

# Teju Cole Quotes

*Writing, Book, Mean, People, New York, Important, Way, Reality, Years, Art,  
Reading, War, Cities, World, Feelings, White, Views, Novelists, Three, Moving*

I deeply respect American sentimentality, the way one respects a wounded hippo. You must keep an eye on it, for you know it is deadly.

~Teju Cole

Writing as writing. Writing as rioting. Writing as righting. On the best days, all three.

~Teju Cole

The White Savior Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege.

~Teju Cole

The white savior supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening.

~Teju Cole

To be alive, it seemed to me, as I stood there in all kinds of sorrow, was to be both original and reflection, and to be dead was to be split off, to be reflection alone.

~Teju Cole

I just realized that we're facing here is an empathy gap. And this was just another way to generate conversation about something that nobody wanted to look at.

~Teju Cole

Things don't go away just because you choose to forget them.

~Teju Cole

The energies of Lagos life- creative, malevolent, ambiguous- converge at the bus stops

~Teju Cole

The site was a palimpsest, as was all the city, written, erased, rewritten.

~Teju Cole

I'm not trying to be in your face and take a picture that is like a journalistic kind of image. I got interested in a kind of complicated, compiled, visual field.

~Teju Cole

Love perhaps includes the promise that when the mob comes for you I'll go against the mob.

~Teju Cole

I couldn't remember what life was like before I started walking.

~Teju Cole

A MOB is not, as is so often said, mindless. A MOB is single-minded.

~Teju Cole

It is dangerous to live in a secure world.

~Teju Cole

I suddenly feel a vague pity for all those writers who have to ply their trade from sleepy American suburbs, writing divorce scenes symbolized by the very slow washing of dishes.

~Teju Cole

Life's too short for anxious score-keeping

~Teju Cole

I adore imaginary monsters, but I am terrified of real ones.

~Teju Cole

I schooled in the Boston area.

~Teju Cole

The banality of evil transmutes into the banality of sentimentality. The world is nothing but a problem to be solved by enthusiasm.

~Teju Cole

Perhaps this is what we mean by sanity: that, whatever our self-admitted eccentricities might be, we are not villains of our own stories.

~Teju Cole

For purposes of marketing, writers are designated as poets, novelists, or something else. But writing is about matchmaking, an attempt to marry sensations with apt words.

~Teju Cole

Always say no pun intended to draw attention to the intended pun.

~Teju Cole

It wasn't a deception: all lovers live on partial knowledge.

~Teju Cole

You don't bring in a gay character as a way of commenting on gay issues. You have one there because he's real, and that's his life, no less so than your life is yours.

~Teju Cole

So, for a book set in 2006, *Open City* evades certain markers, while it embraces certain others. Julius doesn't use a smartphone, and he doesn't discuss contemporary US politics in any fine detail.

~Teju Cole

Not explicitly, no. Compared to this enormous, relentless evolutionary activity in the built environment, writing is small potatoes.

~Teju Cole

It takes a few years to understand what we've lived through. At the moment, we're still sort of mired in the irrelevant bullshit. There isn't yet that public conversation about 9/11.

~Teju Cole

The creative part of oneself finds its way out. In this case, I got interested particularly in the medium of Twitter and looked for ways to use it creatively.

~Teju Cole

Being Nigerian is a strong part of my identity. Being American is a strong part of my identity. And there are important parts of who I am that really have nothing to do with my national connection.

~Teju Cole

There is an expectation that we can talk about sins but no one must be identified as a sinner.

~Teju Cole

One of the difficulties of photography is that it is much better at being explicit than at being reticent.

~Teju Cole

I often say I've spent more time with photography than I have with literature just in terms of hours.

~Teju Cole

The novelist can't successfully depict such horrifying reality. But she can, and must, try, to bear witness. There are many ways of doing this; the mode I prefer is indirect.

~Teju Cole

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