

100 Sentences: An Essay

Not that the story need be long, but it will take a long while to make it short.

—Henry David Thoreau

We will now discuss in a little more detail the struggle for existence.

—Charles Darwin

Grub first, then ethics.

—Berthold Brecht

Hope is a good breakfast, but it is a bad supper.

—Francis Bacon

When he awoke, the dinosaur was still there.

—Italo Calvino (example of a story complete in one sentence)

It was a terrible day and it hadn't even begun yet.

—Len Deighton

Yet you ask on what account I write so many love-lyrics  
And whence this soft book came into my mouth.

—Ezra Pound

Appetite grows by eating.

—Francois Rabelais

Come, woo me, woo me, for now I am in a holiday humor,  
and like enough to consent.

—Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, IV, i)

Nine-tenths of what we attribute to sexuality is the work of our magnificent ability  
to imagine, which is no longer an instinct, but exactly the opposite: a creation.

—Ortega y Gasset

What fortitude the soul contains,  
That it can so endure  
The accent of a falling foot—  
The opening of a Door.

—Emily Dickinson

Her pure and eloquent blood  
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,  
That one might almost say, her body thought.

—John Donne

We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done  
those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us.

—*The Book of Common Prayer*

One's real life is often the life that one does not lead.

—Oscar Wilde

We think caged birds sing, when indeed they cry.

—John Webster

They have a king and officers of sorts;  
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,  
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,  
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,  
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds;  
Which pillage they with merry march bring home  
To the tent-royal of their emperor:  
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys  
The singing masons building roofs of gold,  
The civil citizens kneading up the honey,  
The poor mechanic porters crowding in  
Their heavy burdens at the narrow gate,  
The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,  
Delivering o'er to to executors pale  
The lazy yawning drone.

—Shakespeare (*Henry V*, I, ii)

Great God! This is an awful place.

—Capt. R. F. Scott, of the South Pole

Live with yourself: learn how poorly furnished you are.

—Persius

Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told to you from the beginning?

—Isaiah 40:21

I shudder and I sigh to think  
That even Cicero  
and many-minded Homer were  
Mad as the mist and snow.

—W. B. Yeats

A great book is like great evil.

—Callimachus

I've a great fancy to see my own funeral afore I die.

—Maria Edgeworth

The sooner every party breaks up, the better.

—Jane Austen

I am a kind of burr; I shall stick.

—Shakespeare (*Measure for Measure*, V, iii)

It's tough going to costume parties as both ends of the horse.

—Anonymous

There is not one among them but I dote on his very absence.

—Shakespeare (*The Merchant of Venice*, I, ii)

It's tough not to write satire.

—Juvenal

The more I see of men, the better I like dogs.

—Mme. Roland

If men could give birth, abortion would be a sacrament.

—Gloria Steinem

May you have a lawsuit in which you know you are in the right.

—Gypsy curse

Lawyers, I suppose, were children once.

—Charles Lamb

- The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges,  
to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.  
—Anatole France
- I sentence you to hang by the neck until dead.  
—judicial formula
- I will make you shorter by the head.  
—Queen Elizabeth I
- If only the Roman people had but one neck.  
—Caligula
- A riot is at bottom the language of the unheard.  
—Martin Luther King
- I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
—Wilfred Owen
- Is it possible to succeed without any act of betrayal?  
—Jean Renoir
- Never wear a silk shirt to ask for a raise.  
—Anonymous
- Luck is the residue of design.  
—Branch Rickey
- Don't cheer, men; those poor devils are dying.  
—Rear Admiral "Jack" Philip
- Fate is not an eagle, it creeps like a rat.  
—Elizabeth Bowen
- Property is theft.  
—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon
- Sleep faster, we need the pillows.  
—Yiddish proverb
- I see it is impossible for the King to have things done as cheaply as other men.  
—Samuel Pepys
- Good families are generally worse than any others.  
—Anthony Hope

Sir, the insolence of wealth will creep out.

—Samuel Johnson

It is the wretchedness of being rich that you have to live with rich people.

—Logan Pearsall Smith

Every class is unfit to govern.

—Lord Acton

I have seen the future and it looks just like the present, only longer.

—Dan Quisenberry

The ant sets an example to us all, but it is not a good one.

—Max Beerbohm

Let them perish through their own imaginations.

—*The Book of Common Prayer*

Every drop of ink in my pen ran cold.

—Horace Walpole

I know death hath ten thousand several doors  
For men to take their exits.

