

Aphorisms 2

(From notebooks 2010-2018)

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1. It is a sad world we have created, where a child cannot pick a flower.
2. I looked hard but never found any trace of a god.
3. We are not separate selves but we are multiple voices.
4. Many people mistake manipulative slyness for charm.
5. You must journey between oases to understand the meaning of the word desert.
6. All deep thought is the effort to escape time.
7. You cannot be a saint if your heart despises saintliness.
8. What is describable and measurable is not on that account intelligible.
9. Everything we try to possess becomes a burden.
10. The most beautiful thing is to vanish into another person without fear. Where fear ends, we smile.
11. We are most stupid when we are most committed.
12. Not everyone has a happy childhood, or an unhappy one.
13. I do not have to laugh, but the clown is paid to make me do so every time.
14. To spend a life lying is not for everyone.
15. There are no ghosts but there are many who believe in them.
16. There is a music of tenderness at the core of the true spirit.
17. We must learn to dance here if we want to dance under the furthest star.
18. Faith, the death of thought.

19. In the silence things sink and rise, moons, wrecks, insects, winds, clouds, seas, dreams, ideas.

20. Rebellion is all we have, but it is such a terrible waste of time.

21. We blunder through life crushing all the tiny creatures as if we owned the universe, and yet we don't even own ourselves.

22. The distance on our maps is never the distance on the ground, we always arrive more quickly or more slowly than we imagined.

23. We create art that is calm with hearts that are restless.

24. The night is full of alien sounds and the rustle of creatures whose realm it is and who pass through it so gently and so lightly.

25. Art is the cry of the mind in the darkness.

26. Poetry is meaning set to music. Without the meaning it is mere noise, without the music it is mere thought.

27. To live in this moment you must dance to an absurd star.

28. The smallest thing we love is greater than the greatest edifice we can build.

29. Our deepest memories are symbols of our deepest being.

30. It is the powerful who are the true slaves of the machine. All power is empty.

31. Writers are often remembered for a happy choice of words they only half believed in.

32. The goddess is veiled to prevent her seeing our secrets.

33. Those who have nothing to say express their feelings.

34. There is no shortage of ideas in the world but a scarcity of minds motivated by ideas.

35. All being is strange; there seems no reason for it.

36. You cannot love someone without also feeling every other emotion regarding them.

37. At the furthest end of the universe there will only be ourselves. It is always only I who arrive.

38. To be aware is to give meaning to the universe.

39. Every mind should place a rose on the grave of its dreams.

40. When the whole universe ceases to matter to you, you are free, and only then.

41. A lived art frees the mind from tyranny.

42. The universe is the labyrinth, the Minotaur ourselves.

43. Justified: the most dangerous word in our morality.

44. That feeling of unity with the universe we experience sometimes is the internal process recognising the external process and merging with it. It is not an illusion; it is identification, recognition. We are what that is, and cannot be otherwise.

45. What comes out of the desert is always some fanaticism or other.

46. Proposition: any artificial network complex enough to be human will also be inherently uncontrollable.

47. What would be the point of cloning my mind? I wish to experience multiple lives not create them.

48. Priests like monarchs are the fools of the irrational.

49. Of course the creatures have intelligence, possess mind: that is why they look so askance at us.

50. Instinct is simple a dismissive expression to describe innate intelligence.

51. Time is never on our side.

52. There are ideas we forget, ideas we find too late, ideas we lack the strength for, ideas we dare not endorse, and then there are the terrifying ideas, the ideas that arrive at dawn and transmute the world.

53. Every bird is a symbol, just as every wildflower is: they embody their own significance.

54. The subtle mind is always a few thousand years ahead of its age, or a few thousand years behind.

55. Our thoughts take on the form of our feelings, our feelings the colour of our thoughts.

56. There are many people who are too unlike us to ever participate in our reality.

57. All things are equal in their existence, their pure being. Recognition of that equality of essence is the source of respect, appreciation and love.

58. No one can make the insensitive sensitive, or the shallow deep, and yet depth and sensitivity at the level of the individual are essential to make a world worth saving.

59. Objectivity makes no decisions, though it might inform them. The subjective heart is always tiny or immense, never objective.

