

# William H. Gass

## Quotes

*Writing, Book, People, Hate, Fiction, Eye, Art, Stories, Order, Country, Dream, Would Be, Crafts, Color, Reading, House, Want, Thinking, Philosophy, World*

The true alchemists do not change lead into gold; they change the world into words.

~William H. Gass

Blue is therefore most suitable as the color of interior life.

~William H. Gass

Sports, politics, and religion are the three passions of the badly educated.

~William H. Gass

it is discouraging to leave the past behind only to see it coming toward you like the thunderstorm which drenched you yesterday.

~William H. Gass

It's not the word made flesh we want in writing, in poetry and fiction, but the flesh made word

~William H. Gass

I am unlikely to trust a sentence that comes easily.

~William H. Gass

For me, the short story is not a character sketch, a mouse trap, an epiphany, a slice of suburban life. It is the flowering of a symbol center. It is a poem grafted onto sturdier stock.

~William H. Gass

The speeding reader guts a book the way the skillful clean fish. The gills are gone, the tail, the scales, the fins; then the fillet slides away swiftly as though fed to a seal.

~William H. Gass

The expression to write something down suggests a descent of thought to the fingers whose movements immediately falsify it.

~William H. Gass

I write because I hate. A lot. Hard.

~William H. Gass

For the speedy reader paragraphs become a country the eye flies over looking for landmarks, reference points, airports, restrooms, passages of sex.

~William H. Gass

What else is soul but a listener?

~William H. Gass

Fiction becomes visual by becoming verbal

~William H. Gass

Philosophy has a great sort of appeal in terms of an artistic or aesthetic organization of concepts. It's a conceptual art.

~William H. Gass

When reviewers take the trouble to compliment a writer on her style, it is usually because she has made it easy for them to slide from one sentence to another like an otter down a slope.

~William H. Gass

We converse as we live by repeating, by combining and recombining a few elements over and over again just as nature does when of elementary particles it builds a world.

~William H. Gass

I don't know myself, what to do, where to go... I lie in the crack of a book for my comfort... it's what the world offers... please leave me alone to dream as I fancy.

~William H. Gass

Freud thought that a psychosis was a waking dream, and that poets were daydreamers too, but I wonder if the reverse is not as often true, and that madness is a fiction lived in like a rented house

~William H. Gass

Literature is composed of quarter truths, and the quarters are often spent on penny candy.

~William H. Gass

If there were genders to genres, fiction would be unquestionably feminine.

~William H. Gass

Some people say their life is full of darkness and I wonder why they don't just try and switch the lights on.

~William H. Gass

If you were a fully realized person-whatever the hell that would be-you wouldn't fool around writing books.

~William H. Gass

Words are the supreme objects. They are minded things.

~William H. Gass

Words [are] more beautiful than a found fall leaf.

~William H. Gass

The world of conceptualized ideas is quite wonderful, even when it's - like Aristotle's *Physics* - an outmoded book. The physics is not true. But the reasoning is dazzling.

~William H. Gass

Getting even is one reason for writing.

~William H. Gass

If death itself were to die, would it have a ghost, and would the ghost of death visit the dead in the guise of someone alive, if only to fright them from any temptation to return?

~William H. Gass

And I am in retirement from love.

~William H. Gass

Only the slow reader will notice the odd crowd of images-flier, butcher, seal-which have gathered to comment on the aims and activities of the speeding reader, perhaps like gossips at a wedding.

~William H. Gass

I usually have poor to absent relations with editors because they have a habit of desiring changes and I resist changes.

~William H. Gass

I should like to suggest that at least on the face of it a stroke by stroke story of a copulation is exactly as absurd as a chew by chew account of the consumption of a chicken's wing.

~William H. Gass

As a teacher, it's a great help to be teaching philosophical systems you don't believe. You can actually do a better job of presenting them if you leave your beliefs at the door.

~William H. Gass

I cannot walk under the wires. The sparrows scatter like handfuls of gravel. Really, wires are voices in thin strips. They are words wound in cables. Bars of connection.

~William H. Gass

What one wants to do with stories is screw them up.

~William H. Gass

When book and reader's furrowed brow meet, it isn't always the book that's stupid.

~William H. Gass

The body of Our Saviour shat but Our Saviour shat not.

~William H. Gass

I publish a piece in order to kill it, so that I won't have to fool around with it any longer.

~William H. Gass

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