

Rita Dove

Quotes

*Thinking, Writing, Mean, Children, Book, Moving, Trying, Play, Years, Poet,
People, Library, Art, Two, Way, Reading, World, Dream, School, Needs*

There are times in life when, instead of complaining, you do something about your complaints.

~Rita Dove

I see a resurgence of interest in poetry. I am less optimistic about the prospects for the arts when it comes to federal funding.

~Rita Dove

All of us have moments in our childhood where we come alive for the first time. And we go back to those moments and think, This is when I became myself.

~Rita Dove

A good poem is like a bouillon cube. It's concentrated and it nourishes you when you need it.

~Rita Dove

Courage has nothing to do with our determination to be great. It has to do with what we decide in that moment when we are called upon to be more.

~Rita Dove

Being true to yourself really means being true to all the complexities of the human spirit.

~Rita Dove

We should always do something that makes us feel like a child again. Keep learning, no matter what it is.

~Rita Dove

The library is an arena of possibility, opening both a window into the soul and a door onto the world.

~Rita Dove

I've always been intrigued by the way history works, the way we decide what is mentioned.

~Rita Dove

Sometimes a word is found so right it trembles at the slightest explanation.

~Rita Dove

You have to imagine it possible before you can see something. You can have the evidence right in front of you, but if you can't imagine something that has never existed before, it's impossible.

~Rita Dove

Everybody who's anybody longs to be a tree.

~Rita Dove

Listen how they say your name. If they can't say that right, there's no way they're going to know how to treat you proper, neither.

~Rita Dove

When I was young, I was older than I am today.

~Rita Dove

My father is a chemist, my mother was a homemaker. My parents instilled in us the feeling that learning was the most exciting thing that could happen to you, and it never ends.

~Rita Dove

The poetry that sustains me is when I feel that, for a minute, the clouds have parted and I've seen ecstasy or something

~Rita Dove

Without imagination we can go nowhere. And imagination is not restricted to the arts. Every scientist I have met who has been a

success has had to imagine.

~Rita Dove

If we really want to be full and generous in spirit, we have no choice but to trust at some level.

~Rita Dove

Being Poet Laureate made me realize I was capable of a larger voice. There is a more public utterance I can make as a poet.

~Rita Dove

Libraries are where it all begins.

~Rita Dove

Poetry is language at its most distilled and most powerful.

~Rita Dove

When we are touched by something it's as if we're being brushed by an angel's wings.

~Rita Dove

My childhood library was small enough not to be intimidating. And yet I felt the whole world was contained in those two rooms. I could walk any aisle and smell wisdom.

~Rita Dove

In working on a poem, I love to revise. Lots of younger poets don't enjoy this, but in the process of revision I discover things

~Rita Dove

The sound of the mandolin is a very curious sound because it's cheerful and melancholy at the same time, and I think it comes from that shadow string, the double strings.

~Rita Dove

Creative writing and literacy go hand and hand.

~Rita Dove

One definition of eternity is that we are not alone on this planet, that there are those who've gone before and those who will come, and that there is a community of spirits.

~Rita Dove

It's the combination of the intimate and the public that I find so exciting about being poet laureate.

~Rita Dove

I was apprehensive. I feared every time I talked about poetry, it would be filtered through the lens of race, sex, and age.

~Rita Dove

Instead of trying to come up and pontificate on what literature is, you need to talk with children, to teachers, and make sure they get poetry in the curriculum early.

~Rita Dove

I loved to write when I was a child. I wrote, but I always thought it was something that you did as a child, then you put away childish things.

~Rita Dove

Rap is only one end of a whole spectrum of verbal play and virtuosity. Rap is geared for aural pleasure.

~Rita Dove

I was pirouette and flourish, I was filigree and flame. How could I count my blessings when I didn't know their names?

~Rita Dove

If you can't be free, be a mystery.

~Rita Dove

By making us stop for a moment, poetry gives us an opportunity to think about ourselves as human beings on this planet and what we mean to each other.

~Rita Dove

What's a word, a talisman, to hold against the world?

~Rita Dove

I try to show what it is about language and music that enthralls, because I think those are the two elements of poetry.

~Rita Dove

It's unfortunate that sometimes in schools, there's this need to have things quantified and graded.

