

Vladimir Nabokov

Quotes

*Writing, Art, Book, Men, Thinking, Past, Heart, Mind, Memories, Children,
People, World, Dream, Soul, Two, Numbers, Light, Night, Simple, Life*

Knowing you have something good to read before bed is among the most pleasurable of sensations.

~Vladimir Nabokov

And the rest is rust and stardust.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Do not be angry with the rain; it simply does not know how to fall upwards.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Mind you, sometimes the angels smoke, hiding it with their sleeves, and when the archangel comes, they throw the cigarettes away: that's when you get shooting stars.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Curiosity is insubordination in its purest form.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The writer's job is to get the main character up a tree, and then once they are up there, throw rocks at them.

~Vladimir Nabokov

There are aphorisms that, like airplanes, stay up only while they are in motion.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I think it is all a matter of love: the more you love a memory, the stronger and stranger it is.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Loneliness as a situation can be corrected, but as a state of mind it is an incurable illness.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I have no desires, save the desire to express myself in defiance of all the world's muteness.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I loved you. I was a pentapod monster, but I loved you. I was despicable and brutal, and turpid, and everything, mais je t'aimais, je t'aimais!

~Vladimir Nabokov

Perhaps, somewhere, some day, at a less miserable time, we may see each other again.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The breaking of a wave cannot explain the whole sea.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Let all of life be an unfettered howl. Like the crowd greeting the gladiator. Don't stop to think, don't interrupt the scream, exhale, release life's rapture.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to become visible.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I was the shadow of the waxwing slain/By the false azure in the windowpane.

~Vladimir Nabokov

A writer should have the precision of a poet and the imagination of a scientist.

~Vladimir Nabokov

It was love at first sight, at last sight, at ever and ever sight.

~Vladimir Nabokov

And yet I adore him. I think he's quite crazy, and with no place or occupation in life, and far from happy, and philosophically irresponsible - and there is absolutely nobody like him.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Life is just one small piece of light between two eternal darknesses.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Most of the dandelions had changed from suns to moons.

~Vladimir Nabokov

For I do not exist: there exist but the thousands of mirrors that reflect me.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The spiral is a spiritualized circle. In the spiral form, the circle, uncoiled, has ceased to be vicious; it has been set free.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Why should I tolerate a perfect stranger at the bedside of my mind?

~Vladimir Nabokov

She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was Lola in slacks. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita.

~Vladimir Nabokov

...in my dreams the world would come alive, becoming so captivatingly majestic, free and ethereal, that afterwards it would be oppressive to breathe the dust of this painted life.

~Vladimir Nabokov

It is a short walk from the hallelujah to the hoot.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The cradle rocks above an abyss, and common sense tells us that our existence is but a brief crack of light between two eternities of darkness.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I think like a genius, I write like a distinguished author, and I speak like a child.

~Vladimir Nabokov

We think not in words but in shadows of words.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Time is rhythm: the insect rhythm of a warm humid night, brain ripple, breathing, the drum in my temple—these are our faithful timekeepers; and reason corrects the feverish beat.

~Vladimir Nabokov

There he stood, in the camouflage of sun and shade, disfigured by them and masked by his own nakedness.

~Vladimir Nabokov

There is nothing in the world that I loathe more than group activity, that communal bath where the hairy and slippery mix in a multiplication of mediocrity.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Play! Invent the world! Invent reality!

~Vladimir Nabokov

A major writer combines these three - storyteller, teacher, enchanter - but it is the enchanter in him that predominates and makes him a major writer.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Satire is a lesson, parody is a game.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I have rewritten "often several times" every word I have ever published. My pencils outlast their erasers.

~Vladimir Nabokov

We are most artistically caged.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Art at its greatest is fantastically deceitful and complex.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I mean, I have the feeling that something in my mind is poisoning everything else.

~Vladimir Nabokov

There is an old American saying 'He who lives in a glass house should not try to kill two birds with one stone.'

~Vladimir Nabokov

All the seven deadly sins are peccadilloes but without three of them, Pride, Lust, and Sloth, poetry might never have been born.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Literature and butterflies are the two sweetest passions known to man.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The evolution of sense is, in a sense, the evolution of nonsense.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I confess, I do not believe in time.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Dear Jesus, do something.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Poetry involves the mysteries of the irrational perceived through rational words.

