

Beauty



Quotes, Poems and Thoughts to Ponder

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

These are a companion for you on your journey this month, to get your thinking started and open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of BEAUTY.

Word Roots The Greek word for the beautiful is kalon, “which is related to the word kalein, which includes the notion of ‘call.’ Suggesting that there is something about beauty, wherever we find it, that tugs at us, pulls at us, drawing us into the divine.”

A second Greek word for beauty is hōraios, from hōra, meaning "hour." Beauty was thus associated with "being of one's hour". Thus, a ripe fruit (of its time) was considered beautiful, whereas a young person trying to appear older or an older

person trying to appear younger would not be considered beautiful.

The Ancient Greeks also equated beauty with harmony and virtue, which brings together the ideas of “call” and “hour.” Beauty is not a static experience but one of being in the rightness of the moment, an expression of the divine.

Wise Words Beauty, as a philosophical concept, is rather mysterious — a slippery elf, hard to catch hold of, impossible to define. But let me try anyway: Beauty is that which glistens on the edges of our yearnings and lures us into the depths of things. *Patricia Adams Farmer*

Beauty isn’t all about just nice loveliness, like. Beauty is about more rounded, substantial becoming. So I think beauty, in that sense, is about an emerging fullness.

We can argue about the reason for the universe and the meaning of the universe but not about the beauty of the universe... We all share beauty. It strikes us indiscriminately. It may be when our child was born into this world; or a simple flower; or a song; or a smile on a face; or a great act of courage; or a dance well done; or a child’s laugh; or a loaf of bread baking; or finding a worthy job; or a snowfall; or when drawn to the Source of Life itself. *John O'Donohue*

There is no end to the beauty for the person who is aware. Even the cracks between the sidewalk contain geometric patterns of amazing beauty. *Matthew Fox*

The ability to see beauty is the beginning of our moral sensibility. What we believe is beautiful we will not wantonly destroy."

With this we are reminded that beauty does more than soothe and heal. It demands. It calls. It creates commitment. It doesn't just say "Love and appreciate me." It says "Protect me! Fight for me!" It's steps out in front of us and points to a precious world that needs our help. It paints a picture of new ways of living and declares, "Follow me there!" It's not just the thing that nurtures our activist efforts. It is the reason we take to the streets. Sean Parker Dennison

Again beautiful things are not just objects to be appreciated and adored. They are not pretty things we purchase and possess. They possess us. They are containers for pieces and parts of ourselves. We don't just observe them; we pour ourselves into them. They don't just sit there; they open themselves up and invite us to spill our longings, memories, hopes and hurts into their care. When we observe them, we observe and re-member ourselves.

"The world is not painted or adorned, but is from the beginning beautiful; and God has not made some beautiful things, but Beauty is the creator of the universe."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Beauty has no function, no utility... It greases no wheels; it bakes no puddings. It is a gift of sheer grace, a gratuitous largesse. It must imply behind things a Spirit that enjoys beauty for its own sake and that floods the world everywhere with it... Our joy in it shows that we are in some sense kindred to the giver and revealer of it."
Quaker theologian Rufus Jones

Beauty is the object of longing. We're accustomed to thinking that it is the beautiful thing that causes desire to erupt in us, but perhaps that is not always, or even usually, the case. First, we long. We may not even be conscious of our longing, but because we long, what we long for eventually finds an object in the world, and upon that thing our hearts and imaginations become fixed. *Crispin Sartwell*

At some point in life the world's beauty becomes enough. You don't need to photograph, paint or even remember it. It is enough. No record of it needs to be kept and you don't need someone to share it with or tell it to. *Toni Morrison in Tar Baby*

In each moment, expect a miracle: ten kinds of birds at the feeder, and the tracks of a fox in the snow. Pick up a magnifying glass and scrutinize that crocus... Be astonished at the flower, arrested by its beauty. Run naked through the garden early in the morning and hope the wild geese fly by.
Elizabeth Tarbox

We must first allow ourselves to be captured by the goodness, truth, or beauty of something beyond and outside ourselves. Then we universalize from that moment to the goodness, truth, and beauty of the rest of reality, until our realization eventually ricochets back to include ourselves! *Richard Rohr*

"To See the World" To see the world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a

wildflower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour.” William Blake

This a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before. Maya Angelou

One Talent,

Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Sunrise and its gold,
a single kiss,
the sea that never tire
throwing its beauty at you,
trees scattering jewels,
stars saying their prayers
by candlelight
in their little houses—
such loveliness,
such precious coins.
You can't say what they're worth,
there is no measuring them
any more than the one you are,
little star among millions,
generous, infinite Talent
unburied,
mere single
radiant sun.

