

# Paul Auster Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, Book, People, Men, World, Stories, Mean, Character, Way,  
Believe, Children, Trying, Reading, Fiction, Memories, Father, Long, Boys,  
Years*

Novels are fictions and therefore they tell lies, but through those lies every novelist attempts to tell the truth about the world.

~Paul Auster

There's hope for everyone. That's what makes the world go round.

~Paul Auster

Stories only happen to those who are able to tell them.

~Paul Auster

It always stimulates me to discover new examples of my own prejudice and stupidity, to realize that I don't know half as much as I think I do.

~Paul Auster

One should never underestimate the power of books.

~Paul Auster

If you're not ready for everything, you're not ready for anything.

~Paul Auster

Everything can change at any moment, suddenly and forever.

~Paul Auster

It often happens that things are other than what they seem, and you can get yourself into trouble by jumping to conclusions.

~Paul Auster

Memory is the space in which a thing happens for a second time.

~Paul Auster

It seems to me that I will always be happy in the place where I am not.

~Paul Auster

The funny thing is that I feel close to all my characters. Deep, deep

inside them all. I can't describe how deeply I love them all.

~Paul Auster

As long as you are dreaming, there is always a way out

~Paul Auster

Every man is the author of his own life.

~Paul Auster

The pictures do not lie, but neither do they tell the whole story. They are merely a record of time passing, the outward evidence.

~Paul Auster

The story is not in the words; it's in the struggle.

~Paul Auster

I walk around the world like a ghost, and sometimes I question whether I even exist. Whether I've ever existed at all.

~Paul Auster

Changing your mind is probably one of the most beautiful things people can do. And I've changed my mind about a lot of things over the years.

~Paul Auster

I think that's what turns young men and women into writers - the happiness you discover living in books.

~Paul Auster

All men contain several men inside them, and most of us bounce from one self to another without ever knowing who we are.

~Paul Auster

Dismantling the architecture of my discontent

~Paul Auster

Chance is an element of life. What I try to do is study what I call the mechanics of reality as carefully as I can.

~Paul Auster

you can survive only if nothing is necessary to you

~Paul Auster

We construct a narrative for ourselves, and that's the thread that we follow from one day to the next. People who disintegrate as personalities are the ones who lose that thread.

~Paul Auster

I don't know why I write. If I knew the answer, I probably wouldn't have to. But it is a compulsion. You don't choose it, it chooses you. And I wouldn't recommend it to anybody.

~Paul Auster

No book includes the entire world. It's limited. And so it doesn't seem like an aesthetic compromise to have to do that. There's so much other material to write about.

~Paul Auster

The most challenging project I've ever done, I think, is every single thing I've ever tried to do. It's never easy.

~Paul Auster

As my friend George Oppen once said to me about getting old: what a strange thing to happen to a little boy.

~Paul Auster

All through my writing life I've had this impulse to write autobiographical works.

~Paul Auster

Money is the driving force of Hand to Mouth, the lack of money, and all those true stories about strange things in The Red Notebook, coincidences and unlikely events, surprise, the unexpected.

~Paul Auster

We are continually shaped by the forces of coincidence.

~Paul Auster

You can't put your feet on the ground until you've touched the sky.

~Paul Auster

Every generation always thinks it was better before, and I think people have been saying this for probably thousands of years.

~Paul Auster

We have missed him in the sunshine, in the storm, in the twilight, ever since.

~Paul Auster

It became a habit of mine never to leave the house without a pencil in my pocket.

~Paul Auster

What matters is not how well you can avoid trouble, but how you cope with trouble when it comes.

~Paul Auster

We find ourselves only by looking to what we're not.

~Paul Auster

It's like a mathematical law, Grace.

~Paul Auster

I think that sense of unreality inspired me to write the story within the

book that [August] Brill tells himself, one of the stories he tells himself.

~Paul Auster

I guess the toughest things in translations are word play, which can never be reproduced exactly.

~Paul Auster

We hear things, but we can't always see them, or, even if we do see them, we're not sure that we're seeing correctly. Hence: Invisible.

~Paul Auster

No one can cross the boundary into another -- for the simple reason that no one can gain access to himself

~Paul Auster

It was a wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of night, and the voice on the other end asking for someone he was not.

~Paul Auster

The truth of the story lies in the details.

~Paul Auster

We are all aliens to ourselves, and if we have any sense of who we are, it is only because we live inside the eyes of others.

~Paul Auster

In the end, each life is no more than the sum of contingent facts, a chronicle of chance intersections, of i-ukes, of random events that divulge nothing but their own lack of purpose.

~Paul Auster

We all want to believe in impossible things, I suppose, to persuade ourselves that miracles can happen.

~Paul Auster

Our lives don't really belong to us, you see -- they belong to the world, and in spite of our efforts to make sense of it, the world is a place beyond our understanding.

~Paul Auster

You see, the interesting thing about books, as opposed, say, to films, is that it's always just one person encountering the book, it's not an audience, it's one to one.

~Paul Auster

You're too good for this world, and because of that the world will eventually crush you.

~Paul Auster

To leave the world a little better than you found it. That's the best a man can ever do.

~Paul Auster

I don't like pictures in books. I feel that the pictures diminish the words, and the words diminish the pictures, and it doesn't work.

~Paul Auster

Something happens, Blue thinks, and then it goes on happening forever. It can never be changed, can never be otherwise.

