

Yann Martel

Quotes

*People, Animal, Book, Thinking, Believe, Heart, Stories, Men, Beautiful, Moving,
Want, Pain, Art, Letting Go, Zoos, Mind, Dream, Real, Way, Life*

You must take life the way it comes at you and make the best of it.

~Yann Martel

My life is like a memento mori painting from European art: there is always a grinning skull at my side to remind me of the folly of human ambition.

~Yann Martel

Scientists are a friendly, atheistic, hard-working, beer-drinking lot whose minds are preoccupied with sex, chess and baseball when they are not preoccupied with science.

~Yann Martel

Slice a pear and you will find that its flesh is incandescent white. It glows with inner light. Those who carry a knife and a pear are never afraid of the dark.

~Yann Martel

Zoo is an artificial territory, an approximation. Civilization is our natural territory.

~Yann Martel

To choose doubt as a philosophy of life is akin to choosing immobility as a means of transportation.

~Yann Martel

Life is a peephole, a single tiny entry onto a vastness--how can I not dwell on this brief, cramped view of things? This peephole is all I've got!

~Yann Martel

We commonly say in the trade that the most dangerous animal in a zoo is Man.

~Yann Martel

If you stumble at mere believability, what are you living for? Isn't love hard to believe?

~Yann Martel

I know zoos are no longer in people's good graces. Religion faces the same problem. Certain illusions about freedom plague them both.

~Yann Martel

No one dies of nausea, but it can seriously sap the will to live.

~Yann Martel

I turned around, stepped over the Zebra and threw myself overboard.

~Yann Martel

The presence of God is the finest of rewards.

~Yann Martel

It is true that those we meet can change us, sometimes so profoundly that we are not the same afterwards, even unto our names.

~Yann Martel

The paths to liberation are numerous, but the bank along the way is always the same, the Bank of Karma, where the liberation account of each of us is credited or debited depending on our actions.

~Yann Martel

Reality is how we interpret it. Imagination and volition play a part in that interpretation. Which means that all reality is to some extent a fiction.

~Yann Martel

Truth is a nebulous thing. There are certain, definite truths, but the truth of our lives goes far beyond facts.

~Yann Martel

When you've suffered a great deal in life, each additional pain is both unbearable and trifling.

~Yann Martel

It is a vast country, so that inspires you. It's also the greatest hotel on earth: It welcomes people from everywhere. It's a good country to write from because in many ways Canada is the world.

~Yann Martel

Work, work, work, but what mark do we leave, what point do we make? People who are too beholden to work become like erasers: as things move forward, they leave in their wake no trace of themselves.

~Yann Martel

Faith in God is an opening up, a letting go, a deep trust, a free act of love - but sometimes it was so hard to love.

~Yann Martel

I love Canada...It is a great country much too cold for good sense, inhabited by compassionate, intelligent people with bad hairdos.

~Yann Martel

Life on a lifeboat isn't much of a life.

~Yann Martel

The world isn't just the way it is. It is how we understand it, no? And in understanding something, we bring something to it, no? Doesn't that make life a story?

~Yann Martel

The worst pair of opposites is boredom and terror. Sometimes your life is a pendulum swing from one to the other.

~Yann Martel

You can get used to anything - haven't I already said that? Isn't that what all survivors say?

~Yann Martel

I challenge anyone to understand Islam, its spirit, and not to love it. It is a beautiful religion of brotherhood and devotion.

~Yann Martel

Life on a lifeboat isn't much of a life. It is like an end game in chess, a game with few pieces. The elements couldn't be more simple, nor the stakes higher.

~Yann Martel

Dare I say I miss him? I do. I miss him. I still see him in my dreams. They are nightmares mostly, but nightmares tinged with love. Such is the strangeness of the human heart.

~Yann Martel

Nature can put on a thrilling show. The stage is vast, the lighting is dramatic, the extras are innumerable, and the budget for special effects is absolutely unlimited.

~Yann Martel

I suppose in the end, the whole of life becomes an act of letting go, but what always hurts the most is not taking a moment to say goodbye.

~Yann Martel

When your own life is threatened, your sense of empathy is blunted by a terrible, selfish hunger for survival.

~Yann Martel

Survival starts by paying attention to what is close at hand and immediate. To look out with idle hope is tantamount to dreaming one's life away.

~Yann Martel

It's important in life to conclude things properly. Only then can you let go. Otherwise you are left with words you should have said but never did, and your heart is heavy with remorse.

~Yann Martel

A realization that the founding principle of existence is what we call love, which works itself out sometimes not clearly, not cleanly, not immediately, nonetheless ineluctably.

~Yann Martel

The lower you are, the higher your mind will want to soar.

~Yann Martel

Religion is more than rite and ritual.

~Yann Martel

There are always those who take it upon themselves to defend God... These people fail to realize that it is on the inside that God must be defended, not on the outside.

~Yann Martel

If we, citizens, do not support our artists, then we sacrifice our imagination on the altar of crude reality and we end up believing in nothing and having worthless dreams.

~Yann Martel

My next book - each one while I'm working on it - dances in my mind and thrills me at every turn. If it didn't, why would I write it?

~Yann Martel

A movie will do in one second, with one image, what it will take a novelist at least a page to describe.

~Yann Martel

Why make dirty what is beautiful, spoil what is perfect? Love.

~Yann Martel

My suffering left me sad and gloomy.

~Yann Martel

Despair was a heavy blackness that let no light in or out. It was a hell beyond expression. I thank God it always passed.

~Yann Martel

There is nothing more satisfying than having a sentence fall into place in a way you feel is right, and then adding another one and then another one. It's extraordinarily satisfying.

~Yann Martel

You might think I lost all hope at that point. I did. And as a result I perked up and felt much better.

