

Nicholson Baker

Quotes

*Thinking, Book, Writing, War, Want, People, Way, Reading, Trying, Order,
World, Names, Rooms, Firsts, Sides, Believe, Ideas, Grief, Voice, Years*

I woke up thinking a very pleasant thought. There is lots left in the world to read.

~Nicholson Baker

Books: a beautifully browsable invention that needs no electricity and exists in a readable form no matter what happens.

~Nicholson Baker

For me, as a beginning novelist, all other living writers form a control group for whom the world is a placebo.

~Nicholson Baker

Printed books usually outlive bookstores and the publishers who brought them out. They sit around, demanding nothing, for decades. That's one of their nicest qualities - their brute persistence.

~Nicholson Baker

I've never been a fast reader. I'm fickle; I don't finish books I start; I put a book aside for five, ten years and then take it up again.

~Nicholson Baker

Haven't you felt a peculiar sort of worry about the chair in your living room that no one sits in?

~Nicholson Baker

Poetry is prose in slow motion.

~Nicholson Baker

Spoon the sauce over the ice cream. It will harden. This is what you have been working for.

~Nicholson Baker

Shoes are the first adult machines we are given to master.

~Nicholson Baker

But spending your life concentrating on death is like watching a whole movie and thinking only about the credits that are going to roll at the end. It's a mistake of emphasis.

~Nicholson Baker

History isn't a seesaw. If you have a really bad regime on one side, the actions on the other side don't automatically become good. It doesn't work that way.

~Nicholson Baker

I keep thinking I'll enjoy suspense novels, and sometimes I do. I've read about 20 Dick Francis novels.

~Nicholson Baker

Rarely do pens go dry in restaurants.

~Nicholson Baker

I no longer want to live in an apartment furnished with forklifts and backhoes.

~Nicholson Baker

In my case, adulthood itself was not an advance, although it was a useful waymark.

~Nicholson Baker

Footnotes are the finer-suckered surfaces that allow testicular paragraphs to hold fast to the wider reality of the library.

~Nicholson Baker

It's troubling to see how often Winston Churchill is a proponent of massive programs that are really aimed at civilians - starvation blockades and chemical warfare stockpiles and so on.

~Nicholson Baker

When I really want to be soothed and reminded of why people bother to fiddle with sentences, I often read poetry.

~Nicholson Baker

A bee rose up from a sun-filled paper cup, off to make slum honey from some diet root beer it had found inside.

~Nicholson Baker

The job of the novel is to be true to the confusion, but not so confusing that you turn the reader off.

~Nicholson Baker

Each decision - to kill, to sign a petition, to write a letter, to make a speech, to attack, to lie, to surrender - was made at some point in somebody's day.

~Nicholson Baker

The function of a great library is to store obscure books.

~Nicholson Baker

Of course, individuals are responsible for individual actions - the pilots who flew over Pearl Harbor and dropped bombs on those ships did a terrible thing as part of an attack on a military base.

~Nicholson Baker

Most writers are secretly worried that they're not really writers. That it's all been happenstance, something came together randomly, the letters came together, and they won't coalesce ever again.

~Nicholson Baker

You can tell it's a poem because it's swimming in a little gel pack of white space. That shows it's a poem.

~Nicholson Baker

The nice thing about a protest song is that it takes the complaint, the fussing, the finger-pointing, and gives it an added component of sociable harmony.

~Nicholson Baker

Many good poets are really essayists who write very short essays.

~Nicholson Baker

I like shelves full of books in a library, but if all books become electronic, the task of big research libraries remains the same - keep what's published in the form in which it appeared.

~Nicholson Baker

The great thing about novels is that you can be as unshy as you want to be. I'm very polite in person. I don't want to talk about startling or upsetting things with people.

~Nicholson Baker

People don't like to read text on computer screens (and reading a lot of text on iPod screens gets very tiring very soon, just about as soon as running out of battery power).

~Nicholson Baker

I ordered a Kindle 2 from Amazon. How could I not? There were banner ads for it all over the Web. Whenever I went to the Amazon Web site, I was urged to buy one.

~Nicholson Baker

Maybe the Kindle was the Bowflex of bookishness: something expensive that, when you commit to it, forces you to do more of whatever it is you think you should be doing more of.

~Nicholson Baker

I prefer reading e-books on a high resolution LCD screen - like the iPod

Touch's - although the pixel density could and should be much higher.

~Nicholson Baker

I'm suspicious of full-replacement programs - that is, pronouncements that one way of doing something will entirely supplant another, and that in fact we have to hurry the replacement along.

~Nicholson Baker

I'm a sucker for interiors and carefully, beautifully filmed people sitting in a big room. My appetites are simple.

~Nicholson Baker

When I first wanted to be a writer, I learned to write prose by reading poetry.

~Nicholson Baker

You need the art in order to love the life.

~Nicholson Baker

The question any novel is really trying to answer is, Is life worth living?

~Nicholson Baker

Until a friend or relative has applied a particular proverb to your own life, or until you've watched him apply the proverb to his own life, it has no power to sway you.

~Nicholson Baker

First, if you love the Kindle and it works for you, it isn't problematic, and you should ignore all my criticisms and read the way you want to read.

~Nicholson Baker

I wanted to apprentice myself to the dailiness of the war's beginning phase. It's truer and more frightening that way - when you're afloat on a little dingy in the midst of it all.

~Nicholson Baker

Updike was the first to take the penile sensorium under the wing of elaborate metaphorical prose.

~Nicholson Baker

E.B. White's essays are the best things I've read about Maine - especially the one in which he's not sure if he can go out sailing any more in his sloop.

~Nicholson Baker

Wikipedia is just an incredible thing. It is fact-encirclingly huge, and it is idiosyncratic, careful, messy, funny, shocking and full of simmering controversies - and it is free, and it is fast.

~Nicholson Baker

There is no good word for stomach; just as there is no good word for girlfriend. Stomach is to girlfriend as belly is to lover, and as abdomen is to consort, and as middle is to petite amie.

~Nicholson Baker

Wikipedia flourished partly because it was a shrine to altruism.

~Nicholson Baker

I don't do all that well in the writerly world. I'm happier being outside the flow.

~Nicholson Baker

In the novel, I can change things and simplify, and make events work towards whatever meanings I'm trying to get at more efficiently.

~Nicholson Baker

While I was writing I assumed it would be published under a pseudonym, and that liberated me: what I wrote was exactly what I

wanted to read.

~Nicholson Baker

You can register a political objection in a number of ways.

~Nicholson Baker

I blush easily. I have difficulty meeting people's eye, difficulty with public speaking, the normal afflictions of the shy, but not to a paralyzing degree.

~Nicholson Baker

I'm often called obsessive, but I don't think I am any more than anyone else.

~Nicholson Baker

If you write every day, you're going to write a lot of things that aren't terribly good, but you're going to have given things a chance to have their moments of sprouting.

~Nicholson Baker

You almost believe that you will never come to the end of a roll of tape; and when you do, there is a feeling, nearly, though very briefly, of shock and grief.

~Nicholson Baker

I've always thought of myself as shy.

~Nicholson Baker

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