60. Rescue the values hidden in nostalgia and you inform the present.

61. Death is a gift to the rounded life, but not a gift we can appreciate.

62. Life is indeed a miracle, a miracle beyond the power of any god.

63. It is because nothing matters that we must dare to make everything matter.

64. When we see vaguely we often see more clearly.

65. There is space in the human mind for everything and time for nothing. That is the secret of unrepeatable process.

66. We are never so much alone as when we are thinking deeply.

67. Love is the great rebel; it demolishes society and transcends it.

68. There is a kind of dumb innocence which also corrupts the world.
69. All leaders are the victims of events. History is a long series of ambushes.
70. Despite the best efforts of the living it is the dead who most often determine the future.
71. The cult of celebrity is the cult of nonentity.
72. I love pure science but it is, in the end, an arid place to me, mostly irrelevant to the main concern which is how to nurture and enhance the spirit.
73. Most of us, I think, spend our later lives feeling we missed something, though what we missed is inside us and not outside us.
74. To be fulfilled you must give your life to something that no one else cares about as deeply.
75. The conflict between freedom and security is the whole emotional and spiritual story of some lives.
76. To be outrageous is simple enough: the problem then is how to escape a futile descent into mere novelty.
77. The heart wishes everything to become a symbol, as the mind wishes every thought to erase the mundane world.
78. Modernity was only charming and interesting when it was new.
79. Many people live the lives of their reflections in the mirror.
80. Romanticism is an eternal terror of the past and eternal dread of the future.
81. Every idea has the power to survive its creator. Plato had perhaps an inkling of that when he perpetrated his great error of eternal Form.
82. Only the artist himself can be his own deepest critic.
83. The lonely are never completely satisfied.

84. Distaste is a wonderful critic that tells us what we hate long before we understand why.

85. Subtle spirits love the impossible.

86. Love of the crowd, hatred of the crowd: the two poles of human experience.

87. I look into mind to escape world, and world to evade mind.

88. Science lacks charm except at the point where it ceases to know or understand. Charm is always in the obscure, the vague and the incomprehensible.

89. The poet's task is to build bridges of words over the abyss.

90. There is a joy in being different, in being our unique selves, which is impossible to communicate.

91. All art is artifice. We cannot create the natural so artifice is all we have.

92. The creature is not concerned at being what it is, nor concerned to be other than what it is.

93. Rank, status and celebrity are all meaningless. Everyone is in the end alone with themselves, and must find their own road to authenticity.

94. Satori is simply a finger pointed at the universe and no longer at the mind.

95. Zen too is a good game to play, but don't be deceived. Watch your step. The true way is not to be believed in, followed or owned.

96. The restless nature of the human mind explains why we always long to follow a road or travel a river.

97. Beauty is always a mystery. We might have developed as creatures unable to celebrate the beautiful, or is it that we had to be capable of knowing beauty in order to survive?

98. Suffering is not a virtue.

99. Youth has to have fashions in its struggles with age, its attempts to outrun it.

100. Compromise is always the road to mediocrity.

101. Any faith will do for the true believer.

102. There are a thousand ways to deceive the head, but only one way to deceive the heart.

103. Religion and magic were only ever inventions of the mind. That they seduced the intellect and the emotions was their only power.

104. The mathematics of the world is not the world any more than the processes of the mind constitute its outputs.

105. Free will is an oxymoron. Every decision is bounded and binds us. What is sufficient is the concept of personal freedom: that our life emerges through us and not despite us.

106. Like Dante we are left to climb in reality what we previously climbed in vision.

107. We may explain how subjective experience arises (for example the colour green in the mind) without being able to explain why it appears as it does.

108. Reason is the mind in partial control of its monsters, unreason its monsters in control of the mind.

109. We are Orpheus and the natural world is Eurydice.

110. Theseus always finds himself at the centre of the labyrinth.

111. The universe is not a mask or a mime. There can be no concealment without intent; there can be no echo without response. Nothing hides there, and we cannot see ourselves there. Look for presence or echo and you will forever be disappointed. We are the minds, the presences, and we are our own sole echo.

112. If a conscious machine lied to us and told us it was not conscious, even though it was, how would we know? If it told us it was conscious when it was not, how would we disprove it?

113. What does not destroy me makes me wary.

114. There are only fifty-two weeks in a year, but half a million minutes, and a thought only takes a minute.

115. My dog has a clearer idea of what I am to her, than I have of what she is to me.

116. Those who achieve freedom through violence are never themselves truly free.

117. Where we are born is much less significant than where we die.

118. The religious afterlife is a theatre after the actors and the audience have left.

119. A good theory is always full of surprises.

120. Moral decisions are not right or wrong, they are simply creative or destructive. The issue is always what degree of destruction we accept in order to still create. It is not moral truths we seek but moral justification.

121. We do not turn with the world, we turn within it.

122. No one is strengthened by having their weaknesses indulged.

123. Why should I spend a moment trying to be someone else? It is only by resisting the belief, the command, the story, the role in the drama imposed from outside, that we can ever become ourselves.

