

Will Self Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, People, Book, Mean, Age, Fall, Fiction, Sports, Art, Views,
Class, Ideas, Mind, Ifs, Character, Believe, Trying, Creative, Past*

It could be argued that every age gets the comfort savagery writer it deserves.

~Will Self

Always carry a notebook. And I mean always. The short-term memory only retains information for three minutes; unless it is committed to paper you can lose an idea for ever.

~Will Self

A creative life cannot be sustained by approval, any more than it can be destroyed by criticism.

~Will Self

Schadenfreude is so nutritious.

~Will Self

I think of writing as a sculptural medium. You are not building things. You are removing things, chipping away at language to reveal a living form.

~Will Self

So I was smacked up on the Prime Minister's jet - big deal.

~Will Self

I have a healthy appetite for solitude. If you don't, you have no business being a writer.

~Will Self

Some people have human muses - mine is a city. I feel a startling ambivalence towards London, but for better or worse my work has come utterly to depend upon it.

~Will Self

The writing life is essentially one of solitary confinement - if you can't

deal with this, you needn't apply.

~Will Self

The cynics are correct the sense of freewill is only that feeling which we have when we take the necessitated option that most appeals to us.

~Will Self

The great liberty of the fictional writer is to let the imagination out of the traces and see it gallop off over the horizon.

~Will Self

I think I now understand why it is that the young are so very nostalgic. They have so little by way of personal history that they polish it up and make it shine like a treasured heirloom.

~Will Self

Whenever I produce my best work, it's always because I've spent time being idle. Something always emerges after nothing.

~Will Self

If you believe something, you can have a morality that means something as well. You can feel recognized as an individual within the universe; it can give meaning to who you are.

~Will Self

I'd rather fiddle with my phone for precious seconds than neglect an apostrophe; I'd rather insert a word laboriously keyed out than resort to predictive texting for a - acceptable to some - synonym.

~Will Self

There is a deep sadness to American poverty, greater than the sadness of any other kind. It's because America has such an ideology of success.

~Will Self

As a species, we're addicted to the facile discrimination involved in saying that something or phenomenon is either 'this' or 'that' - how much more uncomfortable that it may well be 'the other'.

~Will Self

The seventies were my fattest decade. Overall I think the seventies were distinctly bulbous. People looked chunky, typefaces were rounded, writing implements penile.

~Will Self

What more chilling indictment of the modern world is there than this: that the condition of the smartphone user is that of a dumb animal. Moooo!

~Will Self

I think the fundamental apprehension is that the city's an organism of some form, rather than being governed from above.

~Will Self

I enjoy doing very high mileages, partly out of masochism and also because I like to feel the shape of the landscape.

~Will Self

Don't look back until you've written an entire draft.

~Will Self

It is not that sport, over-indulged in, coarsens the mind; it is that it dulls it.

~Will Self

Here we meet, on the page, naked and unadorned: shorn of class, race, gender, sexual identity, age and nationality.

~Will Self

Things are only boring if you are boring.

~Will Self

I make no apology for preoccupying myself with architecture, television, conceptual art, restaurants and Jane Asher's cakes.

~Will Self

Why is Mr Universe always from Earth?

~Will Self

Is there anything more useless than a crouton? I sometimes wake up in the small hours with a start and realise that what's roused me is an overpowering urge to visit violence on its originator.

~Will Self

The life of the professional writer - like that of any freelance, whether she be a plumber or a podiatrist - is predicated on willpower. Without it there simply wouldn't be any remuneration, period.

~Will Self

A very beautiful young woman once asked me to sign her breasts. That was back when I was a hip young thing - it's been all downhill since then.

~Will Self

People tend to think of their lives as having a dramatic arc, because they read too much fiction.

~Will Self

A short story is a shard, a sliver, a vignette. It's a biopsy on the human condition but it doesn't have this capacity to think autonomously for itself.

~Will Self

Always carry a notebook. And I mean always.

~Will Self

As for critical writing about modernism, its moments of lucidity are but fulgurations illuminating the dark and incomprehensible landscape of its subject's unabashed difficulty.

~Will Self

Without a shadow of doubt, Trafalgar Square has to be one of the most crap urban public spaces in the world.

~Will Self

Once the working classes were in chains, now they're in chain restaurants.

~Will Self

A party full of 'likeable' people doesn't bear contemplating.

