

# Zadie Smith

## Quotes

*Writing, People, Thinking, Book, Men, Children, Self, Believe, Lying, Past, Girl,  
Want, Ideas, Trying, Pain, Feelings, World, Mean, Years, Different*

You can't state difference and also state equality. We have to state sameness to understand equality.

~Zadie Smith

As far as I'm concerned, if you want to find out about the last day of WWII or the roots of the Indian Mutiny, get thee to a books catalogue.

~Zadie Smith

The past is always tense, the future perfect.

~Zadie Smith

Protect the time and space in which you write. Keep everybody away from it, even the people who are most important to you.

~Zadie Smith

Every moment happens twice: inside and outside, and they are two different histories.

~Zadie Smith

Don't romanticise your 'vocation'. You can either write good sentences or you can't. There is no 'writer's lifestyle'. All that matters is what you leave on the page.

~Zadie Smith

Time is how you spend your love.

~Zadie Smith

I am the sole author of the dictionary that defines me.

~Zadie Smith

Don't confuse honours with achievement.

~Zadie Smith

Pulchritude--beauty where you would least suspect it, hidden in a word

that looked like it should signify a belch or a skin infection.

~Zadie Smith

The secret to editing your work is simple: you need to become its reader instead of its writer.

~Zadie Smith

Learning how to be a good reader is what makes you a writer.

~Zadie Smith

She wore her sexuality with an older woman's ease, and not like an awkward purse, never knowing how to hold it, where to hang it, or when to just put it down.

~Zadie Smith

Work on a computer that is disconnected from the Â-internet.

~Zadie Smith

Cambridge was a joy. Tediously. People reading books in a posh place. It was my fantasy. I loved it. I miss it still.

~Zadie Smith

The end is simply the beginning of an even longer story.

~Zadie Smith

â€!maybe the whole Internet will simply become like Facebook: falsely jolly, fake-friendly, self-promoting, slickly disingenuousâ€!.â€• - Zadie Smith

~Zadie Smith

It's gotten to a point where everybody is concerned about their rights and nobody is concerned about their duties.

~Zadie Smith

Women often have a great need to portray themselves as sympathetic and pleasing, but we're also dark people with dark thoughts.

~Zadie Smith

We cannot be all the writers all the time. We can only be who we are. Which leads me to my second point: writers do not write what they want, they write what they can.

~Zadie Smith

...They cannot escape their history any more than you yourself can lose your shadow.

~Zadie Smith

Nowadays, I know the true reason I read is to feel less alone, to make a connection with a consciousness other than my own.

~Zadie Smith

I am very selfish, really. I lived for love.

~Zadie Smith

There's a perception that novels can't usually allow for your kind of absolute attention to detail.

~Zadie Smith

Tell the truth through whichever veil comes to hand - but tell it. Resign yourself to the lifelong sadness that comes from never being satisfied.

~Zadie Smith

Greeting cards routinely tell us everybody deserves love. No. Everybody deserves clean water. Not everybody deserves love all the time.

~Zadie Smith

An essential part of power is the freedom not to think too deeply

~Zadie Smith

You are never stronger...than when you land on the other side of despair.

~Zadie Smith

Try to read your own work as a stranger would read it, or even better, as an enemy would.

~Zadie Smith

The future's another country, man... And I still ain't got a passport.

~Zadie Smith

I like books that don't give you an easy ride. I like the feeling of discomfort. The sense of being implicated.

~Zadie Smith

My short stories have always pushed twenty pages. That's no length for a short story to be. You either do them short like Carver or you stop trying.

~Zadie Smith

The very reason I write is so that I might not sleepwalk through my entire life.

~Zadie Smith

When a human being becomes a set of data on a website like Facebook, he or she is reduced. Everything shrinks. Individual character. Friendships. Language. Sensibility.

~Zadie Smith

The greatest lie ever told about love is that it sets you free.

~Zadie Smith

Are there other people who, when watching a documentary set in a prison, secretly think, as I have, 'Wish I had all that time to read'?

~Zadie Smith

Rarely does one see a squirrel tremble.

~Zadie Smith

Tell the truth through whichever veil comes to hand - but tell it.

~Zadie Smith

You become a different writer when you approach a short story. When things are not always having to represent other things, you find real human beings begin to cautiously appear on your pages.

~Zadie Smith

The library was the place I went to find out what there was to know. It was absolutely essential.

~Zadie Smith

Step back from your Facebook Wall for a moment: Doesn't it, suddenly, look a little ridiculous? Your life in this format?

~Zadie Smith

But surely to tell these tall tales and others like them would be to spread the myth, the wicked lie, that the past is always tense and the future, perfect.

~Zadie Smith

Desire is never final, desire is imprecise and impractical [...]

~Zadie Smith

I like books that expose me to people unlike me and books that do battle against caricature or simplification. That, to me, is the heroic in fiction.

~Zadie Smith

I know to argue against our online lives seems like the argument of the grumpy, old Luddite novelist, but I really always try to make the argument from the perspective of personal pleasure.

~Zadie Smith

Don't live in a way that makes you feel dead.

~Zadie Smith

It's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe.

~Zadie Smith

People don't settle for people. They resolve to be with them. It takes faith. You draw a circle in the sand and agree to stand in it and believe in it.

~Zadie Smith

The belief that consciousness extends beyond death is surely to put more belief in the permanence of self, not less. That seems to me a comfort that you're allowing yourself.

~Zadie Smith

I cannot believe homosexuality is that much fun. Heterosexuality certainly is not.