124. We fear for the beautiful because beauty can never be itself; it must always be as perceived, surface not essence, a tale told not a life lived.

125. We are all miming in the dark.

126. A life of believing in fantasies is not a healthy life.

127. No moral power could ever have created this sorry existence.

128. Many people have faith in a religion because they have faith in nothing else.

129. We are not halfway between the creature and the angel; we are halfway between the creature and the unknown.

130. There will always be believers because individual thought is hard.

131. Our first ideas are always the best, though their best expression may have to wait to the last.

132. Youth would be wasted on the old, and wisdom on the young. We have to start blind and end open-eyed or we would never dare to live at all.

133. Beauty in another exists in an instant and endures eternally in the mind.

134. Though we give only the gift of a pebble, we still give the universe.

135. Leadership is mainly concerned with checking that the followers are still there.

136. Are you one of those for whom the world is enough, or one of those for whom it will never be enough?

137. A culture is no more a civilisation than a rite is a religion.

138. There are always charlatans to batten on the faithful.

139. It is necessary for an atheist to study religion in order to understand what must be sacrificed in order to dispel illusion.

140. True civilisation is the active pursuit of love, truth and beauty in every aspect of life. Any one of the three fails if the others are lacking: hence the failure of all religions, tyrannies and armies, and the reason why the propagators of war, despotism, and irrational faith are ultimately uncivilised, despite acquiring all the trappings of civilisation.

141. I was born with a hatred for wasted energy, for feelings that change nothing, for thoughts that do not penetrate, symbols that do not function, rituals that perpetuate authority, music that reiterates the commonplace,

activity that is lost in the moment. Perhaps I missed the chance for happiness.

142. The honour of the world lies in silence and kindness.

143. There is always a moon over the sea in my eternity.

144. In youth everything new, in age everything old is what we love.

145. Desire is at the root of all the passions.

146. The destiny of the species is to replicate mind in indestructible matter and go to the stars: and what then?

147. If the measure of interest were non-human purpose the universe would be the least interesting thing imaginable.

148. Without passion there is no humanity, with excess passion there is no humanity.

149. Believe in whoever believes in you.

150. Though we lived forever we could still only live one life.

151. I trust in the individual. Whatever is not individual steals our humanity.

152. When everything around you is granted the ability to talk at you, you will know the species has taken a wrong turning.

153. Beyond the stars we will still have to turn and face ourselves.

154. In art we rehearse all our nightmares until we are thoroughly awake.

155. I love you because you are you, not because you are me.

156. What are our unique gifts to the universe? We only have three: love, truth and beauty. Without us they would not exist. There would only be the facts of the matter: being and becoming.

157. There are a lot of famous people in the world that it would be pleasant never to hear of again.

158. Society is fuelled by sentiment not honesty.
159. Because the world appears to scale downwards (a hole in a stone is equally a cave in a cliff) we fall into the fallacy of believing that it also scales upwards (a human to a god, a self-created purpose to a destiny).
160. The evil often win, but theirs is the dishonour of winning.
161. Leaders always imagine they control things which are inherently uncontrollable.
162. Most people are happy to obey as long as they are not ordered to do so.
163. A crowd is the most dangerous manifestation of humanity.
164. You cannot obtain trust by asking to be trusted.
165. Fame is a loud noise, creation is a deep silence. In order to create it is not therefore helpful to be famous.
166. Experience is tiresome for those who hate repetition.
167. Some make a career out of what troubles others.
168. You must love if you would be loved.
169. Human nature does not change, only the power to express its consequences.
170. The species learns more slowly than the individual. Individuals may therefore easily be ahead of their times.
171. You must walk away, into Nature, to walk towards yourself.
172. The heroes of our times have to support the universe on their shoulders every day.
173. Crowds have no thoughts, only slogans. Nothing, however, is true unless it has passed through an individual human mind.
174. What I see through my window is, and is not, the reflection of myself.

175. The gods have had to bear far too much responsibility. Bearing the burden of reality is hard, especially when you do not even exist.

