

Yusef Komunyakaa

Quotes

Thinking, Believe, White, Language, Said, Light, Men, Writing, Poet, Way, Practice, Ideas, Years, Space, Risk, Who I Am, Peaceful, Needs, Tools, Gun

I am this space my body believes in.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I knew life Began where I stood in the dark, Looking out into the light.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Poetry helps me understand who I am. It helps me understand the world around me. But above all, what poetry has taught me is the fact that I need to embrace mystery in order to be completely human.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Tonight I feel the stars are out to use me for target practice.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I excavate history. I look at lives buried under too much silence. Periods of time, like slavery, have to be revisited, reimagined, so we can move through them.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

We have to embrace the good over the bad. That has to be one's personal project.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

It wasn't a deliberate decision to become a poet. It was something I found myself doing - and loving. Language became an addiction.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I like connecting the abstract to the concrete. There's a tension in that. I believe the reader or listener should be able to enter the poem as a participant. So I try to get past resolving poems.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Poetry is a process of getting back to the unconscious. Hence, I am always writing-even when I'm not facing the white space. I feel writers

are like reservoirs of images. We take in what is around us.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I think of language as our first music.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I said that love heals from inside.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I've been here before, dreaming myself backwards, among grappling hooks of light. True to the seasons, I've lived every word spoken. Did I walk into someone's nightmare?

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I like what Oliver Lakes does on the saxophone. The saxophone comes pretty close to the sound of the human voice and when Oliver plays with other sax players, it's like a dialogue.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I see many black males grasping for some thread of hope. There are so many destructive practices, glimpses into a psychic abyss. That must be very frightening.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Poetry is a kind of distilled insinuation. It's a way of expanding and talking around an idea or a question. Sometimes, more actually gets said through such a technique than a full frontal assault.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Poets are seen as the caretakers of language, so working with words no matter what the form is what we do.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I'm uncomfortable with the focus on the poet and not on the poem.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I close my eyes and can see men drawing lines in the dust. America pushes through the membrane of mist and smoke, and I'm a small boy again in Bogalusa.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

I think of my poems as personal and public at the same time. You could say they serve as psychological overlays. One fits on top of the other, and hopefully there's an ongoing evolution of clarity.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Through the years I have seen myself as a peaceful person, but the awareness of the anger is part of that process.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

It took me 14 years to write poems about Vietnam. I had never thought about writing about it, and in a way I had been systematically writing around it.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

Whoever said men hit harder when women are around, is right. Word for word, we beat the love out of each other.

~Yusef Komunyakaa

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