

# SUNBEAMS

Many people hear voices when no one is there. Some of them are called “mad” and are shut up in rooms where they stare at the walls all day. Others are called “writers” and they do pretty much the same thing.

Meg Chittenden

One has to have a bit of neurosis to go on being an artist. A balanced human seldom produces art. It's that imbalance which impels us.

Beverly Pepper

[Theodore] Dreiser wrote this magnificent novel [*Sister Carrie*]. . . . But the publisher . . . didn't like it, they were afraid of it. So they buried it. And naturally it did nothing; I think it sold four copies. . . . Dreiser rented a furnished room in Brooklyn. He put a chair in the middle of this room and sat in it. The chair didn't seem to be in the right position so he turned it a few degrees, and he sat in it again. Still it was not right. He kept turning the chair around and around, trying to align it to what — trying to correct his own relation to the universe? He never could do it, so he kept going around in circles and circles. He did that for quite a while, and ended up in a sanatorium.

E.L. Doctorow

Art is the stored honey of the human soul, gathered on wings of misery and travail.

Theodore Dreiser

Did the hospital specialize in poets and singers, or was it that poets and singers specialized in madness? . . . What is it about meter and cadence and rhythm that makes their makers mad?

Susanna Kaysen

Songwriting is about getting the demon out of me. It's like being possessed. You try to go to sleep, but the song won't let you. So you have to get up and make it into something, and then you're allowed to sleep. It's always in the middle of the bloody night, or when you're half awake or tired, when your critical faculties are switched off. So letting go is what the whole game is.

John Lennon

It is quite hard at times to distinguish a genius from a lunatic.

Dorothy Thompson

It is only too true that a lot of artists are mentally ill — it's a life which, to put it mildly, makes one an outsider. I'm all right when I completely immerse myself in work, but I'll always remain half crazy.

Vincent van Gogh

Every few years when it's been another five years that have passed and I haven't made a film and the depression starts taking over totally, I allow myself to do a commercial. And then I feel really dirty and get to work promptly.

Terry Gilliam

Despair is the only cure for illusion. Without despair we cannot transfer our allegiance to reality — it is a kind of mourning period for our fantasies. Some people do not survive this despair, but no major change within a person can occur without it.

Philip Slater

The man who fears suffering is already suffering from what he fears.

Michel de Montaigne

The artist is extremely lucky who is presented with the worst possible ordeal which will not actually kill him.

John Berryman

Trouble is said to be good for an artist's soul but almost never is.

Rita Mae Brown

The most beautiful paintings and sculptures, the greatest poetry, have not always been born from torment or bitterness. Often they have sprung from contemplation, from joy, from an instinct or wonder toward all things. To create from joy, to create from wonder, demands a continual discipline, a great compassion. . . . With time and sincerity, you will discover a way to work and write that does not harm you spiritually, that does not tempt you to vanity, that is the deepest expression of your spirituality. You will find a voice that is not your voice only, but the voice of Reality itself. . . . If you can be empty enough, that voice can speak through you. If you can be humble enough, that voice can inhabit you and use you.

Thuksey Rinpoche

Art and Religion are, then, two roads by which men escape from circumstance to ecstasy.

Clive Bell

Once in a museum [painter Pierre] Bonnard persuaded his friend Vuillard to distract an attendant while he approached his own old painting, slipped from his pocket a tiny box of paints and a brush the size of a toothpick, and added to one of his consecrated canvases minute touches that set his mind at rest.

Annette Vaillant

Some people never go crazy. What truly horrible lives they must lead.

Charles Bukowski

*Sunbeams are welcome and may be sent to The Sun, 107 North Roberson Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27516. We're sorry, but we're unable to respond personally to your suggestions.*