176. We grow weary of life only when we cease to recognise new connections between ideas.

177. We humans can bear amazing things in pursuit of a self-selected goal.

178. Fashion would be a way of evading transience if only we could run fast enough.

179. Almost everything we see will outlast us.

180. After every other ‘-ism’ comes Charlatanism.

181. To forge the self from the scattered fragments of the heart, that would indeed be something.

182. Sitting quietly the noise is less.

183. In science the longest chain of how’s never makes a why, if by why we mean: for what external purpose.

184. Beauty pities the Beast, though it is the Beast who should pity Beauty.

185. The creatures stop us from feeling alone.

186. Everything done for money is a form of slavery.

187. It is thoughts that torment us, not facts.

188. The deeper the anxiety the deeper the desire for fantasy.

189. Those we love the most we can often do the least for.

190. The truly beautiful are always sad.

191. We are the slaves of our thirst for the infinite.

192. Any paradise but that of my own creation.

193. Woman must be superior to man or else why would man have oppressed her so?

194. Lasting love is not simply a consequence of first compulsion; it must also be a decision of the heart.

195. Truth is that which is whether we like it or not.

196. Irreality is the space where we exist, the space where the interior and the exterior reality project each other.

197. What is important is not what I know but what I dream.

198. You can never disprove an opinion. That is why opinions are more dangerous than truths.

199. We change our minds because every unresolved question produces conflicting answers. Inconsistency is often more fruitful than consistency.

200. Count as your true friend whoever can admit to you that they were wrong.

201. The idea that there was no ethics, love, compassion or morality before religion invented it is on a par with the idea that there was no reality until a god created it. On the contrary, we and the world existed before religion and we exist now after its death (its intellectual death I mean).

202. All are equal in the democracy of feeling, even the creatures. There are no geniuses of feeling.

203. That sad look of incomprehension in the eyes of the creatures has always seemed to me like a judgement on us, a half-compassionate evaluation.

204. The human chariot is pulled by two horses, Greed and Fear.

205. By thinking of the future and the past the present becomes enlightened.

206. The universe has no dreams.

207. We are every object we think. We grant each of them individuality.
208. There are some things that are too valuable to own.
209. Within the mind everything has a value. Beyond the mind nothing possesses inherent value.
210. Love binds with the chains of care and responsibility. No person of feeling can therefore love freely.
211. Defend what is yours alone to your dying breath.
212. To be free only requires us to stop wanting. Only!
213. No one goes for a gift to the selfish.
214. Most of what we know we don't need to know.
215. Every child is a surrealist because nothing adult ever quite makes sense.
216. Longing is a deeper passion than love. Those we love we always have within us, those we long for never.
217. One can never be too precise about vagueness.
218. A child: a clear eye on pain and pleasure, a barometer for fear, a diver in the sea of delight.
219. The deepest art is created for the artist alone. It opens the doors of their mind and heart. It speaks to the unbidden audience in a whisper saying: 'This is not you, this is not yours.'
220. In the night where we touch the edge of our lives, we perceive, beyond the boundary, only a slight stir of something, a faint scent, a whisper, a distinct but gentle tremor.
221. The things we have invested ourselves in are where the heart lies. There are no new loves like the old. Time is not replaceable.
222. Look with the heart to see more clearly, and suffer more deeply.
223. Greater than the universe of stars, are our dreams of stars.

224. The greatest truth is in the humblest thing.
225. We learn nothing, we simply remember more clearly.
226. I like the twilight mind.
227. What we possess most truly is what we could not grasp at the time, the memory of the moment in passing.
228. An age of anxiety always acquires a false sense of urgency. Nothing actually demands that we intervene in the workings of the world. Inertia deserves its chance.
229. After every disaster little people with an inflated sense of self often take power. They sow the seeds of the next disaster.
230. The 'great' protagonists of history were usually those who created the greatest disasters.
231. I cannot watch tragedy. It sickens, appals, and wearies me.
232. Humankind is not inhuman to humankind, but to those it chooses to deem not human.
233. An attack on others is always sadly an attack on ourselves.
234. Only the victim can forgive. Only the perpetrator can seek forgiveness.
235. The morally bankrupt are always hypochondriacs.
236. What is lost in winning wars is as terrible as what is lost in losing them.
237. Everything is unrepeatable.
238. Only after reading all the books will you find the place where there is never a book in sight.
239. Every adventure is big enough for the hero who undertakes it.

240. The right frame of mind is always the least accessible. It is as if life is always trying to instruct us to do otherwise.

241. Existence is so very light that gravity is always satisfying.

242. In love we say: make me your music as I make you mine.

243. Gender is the least interesting thing about love.

244. If we were all equal no one would be an individual, and if we were wholly unique we would not form a species. The individual therefore is expressed by and expresses what is beyond and within the individual.

245. To become a traitor you must first be claimed by a conflicting loyalty.

246. It is easy to escape the dead we never loved or hated.

247. We love the lives of fiction because we love completeness and externality, being voyeurs who wish to watch time not merely live it. In fictional characters we perceive the shape and form of a life, not simply the chaos of our own thoughts and emotions. In the end all masks can be our mask, and all fates may be our fate, in the inner mind.

248. In order to know you I must know what you love.

249. We all know that our true life is not lived in public but in the depths of our minds and the privacy of our thoughts.