~Rita Dove

There are distinct duties of a poet laureate. I plan a reading series at the Library of Congress and advise the librarian. The rest is how I want to promote poetry

~Rita Dove

I keep the drafts of each poem in color-coded folders. I pick up the folders according to how I feel about that color that day.

~Rita Dove

My favorite poets may not be your bread and butter. I have more favorite poems than favorite poets.

~Rita Dove

Equality and self-determination should never be divided in the name of religious or ideological fervor.

~Rita Dove

It really wasn't until I was in college when I began to write more and more, and I realized I was scheduling my entire life around my writing

~Rita Dove

I believe people may have a predisposition for artistic creativity. It doesn't mean they're going to make it.

~Rita Dove

People write me from all over the country, asking me, and sometimes even telling me, what they think a poet laureate should do. I found that immensely valuable.

~Rita Dove

I prefer to explore the most intimate moments, the smaller, crystallized details we all hinge our lives on.

~Rita Dove

It makes me furious to hear haters of all skin colors - especially Christian, Jewish, and Muslim fundamentalists - deride other people because of their different beliefs and lifestyles.

~Rita Dove

For many years, I thought a poem was a whisper overheard, not an aria heard.

~Rita Dove

What is ironic is that Allen Ginsberg's importance was in its twilight for so many years that it took his death to bring it to the front page. He electrified an entire world!

~Rita Dove

Going to the library was the one place we got to go without asking for permission. And they let us choose what we wanted to read. It was a feeling of having a book be mine entirely.

~Rita Dove

I didn't know writers could be real live people, because I never knew any writers.

~Rita Dove

The American Dream is a phrase we'll have to wrestle with all of our lives. It means a lot of things to different people. I think we're redefining it now

~Rita Dove

If they don't read, if they don't love reading; if they don't find themselves compulsively reading, I don't think they're really a writer

~Rita Dove

I wish someone had told me that my stories are really mine to tell. In other words, anything that I think is important or that has moved me has the ability to move somebody else.

~Rita Dove

Can it be that even as one grows to fit the space one lives in, one cannot grow until there's space to grow?

~Rita Dove

Don't be so fast, you're all you've got.

~Rita Dove

I'm never quite sure how the poem is going to resolve itself and that I'm always in some way surprised. I make a discovery in a poem as I write it.

~Rita Dove

I thought, after the Pulitzer, at least nothing will surprise me quite that much in my life. And another one happened. It was quite amazing.

~Rita Dove

Crassly put: When I write, I am trying not to bore myself and my readers.

~Rita Dove

I think that you certainly don't have to be aged and travel the world to write a poem.

~Rita Dove

I think reading Shakespeare's plays when I was young was extremely important. He had the ability to make utter strangers come alive.

~Rita Dove

I write short stories, and I wrote a play.

~Rita Dove

I change jobs like drinking water ... And as I grow accustomed to the new flavor of a drink I regard as delicious, yes, vital, something fades, life balks. So I break camp; I shed skins.

~Rita Dove

I loved to read, but I always thought that the dream was too far away. The person who had written the book was a god, it wasn't a person.

~Rita Dove

To write for PC reasons, because you think you ought to be dealing with this subject, is never going to yield anything that is really going to matter to anyone else. It has to matter to you.

~Rita Dove

To practice your scales, so to speak, in order play the symphony, is what you have to do as a young poet.

~Rita Dove

I was appointed Poet Laureate. It came totally out of the blue because most Poet Laureates had been considerably older than I. It was not something that I even had begun to dream about!

~Rita Dove

The joy of working at something to find out what it means to me is what I grew up with.

~Rita Dove

I have a high guilt quotient. A poem can go through as many as 50 or 60 drafts. It can take from a day to two years - or longer.

~Rita Dove

I think if you put something in a file that says "war poems" or "love poems" that you already restrict the way in which the poem might move.

~Rita Dove

What writing does is to reveal.

~Rita Dove

I always loved science. And in fact, I got a science award in high school. I mean, I loved science, but I think I loved literature more.

~Rita Dove

I think that when a poem can move readers across generations and across its specific class or race then it becomes truly classic.

~Rita Dove

I think children have talent and insight, but it gets beaten out of them.

~Rita Dove

I carry a notebook with me everywhere. But that's only the first step.

~Rita Dove

Poetry connects you to yourself, to the self that doesn't know how to talk or negotiate.

~Rita Dove

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