—John Webster

Pale death kicks through the doors with equal ease  
Of cottages and castles.

—Horace

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,  
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,  
To shake his sapient head and give  
The ill he cannot cure a name.

—Matthew Arnold

There is a certain class of clergymen whose mendacity is only equalled by their mendacity.

—Archbishop Frederick Temple

I look upon the world as my parish.

—John Wesley

We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another.

—Jonathan Swift

Wheresoever the carcase is, there will be eagles gathered together.

—*Matthew 23:28*

Evolutionarily speaking, the development of the anus was a breakthrough.

—from a student paper

The nearer the Church the farther from God.

—Bishop Lancelot Andrews

Even God cannot change the past.

—Agathon

I was in a printing press in Hell, and saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

—William Blake

If they wanna stay away in droves, you can't stop 'em.

—Yogi Berra, of baseball fans

A poet's hope, to be,  
like some valley cheese,  
local, but prized elsewhere.

—W. H. Auden

There's something I think's better than love, and if you want me to, I'll tell you what it is—that's company.

—Eudora Welty

Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead.

—Benjamin Franklin

A difference of taste in jokes is a great strain on the affections.

—George Eliot

They make a wilderness and call it peace.

—Tacitus

Altogether elsewhere, vast  
Herds of reindeer move across  
Miles and miles of golden moss,  
Silently and very fast.

—W. H. Auden

If you are afraid of loneliness, don't marry.

—Anton Chekov

The majority of husbands remind me of an orangutan trying to play the violin.

—Honoré de Balzac

Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave.

—*Song of Solomon* 8:6

Never to lie is to have no lock to your door; you are never alone.

—Elizabeth Bowen

I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die.

—*1 Samuel* 14:43

May I ask whether these pleasing attentions proceed from the impulse of the moment, or are the result of previous study?

—Jane Austen

Romance at short notice was her specialty.

—Saki

The credulity of love is the most fundamental source of its authority.

—Sigmund Freud

It is a mistake to think of a bad choice in love, since, as soon as choice exists, it can only be bad.

—Marcel Proust

Everyone is dragged along by his favorite pleasures.

—Virgil

He had often eaten oysters, but had never had enough.

—W. S. Gilbert

“Turbot, Sir,” said the waiter, placing before me two fishbones, two eyeballs, and a bit of black mackintosh.

—Thomas Earle Welby

Though sages may pour out their wisdom’s treasure,  
There is no sterner moralist than pleasure.

—Lord Byron

Since I had seen such things depicted in water-colors by Elstir, I sought to find again in reality, I cherished as though for their poetic beauty, the broken gestures of the knives still lying across one another, the swollen convexity of a discarded napkin into

which the sun introduced a patch of yellow velvet, the half-empty glass which thus showed to greater advantage the noble sweep of its curved sides and, in the heart of its translucent crystal, clear as frozen daylight, some dregs of wine, dark but glittering with reflected lights, the displacement of solid objects, the transmutation of liquids by the effect of light and shade, the shifting colors of the plums which passed from green to blue and from blue to golden yellow in the half-plundered dish, the chairs, like a group of old ladies, that came twice daily to take their places round the white cloth spread on the table as on an altar at which were celebrated the rites of the palate, and where in the hollows of the oyster-shells a few drops of lustral water had remained as in tiny holy water stoups of stone; I tried to find beauty there where I had never imagined before that it could exist, in the most ordinary things, in the profundities of "still life."

—Marcel Proust

There's death in the pot.

—2 *Kings* 4:40

The poetry of earth is never dead:

When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,  
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run  
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead.

—John Keats

If you believe Cratinus, that hoary authority,  
and Maecenas, I think you do,  
no poems can please for long nor long endure  
if they're written by drinkers of water.

—Horace

Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life  
in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?

—Samuel Johnson

Nobody ever became depraved overnight.

—Juvenal

They say someone has taste because he has other people's taste.

—Francis Picabia

Oh, life is a glorious cycle of song,  
A medley of extemporanea;  
And love is a thing that can never go wrong,  
And I am Marie of Roumania.

—Dorothy Parker

My son, may you be happier than your father.

—Sophocles

This fell sergeant, death,  
Is swift in his arrest.

—Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, V, i)

Wit is the epitaph of an emotion.

—Nietzsche

I hate quotations.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Shut up, he explained.

—Ring Lardner

You have delighted us long enough.

—Jane Austen

Silence is become his mother tongue.

—Oliver Goldsmith