~Paul Auster

There are two kinds of typical days. There's the typical day when I'm writing a novel, and there's the typical day when I'm not.

~Paul Auster

You have to really have a taste for being alone to be a writer.

~Paul Auster

Libraries aren't in the real world, after all. They're places apart, sanctuaries of pure thought. In this way I can go on living on the moon for the rest of my life.

~Paul Auster

Writing is a solitary business. It takes over your life. In some sense, a writer has no life of his own. Even when he's there, he's not really there.

~Paul Auster

We grow older, but we do not change. We become more sophisticated, but at bottom we continue to resemble our young selves, eager to listen to the next story and the next, and the next.

~Paul Auster

Reason and memory are nearly always at odds.

~Paul Auster

The real is always way ahead of what we can imagine.

~Paul Auster

I think if we didn't contradict ourselves, it would be awfully boring. It would be tedious to be alive.

~Paul Auster

I think I hate cynicism more than anything else. It's the curse of our age, and I want to avoid it at all costs.

~Paul Auster

Every novel is an equal collaboration between the writer and the reader and it is the only place in the world where two strangers can meet on terms of absolute intimacy.

~Paul Auster



I like the sound a typewriter makes.

~Paul Auster

Paintings. Or the collapse of time in images.

~Paul Auster

It would be a terrible world if everyone was an artist. Nothing would get done!

~Paul Auster

I had made an empirical discovery and it carried all the weight of a mathematical proof.

~Paul Auster

Artists are the people for whom the world is not enough.

~Paul Auster

I've been very lucky in this second marriage. It's just luck. It's absolute luck. And I can only marvel at it. So many other things could have happened that didn't, so overall I feel blessed.

~Paul Auster

Nobody asks you to do this. The world out there is not panting after another novelist. We choose it

~Paul Auster

To feel estranged from language is to lose your own body.

~Paul Auster

I don't like that word [memoir]. Whenever my publishers have wanted to use it, I've told them to take it away.

~Paul Auster

It's beyond the grasp of anyone's memory to recall conversations in

kind of [memoir] detail. So it's fake. It's all made up.

~Paul Auster

The fiction is not autobiographical. Maybe to some extent it is, of course.

~Paul Auster

The things we remember are often things that have great emotional importance, and so they have a lasting effect.

~Paul Auster

The joke is the purest, most essential form of storytelling. Every word has to count.

~Paul Auster

Books demand more. You have to be a more active participant.

~Paul Auster

I hate reading digital books. I don't enjoy the experience. I like smelling the paper, turning the pages. I think the book as we've always known it is an efficient technology.

~Paul Auster

The best filmmakers, I think, have always had very narrow frameworks for their stories, and then they can go deeply, rather than skimming the surface.

~Paul Auster

When a person is lucky enough to live inside a story, to live inside an imaginary world, the pains of this world disappear. For as long as the story goes on, reality no longer exists.

~Paul Auster

Writing makes you feel that there is a reason to go on living. If I couldn't

write, I would stop breathing.

~Paul Auster

For some reason, all my characters come to me with their names attached to them. I never have to search for the names.

~Paul Auster

In the good mystery there is nothing wasted, no sentence, no word that is not significant.

~Paul Auster

I guess the important thing for young writers is to read.

~Paul Auster

I'm not a man deeply interested in technology. It eludes me. I confess I don't even have a computer, I don't have a cell phone.

~Paul Auster

...once you fell in love with her, you loved her until the day you died.

~Paul Auster

Holes in the memory. You grab on to some things, others have completely disappeared.

~Paul Auster

I can never say 'why' about anything I do. I suppose I can say 'how' and 'when' and 'what.' But 'why' is impenetrable to me.

~Paul Auster

No one wants to be part of a fiction, and even less so if that fiction is real.

~Paul Auster

Having made films, I know very well that the scope of the average 90-

to 120-minute movie is about the same narrative heft as a long short story or a novella.

~Paul Auster

I don't think about the stories so much, as the characters themselves. They live on, and they are almost as real as I am.

~Paul Auster

but even the facts do not always tell the truth

~Paul Auster

What I'm trying to do [in *Winter Journal*] is to tell the story of a man's life from birth, but there are different versions of him, four different versions.

~Paul Auster

I wrote *Report from the Interior* was that after I finished *Winter Journal*, I took a pause, and I realized there was more I wanted to say.

~Paul Auster

Our lives carry us along in ways we cannot control, and almost nothing stays with us. It dies when we do, and death is something that happens to us every day.

~Paul Auster

Writing is, after all, a gesture towards other people, giving something to others. And so it's not a completely hermetic exercise. It's really an opening up.

~Paul Auster

Let me tell you, there's no better medicine than a friendly card game for sloughing off the cares of a workaday world.

~Paul Auster

You tend to feel very hurt when people attack you and feel indifferent when you get praise. You think, 'Of course they like it. They should like it.'

~Paul Auster

It's June second, he told himself. Try to remember that. This is New York, and tomorrow will be June third. If all goes well, the following day will be the fourth. But nothing is certain.

~Paul Auster

I never would have thought of that word, "hospitality." I settle into the rhythm of my steps.

~Paul Auster

I've found that writing novels is an all-absorbing experience - both physical and mental - and I have to do it every day in order to keep the rhythm, to keep myself focused on what I'm doing.

~Paul Auster

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