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Quotes by Rich, Adrienne

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Adrienne Rich (born May 16, 1929 in Baltimore, Maryland) is an American feminist, poet, teacher, and writer.

The connections between and among women are the most feared, the most problematic, and the most potentially transforming force on the planet.

- Rich, Adrienne

We might hypothetically possess ourselves of every technological resource on the North American continent, but as long as our language is inadequate, our vision remains formless, our thinking and feeling are still running in the old cycles, our process may be revolutionary but not transformative.

- Rich, Adrienne

We who were loved will never unlive that crippling fever.

- Rich, Adrienne

The worker can unionize, go out on strike; mothers are divided from each other in homes, tied to their children by compassionate bonds; our wildcat strikes have most often taken the form of physical or mental breakdown.

- Rich, Adrienne

As her sons have seen her: the mother in patriarchy: controlling, erotic, castrating, heart-suffering, guilt-ridden, and guilt-provoking; a marble brow, a huge breast, an avid cave; between her legs snakes, swamp-grass, or teeth; on her lap a helpless infant or a martyred son. She exists for one purpose: to bear and nourish the son.

- Rich, Adrienne

The mind's passion is all for singling out. Obscurity has another tale to tell.

- Rich, Adrienne

They can rule the world while they can persuade us our pain belongs in some order is death by famine worse than death by suicide, than a life of famine and suicide...?

- Rich, Adrienne

Every journey into the past is complicated by delusions, false memories, false namings of real events.

- Rich, Adrienne

There is the falsely mystical view of art that assumes a kind of supernatural inspiration, a possession by universal forces unrelated to questions of power and privilege or the artist's relation to bread and blood. In this view, the channel of art can only become clogged and misdirected by the artist's concern with merely temporary and local disturbances. The song is higher than the struggle.

- Rich, Adrienne

We assume that politicians are without honor. We read their statements trying to crack the code. The scandals of their politics: not so much that men in high places lie, only that they do so with such indifference, so endlessly, still expecting to be believed. We are accustomed to the contempt inherent in the political lie.

- Rich, Adrienne

The word revolution itself has become not only a dead relic of Leftism, but a key to the deadendedness of male politics: the revolution of a wheel which returns in the end to the same place; the revolving door of a politics which has liberated women only to use them, and only within the limits of male tolerance.

- Rich, Adrienne

The ocean, whose tides respond, like women's menses, to the pull of the moon, the ocean which corresponds to the amniotic fluid in which human life begins, the ocean on whose surface vessels (personified as female) can ride but in whose depth sailors meet their death and monsters conceal themselves... it is unstable and threatening as the earth is not; it spawns new life daily, yet swallows up lives; it is changeable like the moon, unregulated, yet indestructible and eternal.

- Rich, Adrienne

How we dwelt in two worlds the daughters and the mothers in the kingdom of the sons.

- Rich, Adrienne

In order to live a fully human life we require not only control of our bodies (though control is a prerequisite); we must touch the unity and resonance of our physicality, our bond with the natural order, the corporeal grounds of our intelligence.

- Rich, Adrienne

The moment of change is the only poem.

- Rich, Adrienne

No woman is really an insider in the institutions fathered by masculine consciousness. When we allow ourselves to believe we are, we lose touch with parts of ourselves defined as unacceptable by that consciousness; with the vital toughness and visionary strength of the angry grandmothers, the fierce market women of the Ibo's Women's War, the marriage-resisting women silk workers of pre-Revolutionary China, the millions of widows, midwives, and the women healers tortured and burned as witches for three centuries in Europe.

- Rich, Adrienne

My children cause me the most exquisite suffering of which I have any experience. It is the suffering of ambivalence: the murderous alternation between bitter resentment and raw-edged nerves, and blissful gratification and tenderness. Sometimes I seem to myself, in my feelings toward these tiny guiltless beings, a monster of selfishness and intolerance.

- Rich, Adrienne

Only to have a grief equal to all these tears!

- Rich, Adrienne



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