

May Sarton Quotes

*Writing, People, Thinking, Age, Feelings, Real, Flower, Solitude, Giving, Self,
Pain, Long, Light, Believe, Joy, Way, Order, Doe, Art, Dream*

We are all jellyfish, too pitiful and too afraid of being disliked to be honest.

~May Sarton

Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace.

~May Sarton

Without darkness, nothing comes to birth, As without light, nothing flowers.

~May Sarton

What is destructive is impatience, haste, expecting too much too fast.

~May Sarton

We have to dare to be ourselves, however frightening or strange that self may prove to be.

~May Sarton

The minute one utters a certainty, the opposite comes to mind.

~May Sarton

There are some griefs so loud/They could bring down the sky/And there are griefs so still/None knows how deep they lie.

~May Sarton

The most valuable thing we can do for the psyche, occasionally, is to let it rest, wander, live in the changing light of room, not try to be or do anything whatever.

~May Sarton

It is, I assume, quite easy to wither into old age, and hard to grow into it.

~May Sarton

A house that does not have one warm, comfy chair in it is soulless.

~May Sarton

Now I become myself. It's taken time, many years and places.

~May Sarton

One does not "find oneself" by pursuing one's self, but on the contrary by pursuing something else and learning through discipline or routine. . . who one is and wants to be.

~May Sarton

Loneliness is the poverty of self; solitude is the richness of self.

~May Sarton

For me the moral dilemma this past year has been how to make peace with the unacceptable.

~May Sarton

Read between the lines. Then meet me in the silence if you can.

~May Sarton

How slowly one comes to understand anything!

~May Sarton

Fire is a good companion for the mind.

~May Sarton

Words are more powerful than perhaps anyone suspects, and once deeply engraved in a child's mind, they are not easily eradicated.

~May Sarton

People who are always thinking of the feelings of others can be very

destructive because they are hiding so much from themselves.

~May Sarton

... if one does not have wild dreams of achievement, there is no spur even to get the dishes washed. One must think like a hero to behave like a merely decent human being.

~May Sarton

Keep busy with survival. Imitate the trees. Learn to lose in order to recover, and remember nothing stays the same for long, not even pain. Sit it out. Let it all pass. Let it go.

~May Sarton

Wrinkles here and there seem unimportant compared to the Gestalt of the whole person I have become in this past year.

~May Sarton

A garden is always a series of losses set against a few triumphs, like life itself.

~May Sarton

For any writer who wants to keep a journal, be alive to everything, not just to what you're feeling, but also to your pets, to flowers, to what you're reading.

~May Sarton

Sometimes one has simply to endure a period of depression for what it may hold of illumination if one can live through it, attentive to what it exposes or demands.

~May Sarton

One of the good elements of old age is that we no longer have to prove anything, to ourselves or to anyone else. We are what we are.

~May Sarton

I suppose I have written novels to find out what I thought about something and poems to find out what I felt about something.

~May Sarton

We cannot afford not to fight for growth and understanding, even when it is painful, as it is bound to be.

~May Sarton

Innocence is not pure so much as pleased, Always expectant, bright-eyed, self-enclosed

~May Sarton

What is there to do when people die - people so dear and rare - but bring them back by remembering?

~May Sarton

Revision is not going back and fussing around, but going forward into the process of creation

~May Sarton

It looks as if I were meant to be alone, and that any hope of happiness is not meant. Am I too old to acquire the knack for happiness?

~May Sarton

Gardening gives one back a sense of proportion about everything - except itself.

~May Sarton

I long for the bulbs to arrive, for the early autumn chores are melancholy, but the planting of bulbs is the work of hope and is always thrilling.

~May Sarton

Gardening is an instrument of grace.

~May Sarton

We are able to laugh when we achieve detachment, if only for a moment.

~May Sarton

Love cannot exorcise the gifts of hate. / Hate cannot exorcize what has no weight, / But laughter we can never over-rate.

~May Sarton

I see a certain order in the universe and math is one way of making it visible.

~May Sarton

There is only one real deprivation... and that is not to be able to give one's gifts to those one loves most.

~May Sarton

When one's not writing poems - and I'm not at the moment - you wonder how you ever did it. It's like another country you can't reach.

~May Sarton

One must think like a hero to behave like a merely decent human being.

~May Sarton

There is a proper balance between not asking enough of oneself and asking or expecting too much.

~May Sarton

Don't forget that compared to a grownup person every baby is a genius.

~May Sarton

I want feelings to be expressed, to be open, to be natural, not to be looked on as strange. It's not weird if you feel deeply.

~May Sarton

No partner in a love relationship... should feel that he has to give up an essential part of himself to make it viable.

~May Sarton

When we admit our vulnerability, we include others. If we deny it, we shut them out.

~May Sarton

It is dark now. The snow is deep blue and the ocean nearly black. It is time for some music.

~May Sarton

It always comes back to the same necessity: go deep enough and there is a bedrock of truth, however hard.

~May Sarton

It is good for a professional to be reminded that his professionalism is only a husk, that the real person must remain an amateur, a lover of the work.

~May Sarton

Self-respect is nothing to hide behind. When you need it most it isn't there.