~Vladimir Nabokov

if a violin string could ache, i would be that string.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I know more than I can express in words, and the little I can express would not have been expressed, had I not known more.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Genius is finding the invisible link between things.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The more gifted and talkative one's characters are, the greater the chances of their resembling the author in tone or tint of mind.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Maybe the only thing that hints at a sense of Time is rhythm; not the recurrent beats of the rhythm but the gap between two such beats, the gray gap between black beats: the Tender Interval.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The thought, when written down, becomes less oppressive, but some thoughts are like a cancerous tumor: you express it, you excise it, and it grows back worse than before.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Only one letter divides the comic from the cosmic.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Don't touch me; I'll die if you touch me.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Existence is a series of footnotes to a vast, obscure, unfinished masterpiece.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Some people, and I am one of them, hate happy ends. We feel cheated. Harm is the norm.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I need you, the reader, to imagine us, for we don't really exist if you don't.

~Vladimir Nabokov

There is only one real number: one. And love, apparently, is the best exponent of this singularity.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I shall continue to exist. I may assume other disguises, other forms, but I shall try to exist.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Some might think that the creativity, imagination, and flights of fancy that give my life meaning are insanity.

~Vladimir Nabokov

All colors made me happy: even gray. My eyes were such that literally they Took photographs.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Nothing is more exhilarating than philistine vulgarity.

~Vladimir Nabokov

A philistine is a full-grown person whose interests are of a material and commonplace nature, and whose mentality is formed of the stock ideas and conventional ideals of his or her group and time.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Complacency is a state of mind that exists only in retrospective: it has to be shattered before being ascertained.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Imagination without knowledge leads no farther than the back yard of primitive art, the child's scrawl on the fence, and the crank's message in the market place. Art is never simple.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Genius is an African who dreams up snow.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Words without experience are meaningless.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Because you took advantage of my disadvantage.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I don't want an elderly gentleman from Vienna with an umbrella inflicting his dreams upon me.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Who can say what heartbreaks are caused in a dog by our discontinuing a romp?

~Vladimir Nabokov

I should allow only my heart to have imagination; and for the rest rely on memory, that long drawn sunset of one's personal truth.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Let all of life be an unfettered howl.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Nothing revives the past so completely as a smell that was once associated with it.

~Vladimir Nabokov

In and out of my heart flowed my rainbow blood.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I am sentimental,' she said. "I could dissect a koala but not its baby. I like the words damozel, eglantine, elegant. I love when you kiss my elongated white hand.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Curiously enough, one cannot read a book; one can only reread it. A good reader, a major reader, and active and creative reader is a rereader.

~Vladimir Nabokov

We live not only in a world of thoughts, but also in a world of things. Words without experience are meaningless.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Human thought, flying on the trapezes of the star-filled universe, with mathematics stretched beneath, was like an acrobat working with a net

but suddenly noticing that in reality there is no net.

~Vladimir Nabokov

... my mind lay limp in an empty world.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Only talent interests me in paintings and books. Not general ideas, but the individual contribution.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Solitude is the playfield of Satan.

~Vladimir Nabokov

By God, I could make myself bring her that economically halved grapefruit, that sugarless breakfast.

~Vladimir Nabokov

It is strange how a memory will grow into a wax figure, how the cherub grows suspiciously prettier as its frame darkens with age-strange, strange are the mishaps of memory.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I adore you, mon petit, and would never allow him to hurt you, no matter how gently or madly.

~Vladimir Nabokov

A toothache will cost a battle, a drizzle cancel an insurrection.

~Vladimir Nabokov

My God died young. Theolatriy i found Degrading, and its premises, unsound. No free man needs God; but was I free?

~Vladimir Nabokov

Non-Russian readers do not realize two things: that not all Russians

love Dostoievsky as much as Americans do, and that most of those Russians who do, venerate him as a mystic and not as an artist.

~Vladimir Nabokov

And presently I was driving through the drizzle of the dying day, with the windshield wipers in full action but unable to cope with my tears.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The future is but the obsolete in reverse.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The good, the admirable reader identifies himself not with the boy or the girl in the book, but with the mind that conceived and composed that book.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Which arrow flies for ever? The arrow that has hit its mark.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I talk in a daze, I walk in a maze I cannot get out, said the starling

~Vladimir Nabokov

Literature is invention. Fiction is fiction. To call a story a true story is an insult to both art and truth.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Man exists only insofar as he is separated from his surroundings. The cranium is a space-traveler's helmet. Stay inside or you perish.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Our best yesterdays are now foul piles of crumpled names.

~Vladimir Nabokov

I still dwelled deep in my elected paradise--a paradise whose skies

were the color of hell-flames--but still a paradise.

~Vladimir Nabokov

Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.

~Vladimir Nabokov

The compensation for a death sentence is the knowledge of the exact hour when one is to die. A great luxury, but one that is well earned.

~Vladimir Nabokov

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