~Yann Martel

I did not count the days or the weeks or the months. Time is an illusion that only makes us pant. I survived because I forgot even the very notion of time.

~Yann Martel

If you take two steps towards God,' he used to tell me, 'God runs to you!

~Yann Martel

The language of prose is very different than the language of cinema, so the movie has to successfully translate what was in the book.

~Yann Martel

Fanatics do not have faith - they have belief. With faith you let go. You trust. Whereas with belief you cling.

~Yann Martel

Any writer will be happy and good only if they know what they're doing and why they're doing it.

~Yann Martel

My greatest wish â€” other than salvation â€” was to have a book. A long book with a never-ending story. One I could read again and again, with new eyes and a fresh understanding each time.

~Yann Martel

That's what fiction is about, isn't it, the selective transforming of reality? The twisting of it to bring out its essence?

~Yann Martel

To me, religion is about our dignity, not our depravity.

~Yann Martel

If there's only one nation in the sky, shouldn't all passports be valid for it?

~Yann Martel

Time is an illusion that makes us all pant.

~Yann Martel

I am a person who believes in form, in the harmony of order. Where we can, we must give things a meaningful shape.

~Yann Martel

My gratitude to him is as boundless as the Pacific ocean.

~Yann Martel

We believe what we see.'...What do you do when you're in the dark?

~Yann Martel

Nothing beats reason for keeping tigers away. But be excessively reasonable and you risk throwing out the universe with the bathwater.

~Yann Martel

Just as music is noise that makes sense, a painting is colour that makes sense, so a story is life that makes sense.

~Yann Martel

It's important in life to conclude things properly. Only then can you let go.

~Yann Martel

It is life's only true opponent. Only fear can defeat life.

~Yann Martel

At moments of wonder, it is easy to avoid small thinking, to entertain thoughts that span the universe, that capture both thunder and tinkle, thick and thin, the near and the far.

~Yann Martel

Misery loves company, and madness calls it forth.

~Yann Martel

The reason death sticks so closely to life isn't biological necessity - it's envy.

~Yann Martel

The lower you are, the higher your mind will want to soar. It was natural that, bereft and desperate as I was, in the throes of unremitting suffering. I should turn to God

~Yann Martel

Come aboard if your destination is oblivion- it should be our next stop. We can sit together. You can have the window seat if you want. But it's a sad view.

~Yann Martel

I think art comes from some sense of discomfort with the world, some sense of not quite fitting with it.

~Yann Martel

Much hostile and aggressive behaviour among animals is the expression of social insecurity.

~Yann Martel

How true is that necessity is the mother of invention, how very true.

~Yann Martel

I meet a number of people as a writer of fiction who say "Oh, I don't read much fiction," as if the history of the United States, just as an example, isn't an exercise in storytelling and myth-making.

~Yann Martel

Afterwards, when it's all over, you meet God. What do you say to God?

~Yann Martel

How long does it take for a broken spirit to kill a body that has food, water and shelter?

~Yann Martel

Jesus, Mary, Muhammad and Vishnu, how good to see you Richard Parker!

~Yann Martel

Why can't reason give greater answers? Why can we throw a question further than we can pull in an answer? Why such a vast net if there's so

little fish to catch?

~Yann Martel

I thought they were helping me. I was so full of trust in them that I felt grateful as they carried me in the air. Only when they threw me overboard did I begin to have doubts.

~Yann Martel

What a terrible thing it is to botch a farewell.

~Yann Martel

The blackness would stir and eventually go away, and God would remain, a shining point of light in my heart. I would go on loving.

~Yann Martel

My greatest wish - other than salvation - was to have a book.

~Yann Martel

I can only tell my story, what you believe is up to you.

~Yann Martel

It is pointless to say that this or that night was the worst of my life. I have so many bad nights to choose from that I've made none the champion.

~Yann Martel

There's no peace like the peace of an inner courtyard on a sunny day.

~Yann Martel

The moon was a sharply defined crescent and the sky was perfectly clear. The stars shone with such fierce, contained brilliance that it seemed absurd to call the night dark.

~Yann Martel

Music is a bird's answer to the noise and heaviness of words. It puts the mind in a state of exhilarated speechlessness.

~Yann Martel

A house is a compressed territory where our basic needs can be fulfilled close by and safely.

~Yann Martel

If you are pitched into misery, remember that your days on this earth are counted and you might as well make the best of those you have left.

~Yann Martel

I go to mass every Sunday, but love going to mosques too. Muslims pray in a beautiful way.

~Yann Martel

Fiction and nonfiction are not so easily divided. Fiction may not be real, but it's true; it goes beyond the garland of facts to get to emotional and psychological truths.

~Yann Martel

Words are cold, muddy toads trying to understand sprites dancing in a field-but they're all we have.

~Yann Martel

It was as unbelievable as the moon catching fire.

~Yann Martel

Was it the forgetfulness of old age or personal incapacity that made the man able to say please but not thank you?

~Yann Martel

Christianity is a religion in a rush.

~Yann Martel

For evil in the open is but evil from within that has been let out.

~Yann Martel

Don't you bully me with your politeness!

~Yann Martel

Bapu Gandhi said, 'All religions are true.' I just want to love God.

~Yann Martel

I have nothing to say of my working life, only that a tie is a noose, and inverted though it is, it will hang a man nonetheless if he's not careful.

~Yann Martel

I preferred to set off and perish in search of my own kind than to live a lonely half-life of physical comfort and spiritual death on this murderous island.

~Yann Martel

As for hearing, the sloth is not so much deaf as uninterested in sound.

~Yann Martel

I ask you, is it the fig tree's fault that it's not the season for figs? What kind of thing is that to do to an innocent tree, wither it instantly?

~Yann Martel

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