~May Sarton

She became for me an island of light, fun, wisdom where I could run with my discoveries and torments and hopes at any time of day and find welcome.

~May Sarton

Most people have to talk so they won't hear.

~May Sarton

Where joy in an old pencil is not absurd.

~May Sarton

I would predicate that in all great works of genius masculine and feminine elements in the personality find expression, whether this androgynous nature is played out sexually or not.

~May Sarton

True feeling justifies whatever it may cost.

~May Sarton

Anyone who is going to be a writer knows enough at fifteen to write several novels.

~May Sarton

Don't forget that compared to a grownup person every baby is a genius. Think of the capacity to learn! The freshness, the temperament, the will of a baby a few months old!

~May Sarton

Where music thundered let the mind be still, Where the will triumphed let there be no will, What light revealed, now let the dark fulfill.

~May Sarton

The garden is growth and change and that means loss as well as constant new treasures to make up for a few disasters.

~May Sarton

Love opens the doors into everything, as far as I can see, including and perhaps most of all, the door into one's own secret, and often terrible and frightening, real self.

~May Sarton

The more articulate one is, the more dangerous words become.

~May Sarton

Deep down there was understanding, not of the facts of our lives so much as of our essential natures.

~May Sarton

Flowers and plants are silent presences. They nourish every sense except the ear.

~May Sarton

When you change the way you look at a thing, the thing itself changes...By mastering feelings, she had come to understand the meaning of discipline and its reward: freedom and power.

~May Sarton

It is a waste of time to see people who have only a social surface to show. I will make every effort to find out the real person, but if I can't, then I am upset and cross. Time wasted is poison.

~May Sarton

Your poems will happen when no one is there.

~May Sarton

A holiday gives one a chance to look backward and forward; to reset oneself by an inner compass.

~May Sarton

I'm only able to write poetry, for the most part, when I have a Muse, a woman who focuses the world for me.

~May Sarton

We can do anything, or almost, but how balanced, magnanimous, and modest one has to be to do anything! And also how patient. It is as true in the arts as anywhere else.

~May Sarton

I can understand people simply fleeing the mountainous effort Christmas has become... but there are always a few saving graces and finally they make up for all the bother and distress.

~May Sarton

Solitude is the salt of personhood. It brings out the authentic flavor of every experience.

~May Sarton

At some point I believe one has to stop holding back for fear of alienating some imaginary reader or real relative or friend, and come out with personal truth.

~May Sarton

Whatever peace I know rests in the natural world, in feeling myself a part of it, even in a small way.

~May Sarton

We are all, whether we know it or not, in search of a way to enrich, to drink during the fizz, to inhale deeper our gifts, in a desperation for some little understanding before death.

~May Sarton

Does one come to enjoy even the hardships that help make one the person one is? Or is it that the past becomes a legend to be remembered with laughter?

~May Sarton

If art is not to be life-enhancing, what is it to be?

~May Sarton

Why is it that people who cannot show feeling presume that that is a strength and not a weakness?

~May Sarton

I am not a greedy person except about flowers and plants, and then I become fanatically greedy.

~May Sarton

letters are so much easier than living. One can give one's best.

~May Sarton

I have written every poem, every novel, for the same purpose-to find out what I think, to know where I stand.

~May Sarton

Poems like to have a destination for their flight. They are homing pigeons.

~May Sarton

It takes a long time for words to become thought.

~May Sarton

The trouble is, old age is not interesting until one gets there. It's a foreign country with an unknown language to the young and even to the middle-aged.

~May Sarton

Though friendship is not quick to burn it is explosive stuff.

~May Sarton

When addressed, a Gentleman Cat does not move a muscle. He looks as if he hasn't heard.

~May Sarton

[In old age] there is a childlike innocence, often, that has nothing to do with the childishness of senility. The moments become precious . . .

~May Sarton

It is curious how any making of order makes one feel mentally ordered, ordered inside.

~May Sarton

How much hope, expectation, and sheer hard work goes into the smallest success! There is no being sure of anything except that whatever has been created will change in time.

~May Sarton

A body without bones would be a limp impossible mess, so a day without steady routine would be disruptive and chaotic.

~May Sarton

Solitude is my element, and the reason is that extreme awareness of other people... precludes awareness of one's self so that after a while the self no longer knows that it exists.

~May Sarton

Public education was not founded to give society what it wants. Quite the opposite.

~May Sarton

And I refuse to feel guilty about not letter-writing either. There are times when one can, times when one can't. In the times when an enormous amount of living is going on, one can't.

~May Sarton

In the country of pain we are each alone.

~May Sarton

For to be desperate is to discover strength. / We die of comfort and by conflict live.

~May Sarton

I feel more alive when I'm writing than I do at any other time--except maybe when I'm making love.

~May Sarton

Absence becomes the greatest Presence.

~May Sarton

instant intimacy was too often followed by disillusion.

~May Sarton

True power is given to the vulnerable.

~May Sarton

Human relations just are not fixed in their orbits like the planets -- they're more like galaxies, changing all the time, exploding into light for years, then dying away.

~May Sarton

life is always bringing unexpected gifts.

~May Sarton

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