~Zadie Smith

English, as a subject, never really got over its upstart nature. It tries to bulk itself up with hopeless jargon and specious complexity, tries to imitate subjects it can never be.

~Zadie Smith

Under every friendship there is a difficult sentence that must be said, in

order that the friendship can be survived.

~Zadie Smith

The object of the passion is just an accessory to the passion itself.

~Zadie Smith

This is what divorce is: taking things you no longer want from people you no longer love.

~Zadie Smith

I often worry that my idea of personhood is nostalgic, irrational, inaccurate.

~Zadie Smith

I never attended a creative writing class in my life. I have a horror of them.

~Zadie Smith

I read Carver. Julio Cortázar. Amis's essays. Baldwin. Lorrie Moore. Capote. Saramago. Larkin. Wodehouse. Anything, anything at all, that doesn't sound like me.

~Zadie Smith

Everything shrinks. Individual character. Friendships. Language. Sensibility.

~Zadie Smith

They had nothing to say to each other. A five-year age gap between siblings is like a garden that needs constant attention. Even three months apart allows the weeds to grow up between you.

~Zadie Smith

Oh, I know that. You know me, baby, I cannot be broken. Takes a giant to snap me in half.



~Zadie Smith

World makers, social network makers, ask one question first: 'How can I do it?'

~Zadie Smith

You can feel bad... I mean, that's not illegal.

~Zadie Smith

Art is the Western myth, with which we both console ourselves and make ourselves.

~Zadie Smith

A writer's duty is to register what it is like for him or her to be in the world.

~Zadie Smith

When I was 21 I wanted to write like Kafka. But, unfortunately for me, I wrote like a script editor for The Simpsons who'd briefly joined a religious cult and then discovered Foucault. Such is life.

~Zadie Smith

The idea that motherhood is inherently somehow a threat to creativity is just absurd.

~Zadie Smith

Revelation is where all crazy people end up. It's the last stop on the nutso express.

~Zadie Smith

He had her in his heart, but not always in his mind.

~Zadie Smith

Any artist who aligns themselves with a politician is making a category

error because what politicians do is not on a human scale, it is on a geopolitical scale.

~Zadie Smith

Make sure the lubricant is unscented. Don't join fashionable 'schools of thought.' Read everything.

~Zadie Smith

Anyone over the age of thirty catching a bus can consider himself a failure.

~Zadie Smith

You say you want to talk, But you don't . You stonewall me.

~Zadie Smith

'A reality shaped around your own desires' - there is something sociopathic in that ambition.

~Zadie Smith

Fate is a quantity very much like TV: an unstoppable narrative, written, produced and directed by somebody else.

~Zadie Smith

Sometimes you get a flash of what you look like to other people.

~Zadie Smith

In the end, your past is not my past and your truth is not my truth and your solution - is not my solution.

~Zadie Smith

Any woman who counts on her face is a fool.

~Zadie Smith

If you're going to write a good book, you have to make mistakes and

you have to not be so cautious all the time.

~Zadie Smith

Desperation, weakness, vulnerability - these things will always be exploited. You need to protect the weak, ring-fence them, with something far stronger than empathy.

~Zadie Smith

The novel leads you places that you never could have gotten to otherwise.

~Zadie Smith

Writing is my way of expressing - and thereby eliminating - all the various ways we can be wrong-headed.

~Zadie Smith

You don't have favourites among your children, but you do have allies.

~Zadie Smith

You're a library of me.

~Zadie Smith

I'm most honest about writing when I'm talking to family or friends, not to newspapers.

~Zadie Smith

It's not in good taste to have talking ghosts in a grown-up novel.

~Zadie Smith

I love to dance, and sing - in the shower, not in public. Im too old to go raving, but my fondest memories are of that kind of thing - dancing, with lots of people, outside if possible.

~Zadie Smith

I have a natural tendency to feel well about the world, I suppose, one way or another. But then there is the problem of pain. There are things like [Abraham] Lincoln's beloved little boy dying.

~Zadie Smith

It has historically been a comfort for the bourgeois and that you can read the most extreme books and not change. You can read A Christmas Carol and not change in any way.

~Zadie Smith

One thing you learn about the novel as a form is that it's always smarter than you are.

~Zadie Smith

[George Saunders] is very precise about what he is doing. There isn't a thing left to chance.

~Zadie Smith

Today, writing seems to me like an incredible luxury, almost a perversity, something which hardly exists in the world anymore, where you get to see the fruits of your actions in a daily way.

~Zadie Smith

I'm a writer who never writes about sex. It's so far from my own fictional world.

~Zadie Smith

When people use that stream of consciousness, it's kind of just a term they use for anything that looks slightly different on the page.

~Zadie Smith

I don't keep any copies of my books in the house - they go to my mum's flat. I don't like them around.

~Zadie Smith

English fiction was something I loved growing up, and it changed my life - it changed the trajectory of my life.

~Zadie Smith

Jerome said, It's like, a family doesn't work anymore when everyone in it is more miserable than they would be if they were alone, You know?

~Zadie Smith

I'm very attracted to exile literature - particularly Nabokov - exactly because the idea of being away from home for any serious length of time is so inconceivable to me.

~Zadie Smith

It's difficult to tell the truth about how a book begins. The truth, as far as it can be presented to other people, is either wholly banal or too intimate.

~Zadie Smith

Novels are not about expressing yourself, they're about something beautiful, funny, clever and organic. Self-expression ? Go and ring a bell in a yard if you want to express yourself.

~Zadie Smith

Then he gave her a kiss on the forehead that felt like a baptism and she wept like a baby.

~Zadie Smith

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