The secret of ugliness consists not in irregularity, but in being uninteresting.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Beauty always has rules. It's a game. I resent the beauty game when I see it controlled by people who grab fortunes from it and don't care who they hurt. I hate it when I see it making people so self-dissatisfied that they starve and deform and poison themselves. *Ursula K. Le Guin*

If only our eyes saw souls instead of bodies how very different our ideals of beauty would be. *Anonymous*

One of the huge confusions in our times is to mistake glamour for beauty. *John O'Donohue*

It's the question of beauty... there are individuals holding out on frontlines, holding the humane tissue alive in areas of ultimate barbarity, where things are visible that the human eye should never see. And they're able to sustain it, because there is, in them, some kind of sense of beauty that knows the horizon that we are really called to in some way.

I love Pascal's phrase, that you should always keep something beautiful in your mind. And I have often — like in times when it's been really difficult for me, if you can keep some kind of little contour that you can glimpse sideways at, now and again, you can endure great bleakness. *John O'Donohue*

Human beings have a hard time regarding anything beautiful without wanting to devour it. *Barbara Brown Taylor*

That which is striking and beautiful is not always good, but that which is good is always beautiful. *Ninon de L'Enclos*

The beauty of the world is the mouth of a labyrinth... if [we do] not lose courage, if [we go] on walking, it is absolutely certain that [we] will finally arrive at the center of the labyrinth. And there God is waiting... *Simone Weil*

Beauty disciplines our hearts to joy like
riverbanks nudging the current ever closer
to the sea. *Priscilla Stuckey*

**There is nothing more beautiful than
someone who goes out of their way
to make life beautiful for others.**

Mandy Hale

Beauty does more than awaken us. It also
admonishes us. It demands something... We
are here, in religious community, not to
hide from the anguished cries or the tender
lullabies. We are here, in religious
community, not to protect our hearts from
breaking. We are here together to borrow
courage for the task of coming alive. We are
here so that together we might heed the
admonitions of beauty. Answer its call to
create, protect, and preserve. *Rev. Mary
Katherine Morn*

How Did the rose
Ever open its heart
And give to this world
All its Beauty?
It felt the encouragement of light
Against its Being,
Otherwise,
We all remain
Too
Frightened. *Hafiz*

For the world is not painted or adorned, but
is from the beginning beautiful; and God
has not made some beautiful things, but

Beauty is the creator of the universe. Ralph
Waldo Emerson In my youth I am aware of
it and in my old age I shall walk quietly the
beautiful trail. In beauty it is begun and in
beauty it is ended. *Navajo Blessing*

In such ugly times, the only true protest is
beauty. *Phil Ochs*

In difficult times, carry something beautiful
in your heart. *Blaise Pascal*
Beauty Out of Ugly

In my life as an author and speaker and
ministry leader I often use a favorite phrase
to describe the mission of Jesus: He came to
make beauty out of ugly. Not “pretty” ...
Beauty.

This deep-and-wide word is the focus of
Michael Gungor’s iconic and unforgettable
worship song “Beautiful Things.” Here’s the
quiet beginning of the song...

All this pain
I wonder if I'll ever find my way
I wonder if my life could really change, at
all
All this earth
Could all that is lost ever be found?
Could a garden come out from this ground,
at all?
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us

In a very real, practical, visceral way,
beauty-making and beauty-revealing is
exactly what Jesus is doing in the world, and
in our life, right now... When we experience
beauty in any of its alter-ego’s, it is

simultaneously calming and staggering. Sunlight filtering through a forest of tree-leaves in the fall... The embedded mask-marks on the face of a healthcare first-responder who's just pulled a 14-hour shift... The visceral experience of listening to live jazz in a small club... The unbridled laughter of a toddler... And every last single thing Jesus ever said and did...



“I want to see beauty. In the ugly, in the sink, in the suffering, in the daily, in all the days before I die, the moments before I sleep.”

— Ann Voskamp, *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*

I hadn't even noticed that I'd been hungry for Beauty until I ran for the moon. Ann Voskamp, *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are*

“God is beauty itself.”

St. Thomas Aquinas

There is no beauty in nature that is independent of Christ's beauty. All the loveliness we spy in the universe is a mere reflection of God's glory, and all beauty comes from His hand (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Ezekiel 31:9).

The Beauty of Christ