

I believe that living is an *exercice* in expanding awareness; that a part of that exercise comes through individual growth, that another part comes through human relationships, and another part through intuition of the presence of God. Since we now have so stunted a growth, such flawed human relationships, such faint divination of the divine, we know that we are still in the early stages of awareness, and that our development has hardly begun. The heightening of perception is the supreme adventure. When the human being, with a negligible fraction of his brain developed, goes wild, misinterprets love, runs amuck on recreation, greed, drunkenness, descends to war and other crime, he is missing the fun, cutting himself off from the chief romance of the *divinable* universe.

I believe that the technique for the quickening of perception is attempted in most of the great religions of the world, though later standardized and largely lost. Fundamentally, religion is a technique for the expansion of life, for "life more abundant". So also are education, the idea of government, and art and beauty. In proportion as we quicken and heighten perception, we quicken and further the life and growth of the human race. For living is an exercise in expanding awareness.

Zona Gale

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Looking at life, it appears to me an absorbing game; a game in which I have been dealt several varying hands, that were not played as well as might have been, but with which I have taken, it seems to me, a shade the best in tricks. This, of course, is purely an emotional reaction and has no reasoned relation to the question of whether or not the game is worth playing or winning.

Yet, in spite of rational lapses, I find, pardon the mixing of metaphors, that life tastes good. And I find the world, in spite of what this civilization and its predecessors have done to spoil it, as good a place to live in as any I have reliable information about.

James Weldon Johnson

The problem of any person as artist, whether in America or anywhere else on earth, past, present or future, is to work out to the best of his natural powers the particular individual he happens to be, and to do so quite regardless of any material consideration. The congenial job is the thing, and next to that, the necessary economic freedom, in these days of plutocratic industrialism, to admit of the hard, clean, perpetual pursuit of the career for which Nature has endowed him. The slightest compromise between himself and Mammon is fatal to the white-hot devotion that Art demands. Her ladyship has no room for rivals in her affection, least of all the stoutest and most commonly successful prostitute, Commerce. Though practically the whole of America is dedicated to the pursuit of the dollar sign, enough clear-eyed, strong-sinewed, deep-hearted men and women have emerged to lead one to the simple claim that even we folk have our artists. If I were asked to reply to a recent cocksure intellectual who propounded the sceptical query, "Has America made room for poetry?"—I should say, "Yes, because it has had to!"

Alfred Kreymborg

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All of my work, barring a few obvious burlesques, is based upon three fundamental ideas. 1. That knowledge is better than ignorance; 2. That it is better to tell the truth than to lie; and 3. That it is better to be free than to be a slave. All of these ideas are taught in the American school-books, but every effort to give them practical reality is excessively offensive to so-called "good" Americans. I am thus somewhat unpopular in my native land, and the hope of becoming President is one that I may not cherish. But my aspirations in that direction are very faint, and so I do not repine. All I ask of "good" Americans is that they continue to serve me hereafter, as in the past, as willing laboratory animals. In that rôle they have great talents. No other country houses so many gorgeous frauds and imbeciles as the United States, and in consequence no other country is so amusing. Thus my patriotism is well-grounded as impec-

cable, though perhaps not orthodox. I love my country as a small boy loves the circus.

H. L. Mencken

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It is my idea that a writer, to be of any consequence, should have something to say which is likely to be of use to other men in understanding how to live.

Upton Sinclair

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We always sang four-part songs, in the Islands, at school and singing was important. I sat with the altos and sang the dark humming parts. After about a year, came along a singing teacher who applied her octaves and diagnosed:

"But you are a soprano."

There it was again. I was a freckled blonde when I wanted to be brunette, white when I wanted to be Hawaiian, and a soprano when I wanted to be alto.

"I'm going to keep on singing alto." That was final.

"Very well, and ruin your voice. You have a real soprano. And you might sing solos."

And so, Alto against Nature, with now (she was right), no voice at all . . . and the only chance for singing, on paper. Uncomfortable as a dog within ear-shot of high sopranos, still liking best middle register and counterpoint.

Genevieve Taggard

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To qualify as one of the subjects of this collection, I shall have to confess my chief claims to distinction: first as the only editor in the country who is not also a critic; and second as the only Van Doren—in New

York, at least—who does not write. To add more would only endanger this happy record.

Irita Van Doren

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As a literary man it has been my good fortune to be misunderstood. *Bunk*—my first novel—was taken by the American public as a humorous book, though it contains enough radical and revolutionary ideas to send Upton Sinclair to jail for life if he had written it. For a day or two I was spoken of as a rival of Ring Lardner, while, in fact, I am not a humorist at all, but a solemn and moody person. *Bunk* still sells as a funny book, and I continue to get letters from people who declare that, in reading it, they "laughed and laughed". I am glad that it turned out as it did, for although I want to distribute my ideas as widely as possible, I would not like a visit from the Ku Klux Klan, or have the National Security League dogging after me.

There is only one thing in my writing life that I regret. I invented the word "debunking", and I shall never hear the last of it. The debunking label is tied to me for life, and this thought makes me very sad. I cannot put a thing in print without having this ugly word thrown in my face. If I had written Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark* reviewers would announce that I had set out to debunk skylarks. I wrote a faithful, careful—and I hope, scholarly—life of George Washington, and every newspaper in the United States said I had attempted to debunk the Father of Our Country. The truth is that I did nothing of the kind.

P.S. I am now engaged in writing a life of General Grant—who was a conscientious, honest, and rather pathetic figure. Wait until it is published—just wait—and you will see "Woodward Debunks Grant" flower over the face of the newspapers.

W. E. Woodward