

# Peter Orner Quotes

*Thinking, People, Book, Writing, Character, Stories, Years, Real, Done, Mean,  
Teacher, Soul, Unhappy, Moving, Novel, Trying, Waiting, Nice, Rivers, Different*

Actually, you're not famous at all. Maybe you'll get some traction after you're dead?

~Peter Orner

I revise and revise and revise. I'm not even sure "revise" is the right word. I work a story almost to death before it's done.

~Peter Orner

I think anything we do - eating, walking down the street, online shopping - gives you another perspective on writing stories.

~Peter Orner

I sometimes wonder if our memories are a myth. We think we remember, but we are remembering the story and not the actual event?

~Peter Orner

I agree with the Lev Tolstoy quote completely, but I also feel like there's more to it. What is a happy family and an unhappy family? We're probably both of those things at the same time.

~Peter Orner

A stellar, fully-realized collection of stories... grounded, wonderfully, in the river valleys of western Maine. You come away not only understanding a place but the soul of its people.

~Peter Orner

I've spent a lot of time in prisons, first doing legal work and later, teaching.

~Peter Orner

If a novel or a story works, you don't stop thinking about it; it doesn't truly end.

~Peter Orner

I have a friend who teaches yoga (or is it pilates?), and she said that I don't seem to live in the moment. And I said, "Exactly!" I'd go nuts if I lived in the moment.

~Peter Orner

I think some writers should wait for something to say.

~Peter Orner

I've spent so many years living in one place and imaging another.

~Peter Orner

Lot of stories in deceit, how characters deceive other people, but most of all, I think, how they deceive themselves. We're not as tricky as we think we are.

~Peter Orner

A collection, for me, is a book of very diverse stories that somehow speak to each other, across wide geography, across time, years, decades.

~Peter Orner

I agonize over things like this - the order of things, section titles, all this architectural sort of stuff. Takes me years to figure out.

~Peter Orner

My characters tend to be people who are looking back on a life lived, their joys, their regrets.

~Peter Orner

I'm constantly trying to figure out how to crack that mystery; how to make a novel that has a sense of immediacy of a short story. I try to do that and I'll try it again, but I'll never get it.

~Peter Orner

I feel like there are too many words in the world, and I think silence is so much more powerful than the glut of words.

~Peter Orner

We don't want emotion handed to us - that's not emotion. You have to build and come from the reader's soul.

~Peter Orner

As a professor I can't teach writing.

~Peter Orner

I'm pretty tight - I rewrite, in some cases, 70 to 80 times before I show it to people.

~Peter Orner

I write when I have something to say and not when I don't. My time is better spent if I know I have nothing to say. I don't consider it writer's block; I just don't have anything to say.

~Peter Orner

What you can do with a short story that you can't do with a novel is punch someone in the gut, in the best of ways.

~Peter Orner

I beat a story to within an inch of its life - that's when I know its done. Not before, not after.

~Peter Orner

Maybe my work is somewhat divided into family stories, things I know intimately, and then everybody else in the world - the strangers who I am totally fascinated with.

~Peter Orner

I try not to read my own books just because I would rather read

somebody else.

~Peter Orner

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