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Quotes by Eliot, T. S.

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Thomas Stearns Eliot, OM (September 26, 1888 - January 4, 1965) was a poet, dramatist and literary critic, whose works, such as *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, *The Waste Land*, "The Hollow Men", and *Four Quartets*, are considered defining achievements of twentieth century Modernist poetry. The winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1948, he is considered one of the most influential poets of the 20th century. Although he was born an American, he moved to the United Kingdom in 1914 (at age 25) and was naturalised as a British subject in 1927 at age 39.

The years between fifty and seventy are the hardest. You are always being asked to do things, and yet you are not decrepit enough to turn them down.

- Eliot, T. S.

I don't believe one grows older. I think that what happens early on in life is that at a certain age one stands still and stagnates.

- Eliot, T. S.

The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason.

- Eliot, T. S.

An editor should tell the author his writing is better than it is. Not a lot better, a little better.

- Eliot, T. S.

I suppose some editors are failed writers; but so are most writers.

- Eliot, T. S.

Our emotions are only incidents in the effort to keep day and night together.

- Eliot, T. S.

So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good: so far as we do evil or good, we are human: and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least we exist.

- Eliot, T. S.

We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started... and know the place for the first time.

- Eliot, T. S.

There are flood and drought over the eyes and in the mouth, dead water and dead sand contending for the upper hand. The parched eviscerate soil gapes at the vanity of toil, laughs without mirth. This is the death of the earth.

- Eliot, T. S.

I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

- Eliot, T. S.

Liberty is a different kind of pain from prison.

- Eliot, T. S.

Friendship should be more than biting time can sever.

- Eliot, T. S.

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be: am an attendant lord, one that will do to
swell a progress, start a scene or two, advise the prince.

- Eliot, T. S.

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons.

- Eliot, T. S.

Hell is oneself, hell is alone, the other figures in it merely projections. There is nothing to
escape from and nothing to escape to. One is always alone.

- Eliot, T. S.

Half of the harm that is done in this world is due to people who want to feel important.
They don't mean to do harm. But the harm does not interest them.

- Eliot, T. S.

The awful daring of a moment's surrender which an age of prudence can never retract.

- Eliot, T. S.

In a minute there is time for decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

- Eliot, T. S.

People exercise an unconscious selection in being influenced.

- Eliot, T. S.

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information.

- Eliot, T. S.

Where does one go from a world of insanity? Somewhere on the other side of despair.

- Eliot, T. S.

The dream crossed twilight between birth and dying.

- Eliot, T. S.

Birth, copulation and death. That's all the facts when you come to the brass tacks.

- Eliot, T. S.

When we read of human beings behaving in certain ways, with the approval of the author,

who gives his benediction to this behavior by his attitude towards the result of the behavior arranged by himself, we can be influenced towards behaving in the same way.

- Eliot, T. S.

Love is most nearly itself when here and now cease to matter.

- Eliot, T. S.

We are not here to triumph by fighting, by strata gem, or by resistance, not to fight with beasts as men. We have fought the beast and have conquered. We have only to conquer now, by suffering. This is the easier victory.

- Eliot, T. S.

There is no method but to be very intelligent.

- Eliot, T. S.

You are the music while the music lasts.

- Eliot, T. S.

We do not quite say that the new is more valuable because it fits in; but its fitting in is a test of its value -- a test, it is true, which can only be slowly and cautiously applied, for we are none of us infallible judges of conformity.

- Eliot, T. S.

All cases are unique and very similar to others.

- Eliot, T. S.

Only by acceptance of the past, can you alter it.

- Eliot, T. S.

Think not forever of yourselves, O Chiefs, nor of your own generation. Think of continuing generations of our families, think of our grandchildren and of those yet unborn, whose faces are coming from beneath the ground.

- Eliot, T. S.

What we know of other people's only our memory of the moments during which we knew them.

- Eliot, T. S.

A play should give you something to think about. When I see a play and understand it the first time, then I know it can't be much good.

- Eliot, T. S.

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experiences.

- Eliot, T. S.

We must believe that emotion recollected in tranquillity is an inexact formula. For it is neither emotion, nor recollection, nor without distortion of meaning, tranquillity. It is a concentration, and a new thing resulting from the concentration of a very great number of experiences which to the practical and active person would not seem to be experiences at all; it is a concentration which does not happen consciously or of deliberation. These experiences are not recollected and they finally unite in an atmosphere which is tranquil only in that it is a passive attending upon the event.

- Eliot, T. S.

It seems just possible that a poem might happen to a very young man: but a poem is not poetry --That is a life.

- Eliot, T. S.

I take as metaphysical poetry that in which what is ordinarily apprehensible only by thought is brought within the grasp of feeling, or that in which what is ordinarily only felt is transformed into thought without ceasing to be feeling.

- Eliot, T. S.

Each venture is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate with shabby equipment always deteriorating in the general mess of imprecision of feeling.

- Eliot, T. S.

The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.

- Eliot, T. S.

Art never improves, but the material of art is never quite the same.

- Eliot, T. S.

Moving between the legs of tables and of chairs, rising or falling, grasping at kisses and toys, advancing boldly, sudden to take alarm, retreating to the corner of arm and knee, eager to be reassured, taking pleasure in the fragrant brilliance of the Christmas tree.

- Eliot, T. S.

If you haven't the strength to impose your own terms upon life, you must accept the terms it offers you.

- Eliot, T. S.

Time past and time future what might have been and what has been point to one end, which is always present.

- Eliot, T. S.

Most of the trouble in the world is caused by people wanting to be important.

- Eliot, T. S.

Humankind cannot bear very much reality.

- Eliot, T. S.

It's not wise to violate rules until you know how to observe them.

- Eliot, T. S.

Footfalls echo in the memory down the passage which we did not take towards the door
we never opened into the rose-garden.

- Eliot, T. S.

Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far they can go.

- Eliot, T. S.

April is the cruelest month, breeding lilacs out of the dead land, mixing memory and
desire, stirring dull roots with spring rain.

- Eliot, T. S.

Success is relative. It is what we can make of the mess we have made of things.

- Eliot, T. S.

In my beginning is my end.

- Eliot, T. S.

It is a medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke
at the same time, and yet remain lonesome.

- Eliot, T. S.

It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labor.

- Eliot, T. S.

A tradition without intelligence is not worth having.

- Eliot, T. S.

War is not a life: it is a situation, one which may neither be ignored nor accepted.

- Eliot, T. S.

For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice.

- Eliot, T. S.

Some editors are failed writers, but so are most writers.

- Eliot, T. S.

The young feel tired at the end of an action, the old at the beginning.

- Eliot, T. S.

Genuine poetry can communicate before it is understood.

- Eliot, T. S.

For every life and every act consequence of good and evil can be shown and as in time results of many deeds are blended so good and evil in the end become confounded.

- Eliot, T. S.

We might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism.

- Eliot, T. S.

In the room the women come and go talking of Michelangelo.

- Eliot, T. S.

And what the dead had no speech for, when living, they can tell you, being dead: the communication of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living.

- Eliot, T. S.



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