

Theodore Roethke

Quotes

*Light, Dark, Teaching, Heart, Soul, Long, Body, Eye, Water, Fall, Men, Sleep,
Mind, Fire, Giving Up, Inspirational, Summer, God, Spirit, Joy*

What we need is more people who specialize in the impossible.

~Theodore Roethke

Beginnings start without shade, Thinner than minnows. The live grass whirls with the sun, Feet run over the simple stones, There's time enough. Behold, in the lout's eye, love.

~Theodore Roethke

Deep in their roots, all flowers keep the light.

~Theodore Roethke

Over every mountain there is a path, although it may not be seen from the valley.

~Theodore Roethke

How body from spirit slowly does unwind, until we are pure spirit at the end.

~Theodore Roethke

May my silences become more accurate.

~Theodore Roethke

Those who are willing to be vulnerable move among mysteries.

~Theodore Roethke

Love is not love until love's vulnerable.

~Theodore Roethke

I teach my sighs to lengthen into songs.

~Theodore Roethke

When I go mad, I call my friends by phone: I am afraid they might think they're alone.

~Theodore Roethke

I have gone into the waste lonely places

~Theodore Roethke

What is madness but nobility of soul at odds with circumstance?

~Theodore Roethke

Art is the means we have of undoing the damage of haste. It's what everything else isn't.

~Theodore Roethke

The visible exhausts me. I am dissolved in shadow.

~Theodore Roethke

Live in a perpetual great astonishment.

~Theodore Roethke

In our age, if a boy or girl is untalented, the odds are in favor of their thinking they want to write.

~Theodore Roethke

Too much reality can be a dazzle, a surfeit; Too close immediacy an exhaustion

~Theodore Roethke

I came where the river Ran over stones; My ears knew An early joy.
And all the waters Of all the streams Sang in my veins That summer day.

~Theodore Roethke

I am overwhelmed by the beautiful disorder of poetry, the eternal virginity of words.

~Theodore Roethke

What have I done, dear God, to deserve this perpetual feeling that I'm

almost ready to begin something really new?

~Theodore Roethke

Being, not doing, is my first joy.

~Theodore Roethke

My truths are all foreknown, This anguish self-revealed. I'm naked to the bone, With nakedness my shield.

~Theodore Roethke

I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. I feel my fate in what I cannot fear. I learn by going where I have to go.

~Theodore Roethke

A mind too active is no mind at all.

~Theodore Roethke

A lively understandable spirit Once entertained you. It will come again. Be still. Wait.

~Theodore Roethke

So much of adolescence is an ill-defined dying, An intolerable waiting, A longing for another place and time, Another condition.

~Theodore Roethke

But when I breath with the birds, The spirit of wrath becomes the spirit of blessings, And the dead begin from their dark to sing in my sleep.

~Theodore Roethke

The self says, I am; The heart says, I am less; The spirit says, you are Nothing.

~Theodore Roethke

I'm sure I've been a toad, one time or another. With bats, weasels,

worms...I rejoice in the kinship. Even the caterpillar I can love, and the various vermin.

~Theodore Roethke

How terrible the need for God.

~Theodore Roethke

Be sure that whatever you are is you.

~Theodore Roethke

God bless the roots! Body and soul are one.

~Theodore Roethke

Nothing would give up life: Even the dirt keeps breathing a small breath.

~Theodore Roethke

What's important? That which is dug out of books, or out of the guts?

~Theodore Roethke

I wish I could find an event that meant as much as simple seeing.

~Theodore Roethke

In this place of light: he dares to live Who stops being a bird, yet beats his wings Against the immense immeasurable emptiness of things.

~Theodore Roethke

Should we say the self, once perceived, becomes the soul?

~Theodore Roethke

All lovers live by longing, and endure: Summon a vision and declare it pure.

~Theodore Roethke

Civilization is over-rated, but there isn't much else.

