

Wallace Stegner Quotes

*Writing, People, Thinking, Country, Character, Book, Mean, Lying, Two, Want,
Home, Might, Heart, Fiction, Nature, National Parks, Cutting, Ideas, Knows,
Long*

National parks are the best idea we ever had. Absolutely American, absolutely democratic, they reflect us at our best rather than our worst.

~Wallace Stegner

We simply need that wild country available to us... For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.

~Wallace Stegner

You have to get over the color green; you have to quit associating beauty with gardens and lawns; you have to get used to an inhuman scale; you have to understand geological time.

~Wallace Stegner

Whatever landscape a child is exposed to early on, that will be the sort of gauze through which he or she will see all the world afterwards.

~Wallace Stegner

Be proud of every scar on your heart, each one holds a lifetime's worth of lessons.

~Wallace Stegner

She had rooms in her mind that she would not look into.

~Wallace Stegner

Hard writing makes easy reading.

~Wallace Stegner

Some are born in their place, some find it, some realize after long searching that the place they left is the one they have been searching for.

~Wallace Stegner

Wisdom. . . is knowing what you have to accept.

~Wallace Stegner

Every green natural place we save saves a fragment of our sanity and gives us a little more hope that we have a future.

~Wallace Stegner

Home is a notion that only nations of the homeless fully appreciate and only the uprooted comprehend.

~Wallace Stegner

American individualism, much celebrated and cherished, has developed without its essential corrective, which is belonging.

~Wallace Stegner

Most things break, including hearts. The lessons of life amount not to wisdom, but to scar tissue and callus.

~Wallace Stegner

If the national park is, as Lord Bryce suggested, the best idea America has ever had, wilderness preservation is the highest refinement of that idea.

~Wallace Stegner

wherever you find the greatest good, you will find the greatest evil, because evil loves paradise as much as good.

~Wallace Stegner

It is love and friendship, the sanctity and celebration of our relationships, that not only support a good life, but create one. Through friendships, we spark and inspire one another's ambitions.

~Wallace Stegner

Youth hasn't got anything to do with chronological age. It's times of hope and happiness.

~Wallace Stegner

Talent can't be taught, but it can be awakened.

~Wallace Stegner

It is the beginning of wisdom when you recognize that the best you can do is choose which rules you want to live by, and it's persistent and aggravated imbecility to pretend you can live without any.

~Wallace Stegner

The brook would lose its song if we removed the rocks.

~Wallace Stegner

If you're going to get old, you might as well get as old as you can get.

~Wallace Stegner

The Westerner is less a person than a continuing adaptation. The West is less a place than a process.

~Wallace Stegner

Water is the true wealth in a dry land.

~Wallace Stegner

We are the only species which, when it chooses to do so, will go to great effort to save what it might destroy.

~Wallace Stegner

A teacher enlarges people in all sorts of ways besides just his subject matter.

~Wallace Stegner

No place is a place until things that have happened in it are remembered in history, ballads, yarns, legends, or monuments. Fictions serve as well as facts.

~Wallace Stegner

it is an easy mistake to think that non-talkers are non-feelers.

~Wallace Stegner

There it was, there it is, the place where during the best time of our lives friendship had its home and happiness its headquarters.

~Wallace Stegner

If you avoid the killer diseases and keep the degenerative ones under control with sensible diet and exercise and whatever chemotherapy you need to stay in balance, you can live nearly forever.

~Wallace Stegner

I may not know who I am, but I know where I am from.

~Wallace Stegner

We write to make sense of it all.

~Wallace Stegner

History is not the proper midden for digging up novelties. Perhaps that is one reason why a nation bent on novelty ignores it.

~Wallace Stegner

It is something it can be everything-to have found a fellow bird with whom you can sit among the rafters while the drinking and boasting and reciting and fighting go on below.

~Wallace Stegner

If we don't know where we are, we don't know who we are.

~Wallace Stegner

One means of sanity is to retain a hold on the natural world, ...
Americans still have that chance, more than many peoples.

~Wallace Stegner

Thanks to the growing strength of environmental organizations, there will always be some back country to provide us with a touch of wonder and a breath of fresh air.

~Wallace Stegner

After a day and a half or so the traveler will realize that crossing the continent by Interstate he gets to know the country about as well as a cable messenger knows the sea bottom.

~Wallace Stegner

Expose a child to a particular environment at this susceptible time and he will perceive in the shapes of that environment until he dies.

~Wallace Stegner

No life goes past so swiftly as an eventless one, no clock spins like a clock whose days are all alike.

~Wallace Stegner

Creation is a knack which is empowered by practice, and like almost any skill, it is lost if you don't practice it.

~Wallace Stegner

[I]t is dangerous for a bride to be apologetic about her husband.

~Wallace Stegner

You'll do what you think you want to do, or what you think you ought to do. If you're very lucky, luckier than anybody I know, the two will coincide.

~Wallace Stegner

Faith can reclaim deserts as well as move mountains.