~Will Self

As a writer, I'm not convinced that we are the best equipped to understand how we go about the business of literary production.

~Will Self

As the render is to the building, and the blueprint to the machine, so sport is to social existence.

~Will Self

I do have a fantasy life in which I can grout bathrooms - but not for a living.

~Will Self

I loathe computers more and more, so I have one I can shut down and shelve like a book.

~Will Self

I write because I feel driven to write. I write from a sense of inner necessity. I don't write for anything other than that.

~Will Self

I prefer to write first drafts as soon as possible after waking, so that the oneiric inscape is still present to me.

~Will Self

Certainly, for time out of mind, an obsessive dwelling on happier former days has been synonymous with getting older, while it was the juvenescent who rushed with open arms to embrace the future.

~Will Self

The high arts of literature and music stand in a curious relationship to one another, at once securely comfortable and deeply uneasy - rather like a long-term marriage.

~Will Self

Lives don't divide up into chapters. People don't just talk, while nothing's going on in their head, and then respond. You know, none of these things actually happen.

~Will Self

I think in retrospect that all those 'alternative' modes of living were little more than exercises in arrested development.

~Will Self

As a bookish adolescent, I sopped up texts as if I were blotting paper and they were fluid.

~Will Self

Live life and write about life. Of the making of many books there is indeed no end, but there are more than enough books about books.

~Will Self

As far as I can see, the history of experimental art in the twentieth century is intimately bound up with the experience of intoxication.

~Will Self

The novelist, quite rightly, fears the psychoanalyst as both an enemy and a usurper.

~Will Self

You may have gathered that I am not the most cheerful of revellers - some characterise me as the death and soullessness of any party but it wasn't always so, believe me.

~Will Self

The fictional work is a kind of actor that wears a satirical garb but can put on other costumes as well.

~Will Self

In our benighted age, when films about amusement park rides and electronic fidgets scoop the honours, perhaps Hollywood redux is the best we can hope for.

~Will Self

So heedless have we become of our own image that second-hand mobile phones now invariably come with a SIM card chock-full of discarded intimacies.

~Will Self

Vaughn's vision is older, wiser and harder than Ritchie's.

~Will Self

Drug use and procrastination often go hand in hand in tourniquet.

~Will Self

If the seventies were bulbous, and the eighties sharp, the nineties were

nothing but bogus.

~Will Self

Lust was a positive high-tension cable, plugged into my core, activating a near-epileptic seizure of conviction that this was the one thing I had to do in life.

~Will Self

I always wanted to write fiction. Always. As far back as I can remember it's been integral to my sense of myself - everything else was always a displacement activity.

~Will Self

I'm very happy for whatever plaudits might come the way of my work, but I never ever sit down to write x with y in view - whether it's a reader, a prize or a sale.

~Will Self

Mother sighed with exasperation. "Look, there aren't any "people in charge of death". When you die you move to another part of London, that's all there is to it. Period.

~Will Self

I'm going to end up like one of those old weirdos who lives in a network of tunnels burrowed through trash - yet I do not fear this.

~Will Self

Whatever respect photography may once have deserved is now superfluous in view of its own superfluity.

~Will Self

Sometimes the crowd is the madness - at others it's the absence of the crowd that is.

~Will Self

I think it's a misreading of Dostoevsky to think of him as a programmatic theist. He's actually much closer to someone like William James. He's actually a pragmatist.

~Will Self

My novels tend to come about from a fusion of two big ideas, creating a critical mass that then fissions, throwing off hundreds of other particles, riffs, tropes and characters.

~Will Self

Like all right-listening folk, I am an implacable enemy of all muzak.

~Will Self

There's a flip side to having prominent public intellectuals, which is that they start meddling in politics and often with quite disastrous results.

~Will Self

The only proper suit-and-tie job I've had in my life was the two years in the late 1980s when I ran a small corporate publishing company. I even had a Ford Sierra!

~Will Self

Many of my works fall into the category of "Zeitgeist novels." Yet I hope that they aren't only reportage, but also attempts to convey the sense of the present to the future.

~Will Self

Most of us have had that experience - at around puberty - of realising that, despite whatever efforts we put into our chosen sports, we will become at best competent.

~Will Self

It might be an idea for all literary critics to read the books they analyse aloud - it certainly helps to fix them in the mind, while providing a

readymade seminar with your audience.

~Will Self

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