

William Stafford

Quotes

*Writing, World, People, Found, Real, Ocean, Knows, Process, Bird, Artist,
Decision, Journey, Talking, Hurt, Sound, Kids, Rivers, Home, Language, Way*

Once we have tasted far streams, touched the gold, found some limit beyond the waterfall, a season changes and we come back changed but safe, quiet, grateful.

~William Stafford

Kids: they dance before they learn there is anything that isn't music.

~William Stafford

I embrace emerging experience, I participate in discovery. I am a butterfly. I am not a butterfly collector. I want the experience of the butterfly.

~William Stafford

I have woven a parachute out of everything broken.

~William Stafford

There is no such thing as writer's block for writers whose standards are low enough.

~William Stafford

You don't need many words if you already know what you're talking about

~William Stafford

Wisdom is having things right in your life and knowing why.

~William Stafford

Anyone who breathes is in the rhythm business.

~William Stafford

A speech is something you say so as to distract attention from what you do not say.

~William Stafford

...What you fear will not go away; it will take you into yourself and bless you and keep you. That's the world, and we all live there.

~William Stafford

If you purify the pond, the lilies die

~William Stafford

And the things you know before you hear them; these are you and the reason you are in the world.

~William Stafford

I heard a bird congratulating itself all day for being a jay. Nobody cared. But it was glad all over again, and said so, again.

~William Stafford

Let the bucket of memory down into the well, bring it up. Cool, cool minutes. No one stirring, no plans. Just being there.

~William Stafford

If you don't know the kind of person I am and I don't know the kind of person you are a pattern that others made may prevail in the world and following the wrong god home we may miss our star.

~William Stafford

When the snake decided to go straight, he didn't get anywhere.

~William Stafford

The ocean and I have many pebbles To find and wash off and roll into shape.

~William Stafford

Will you ever bring a better gift for the world than the breathing respect that you carry wherever you go right now?

~William Stafford

The more you let yourself be distracted from where you are going, the more you are the person that you are. It's not so much like getting lost as it is like getting found.

~William Stafford

The greatest ownership of all is to glance around and understand.

~William Stafford

It's love,' they say. You touch the right one and a whole half of the universe wakes up, a new half.

~William Stafford

A writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them.

~William Stafford

Even the upper end of the river believes in the ocean.

~William Stafford

What you have to do as a writer is . . . write day in and day out no matter what happens.

~William Stafford

The earth says have a place, be what that place requires; hear the sound the birds imply and see as deep as ridges go behind each other.

~William Stafford

When you allow me to live with you, every glance at the world around you will be a sort of salvation.

~William Stafford

Security of character would be like a compass, you know? Other people may say that this way is north, or this way might be north. But the

compass just says -- north. That's what we count on.

~William Stafford

A poem is a serious joke, a truth that has learned jujitsu.

~William Stafford

Others may be able to accept standards from another, but an artist is a person who decides.

~William Stafford

You were aimed from birth: you will never be alone... The whole wide world pours down.

~William Stafford

Literature is not a picture of life, but is a separate experience with its own kind of flow and enhancement.

~William Stafford

Once you decide to do right, life is easy, there are no distractions.

~William Stafford

So, the world happens twice-- once what we see it as; second it legends itself deep, the way it is.

~William Stafford

When a goat likes a book, the whole book is gone, and the meaning has to go find an author again.

~William Stafford

One way to find your place is like the rain, a million requests for lodging, one that wins, finds your cheek: you find your home.

~William Stafford

An owl sound wandered along the road with me. I didn't hear it--I

breathed it into my ears.

~William Stafford

You can treat experience as a set of surprises on which to exercise your quirky self.

~William Stafford

Language can do what it can't say.

~William Stafford

A student comes to me with a piece of writing, holds it out, says, 'Is this good?' A whole sequence of emergencies goes off in my mind. That's not a question to ask anyone but yourself.

~William Stafford

Keep a journal, and don't assume that your work has to accomplish anything worthy: artists and peace-workers are in it for the long haul, and not to be judged by immediate results.

~William Stafford

'Be alive,' the land says, 'listen - this is your time, your world, your pleasure.'

~William Stafford

Some people are blinded by their experience. Soldiers know how important war is. Owners of slaves learn every day how inferior subject peoples are.

~William Stafford

The signals we give-yes or no, or maybe-/should be clear/the darkness around us is deep.

~William Stafford

People wander about what you are pursuing. You have to explain

about the thread.

~William Stafford

There are so many things admirable people do not understand.

~William Stafford

Can injustice one way be corrected without the interim reaction that tries to impose injustice the other way?

~William Stafford

I'll be Pavlov, you be the dog.

~William Stafford

The root and the flower have to trust each other. If the root does not trust, the plant won't blossom.

~William Stafford

It is as if the ordinary language we use every day has a hidden set of signals, a kind of secret code.

~William Stafford

If you can say it, it begins to exist.

~William Stafford

They miss the whisper that runs any day in your mind, "Who are you really, wanderer?"-- and the answer you have to give no matter how dark and cold the world around you is: "Maybe I'm a king.

~William Stafford

You can lie at a banquet but you have to be honest in the kitchen.

~William Stafford

A writer is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things.

~William Stafford

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