~Wallace Stegner

I balked at nothing, I was above nothing. Everything had something to teach me.

~Wallace Stegner

Any life will provide the material for writing, if it is attended to.

~Wallace Stegner

Are you a reader? If you aren't a reader, you might as well forget trying to be a writer.

~Wallace Stegner

The meeting of writer and reader is an intimate act, and it properly takes place in private.

~Wallace Stegner

There is a sense in which we are all each other's consequences

~Wallace Stegner

It is the abiding concern of thinking people to preserve what keeps men human-to save our contact with nature of which we are a part.

~Wallace Stegner

Salt is added to dried rose petals with the perfume and spices, when we store them away in covered jars, the summers of our past.

~Wallace Stegner

Death is a convention, a certification to the end of pain, something for the vital statistics book, not binding upon anyone but the keepers of graveyard records.

~Wallace Stegner

Values, both those that we approve and those that we don't, have roots as deep as creosote rings, and live as long and grow as slowly

~Wallace Stegner

We made plenty of mistakes, but we never tripped anybody to gain an advantage, or took illegal shortcuts when no judge was around. We have all jogged and panted it out the whole way.

~Wallace Stegner

There is nothing like a doorbell to precipitate the potential into the kinetic.

~Wallace Stegner

We were going to leave a mark on the world but instead the world left marks on us.

~Wallace Stegner

This early piece of the morning is mine.

~Wallace Stegner

No place is a place until it has found its poet.

~Wallace Stegner

A writer is an organism that will go on writing even after its heart has been cut out.

~Wallace Stegner

Young writers should be encouraged to write, and discouraged from thinking they are writers.

~Wallace Stegner

You married me...but you didn't marry what you could make out of me.

~Wallace Stegner

A political animal can be defined as a body that will go on circulating a petition even with its heart cut out.

~Wallace Stegner

Do we respond only to people who seem to find us interesting?

~Wallace Stegner

We need wilderness preserved-as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds-because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed.

~Wallace Stegner

Towns are like people. Old ones often have character, the new ones are interchangeable.

~Wallace Stegner

You can't retire to weakness -- you've got to learn to control strength.

~Wallace Stegner

In a way, it is beautiful to be young and hard up. With the right wife, and I had her, deprivation became a game.

~Wallace Stegner

Have a chance to create a society to match its scenery.

~Wallace Stegner

No one who has studied Western history can cling to the belief that the Nazis invented genocide.

~Wallace Stegner

The life we all live is amateurish and accidental; it begins in accident and proceeds by trial and error toward dubious ends.

~Wallace Stegner

When I was twenty I was in love with words, a wordsmith. I didn't know enough to know when people were letting words get in their way. Now I like the words to disappear, like a transparent curtain.

~Wallace Stegner

In fiction I think we should have no agenda but to tell the truth.

~Wallace Stegner

To have so little, and it of so little value, was to be quaintly free.

~Wallace Stegner

Human lives seldom conform to the conventions of fiction. Chekhov says that it is in the beginnings and endings of stories that we are most tempted to lie. I know what he means, and I agree.

~Wallace Stegner

We are fossils in the making.

~Wallace Stegner

We do not write what we know; we write what we want to find out.

~Wallace Stegner

I shall be richer all my life for this sorrow

~Wallace Stegner

Hope was always out ahead of fact, possibility obscured the outlines of reality.

~Wallace Stegner

Floating upward through a confusion of dreams and memory, curving like a trout through the rings of previous risings, I surface. My eyes open. I am awake.

~Wallace Stegner

Largeness is a lifelong matter - sometimes a conscious goal, sometimes not. You enlarge yourself because that is the kind of individual you are. You grow because you are not content not to.

~Wallace Stegner

The perfect weather of Indian Summer lengthened and lingered, warm sunny days were followed by brisk nights with Halloween a presentiment in the air.

~Wallace Stegner

Every action is an idea before it is an action, and perhaps a feeling before it is an idea, and every idea rests upon other ideas that have preceded it in time.

~Wallace Stegner

Are writers reporters, prophets, crazies, entertainers, preachers, judges, what?

~Wallace Stegner

He used to tell me, 'Do what you like to do. It'll probably turn out to be what you do best.

~Wallace Stegner

That is all the National Parks are about. Use, but do no harm.

~Wallace Stegner

I am impressed by how much of my grandparent's life depended on continuities, contacts, connections, friendships, and blood relationships.

~Wallace Stegner

It is almost impossible to write fiction about the Mormons, for the reason that Mormon institutions and Mormon society are so peculiar that they call for constant explanation.

~Wallace Stegner

I consider the integrity of the material to be of greater value than any message I might want to get across.

~Wallace Stegner

It's easier to die than to move ... at least for the Other Side you don't need trunks.

~Wallace Stegner

I think, don't you, that a girl with any delicacy of feeling couldn't bring herself to marry a man indirectly responsible for her father's death. No matter how much she was in love with him.

~Wallace Stegner

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