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Quotes by Rimbaud, Arthur

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Rimbaud, Arthur (1854-91) was a French poet who had a great influence on the symbolists and subsequent modern poets, born in Charleville. A defiant and precocious youth, Rimbaud at 16 sent some poems to Verlaine, who liked his work and invited him to Paris. In 1872-73 the two poets lived together in London and Brussels. In a drunken quarrel Verlaine fired a pistol, wounding Rimbaud, and their relationship ended. Rimbaud returned home and finished *Une Saison en enfer* (1873), a confessional autobiography in which he renounces his former hellish life and his work. At an undetermined time he produced *Les Illuminations*, consisting of prose poems that transcend all traditional syntax and narrative elements. Rimbaud is thought to have stopped writing poetry at the age of 19, and he never wrote another literary work. Thereafter, he wandered throughout Europe and N Africa, working in various jobs, from circus cashier to commercial traveler to African gunrunner, and engaging in numerous business ventures. Six months after the amputation of his leg due to cancer, he died in Marseilles at 37. Rimbaud's poetry has been called hallucinatory because the poet seems to write not of material reality but of his dreamworld; his technique anticipates the symbolists in its suggestiveness, its abstract verbal music, and its images drawn from the subconscious. "Le Bateau ivre" ("The Drunken Boat") is an outstanding example. Rimbaud's works were published by Verlaine in several posthumous editions, the first complete collection appearing in 1898.

I saw that all beings are fated to happiness: action is not life, but a way of wasting some force, an enervation. Morality is the weakness of the brain.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

And again: No more gods! no more gods! Man is King, Man is God! -- But the great Faith is Love!

- Rimbaud, Arthur

I believe that I am in hell, therefore I am there.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

I is another.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

Only divine love bestows the keys of knowledge.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

Life is the farce which everyone has to perform.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

What a life! True life is elsewhere. We are not in the world.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

I am the slave of my baptism. Parents, you have caused my misfortune, and you have caused your own.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

But, truly, I have wept too much! The Dawns are heartbreaking. Every moon is atrocious and every sun bitter.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

One evening I sat Beauty on my knees --And I found her bitter --And I reviled her.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

The Sun, the hearth of affection and life, pours burning love on the delighted earth.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

For a long time I found the celebrities of modern painting and poetry ridiculous. I loved absurd pictures, fanlights, stage scenery, mountebanks backcloths, inn-signs, cheap colored prints; unfashionable literature, church Latin, pornographic books badly spelt, grandmothers novels, fairy stories, little books for children, old operas, empty refrains, simple rhythms.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

Idle youth, enslaved to everything; by being too sensitive I have wasted my life.

- Rimbaud, Arthur

When you are seventeen you aren't really serious.

- Rimbaud, Arthur



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