is yours. I told it so. I said it was yours. I have carried it with me too long. I give it back.

~Mark Strand

Poetry is something that happens in universities, in creative writing programs or in English departments.

~Mark Strand

A great many people seem to think writing poetry is worthwhile, even though it pays next to nothing and is not as widely read as it should be.

~Mark Strand

And Robert Lowell, of course - in his poems, we're not located in his actual life. We're located more in the externals, in the journalistic facts of his life.

~Mark Strand

There's a certain point, when you're writing autobiographical stuff, where you don't want to misrepresent yourself. It would be dishonest.

~Mark Strand

In a field I am the absence of field. This is always the case. Wherever I am I am what is missing.

~Mark Strand

I don't really think it will make much difference to me when I'm dead whether I'm read or not . . . just as whether I'm dead or not won't mean much to me when I'm dead.

~Mark Strand

Poetry is about slowing down. You sit and you read something, you read it again, and it reveals a little bit more, and things come to light you never could have predicted.

~Mark Strand

I haven't met God and I haven't been to heaven, so I'm skeptical.

~Mark Strand

Usually a life turned into a poem is misrepresented.

~Mark Strand

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