~Theodore Roethke

By daily dying, I have come to be.

~Theodore Roethke

Time marks us while we are marking time.

~Theodore Roethke

Love begets love. This torment is my joy.

~Theodore Roethke

Reason? That dreary shed, that hutch for grubby schoolboys.

~Theodore Roethke

And I walked, I walked through the light air; I moved with the morning.

~Theodore Roethke

The poet: would rather eat a heart than a hambone.

~Theodore Roethke

I learn by going where I have to go.

~Theodore Roethke

I lose and find myself in the long water. I am gathered together once more.

~Theodore Roethke

The mind enters itself, and God the mind, And one is One, free in the tearing wind.

~Theodore Roethke

The stones were sharp, The wind came at my back; Walking along the highway, Mincing like a cat.

~Theodore Roethke

In a dark time, the mind begins to see.

~Theodore Roethke

The darkness has its own light.

~Theodore Roethke

In the kingdom of bang and blab.

~Theodore Roethke

Fear was my father, Father Fear. His look drained the stones.

~Theodore Roethke

Let others probe the mystery if they can. Time-harried prisoners of Shall
and Will -The right thing happens to the happy man.

~Theodore Roethke

The living all assemble! What's the cue?-- Do what the clumsy partner
wants to do!

~Theodore Roethke

The light comes brighter from the east; the caw
Of restive crows is sharper on the ear.

~Theodore Roethke

You must believe a poem is a holy thing, a good poem, that is.

~Theodore Roethke

And soon a branch, part of a hidden scene, The leafy mind, that long
was tightly furled, Will turn its private substance into green, And young
shoots spread upon our inner world.

~Theodore Roethke

In a dark time, the eye begins to see / I meet my shadow in the deepening shade...Dark, dark my light, and darker my desire.

~Theodore Roethke

What falls away is always. And is near.

~Theodore Roethke

We think by feeling. What is there to know?

~Theodore Roethke

I came to love, I came into my own.

~Theodore Roethke

Long live the weeds that overwhelm My narrow vegetable realm! The bitter rock, the barren soil That force the son of man to toil; All things unholy, marred by curse, The ugly of the universe.

~Theodore Roethke

The damage of teaching: the constant contact with the undeveloped.

~Theodore Roethke

The fields stretch out in long unbroken rows. We walk aware of what is far and close. Here distance is familiar as a friend. The feud we kept with space comes to an end.

~Theodore Roethke

Teach as an old fishing guide takes out a beginner.

~Theodore Roethke

I bleed my bones, their marrow to bestow Upon that God who knows what I would know.

~Theodore Roethke

The soul has many motions, body one.

~Theodore Roethke

And I rejoiced in being what I was.

~Theodore Roethke

Art is our defense against hysteria and death.

~Theodore Roethke

Who rise from flesh to spirit know the fall: The word outleaps the world,
and light is all.

~Theodore Roethke

Pain wanders through my bones like a lost fire

~Theodore Roethke

The body and the soul know how to play In that dark world where gods
have lost their way.

~Theodore Roethke

I long for the imperishable quiet at the heart of form.

~Theodore Roethke

Wake the happy words.

~Theodore Roethke

(I measure time by how a body sways.)

~Theodore Roethke

What is desire?-- The impulse to make someone else complete? That
woman would set sodden straw on fire.

~Theodore Roethke

You must believe: a poem is a holy thing - a good poem, that is. The
poem, even a short time after being written, seems no miracle;

unwritten, it seems something beyond the capacity of the gods.

~Theodore Roethke

A too explicit elucidation in education destroys much of the pleasure of learning. There should be room for sly hinters, masters of suggestion.

~Theodore Roethke

To follow the drops sliding from a lifting oar, Head up, while the rower breathes, and the small boat drifts quietly shoreward.

~Theodore Roethke

Any fool can take a bad line out of a poem; it takes a real pro to throw out a good line.

~Theodore Roethke

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