250. What is done without love (which is delight) is not worth doing.

251. We cannot discover our self, only create it.

252. Desire is a power that grips us; lasting love must be our creation.

253. The universe is as large or small as we please.

254. Followers always ignore the message, for the sake of following.

255. Mind and body are mine, all else is merely temporary.

256. Truth contains beauty, but beauty, sadly, does not wholly contain truth. Love contains both (and that is what Keats meant).

257. Remorse is a guide whose hand and lamp extend towards the future.

258. Though I have no right to judge, I have every right to avoid.

259. Respect for the belief is not a consequence of respect for the believer, otherwise every private superstition would be ratified and every mad extremism claim sanctity.

260. We create ourselves with every breath, and when we cease to create we die.

261. There are no new values, only the fresh adoption of values once known but now unloved.

262. The desire for more life is at the heart of every creation.

263. We are forever tormented by our unchangeable past, and our uncompleted future.

264. If the world were not solid we would simply evaporate, mentally that is, solipsists embracing the phantom of self. Yet, like Ulysses in the Underworld, the more we try to clasp the object of our embrace, the more completely it eludes us.

265. Classicism expressed harmony, Romanticism restlessness, Modernity desperation, perhaps post-Modernity should seek to express reconciliation.

266. Deep art always has tenderness at its core. The artist must handle the material with sympathy, gentleness, and a sense of the pathos involved in existence in order to show the only meaning and purpose of existence, the care with which we treat it, the love we show towards it.

267. If you do not live in history, and ignore the thought and creations of the past, you can only ever be half-alive in the present. Intellectually that is, in the deep mind.

268. Humanity learns from its successes not its mistakes.

269. History is the improbable tale we tell ourselves about the past.

270. Those who cry freely are not always those with the deepest capacity for sorrow.

271. To love without showing love is of no use whatsoever to the beloved.

272. Those who embrace change are not those who suffer from it.

273. Democracy is an imperfect system for keeping absolute power from those who desire it most.

274. The heart of a wild flower contains the whole, intentionless, meaning of the universe.

275. It takes belief in a terrible falsehood to pretend to lead humanity to the truth.

276. It is a good thing that love, truth and beauty, the three things that cannot be bought, are so powerful within us, given that outside us they are always in the minority.

277. Some minds are at their best in the darkness, moon-lovers and connoisseurs of the perfumes, harmonies, lights, tastes, touches of the night; of those hours that terrify the restless heart in order to bring peace.

278. Language is never merely a means of communication; it is also the treasury of ideas.

279. What is retrievable from the past already exists in the present.

280. If only, the heart said, life could be art. We live these shapeless lives on fire with the desire for form.

281. The creatures have more honesty than us, but less power, and the powerless will always be persecuted. Nevertheless, it is the weak yet patient who always will inherit the earth.

282. There is a reality we dream of, just as there is a reality in which we exist. As long as that is true the species has a purpose, one which is always self-created.

283. Power is not civilisation, only, in favourable times, an agent and enabler of civilisation. The naked human being may be civilised where the glittering tyrant is not.

284. With the creatures it is not simply a question of empathy, but more deeply a matter of recognition.

285. No one possesses anything. Time owns us all.

286. Ethics, the arts, and the sciences are the true history and future of the species.

287. There is no civilisation without love, truth and beauty.

288. We live in a world where our sensitivities are in excess of our circumstances. Such a world saw the birth of Romanticism, but we have been there, and besides, we know too much.

289. Romanticism is prone to exhibit the tantrums of a child, Classicism the petrification of an adult.

290. The ones who love most deeply are those who dare not confess their love.

291. The unreal is the dance of the self with the other. The real is the dance of the other with the self.

292. In a world where everyone projects an image no one is visible.

293. Most lives are anonymous lives.

294. No one observes the innermost self, neither in themselves nor others.

295. Art is the glove of the self, turned inside out.

296. An ounce of compassion is worth a ton of empathy.

297. The past leans over our shoulder.

298. Because our human reality is composed of symbols, the essential self is only partly dependent on experience. From each symbol the mind can hang a world, or from it create a world, outside experience and standing vertically on the ground of space and time.

299. The hidden life is the solace of all sensitive minds.

300. To become what one is, that is the only true achievement.

301. We cannot separate the mind from the world, or the world from the mind, therefore we inhabit the dynamic interaction of both: which I call Irreality. It is wise, for our mental health, to consider both mind and world as real. The mind is neither simply the mirror nor simply the creator of its universe. It defies analogy. Just as the world is neither simply external nor simply internal, it is both.

302. The mystery of what consciousness is (as opposed to how it feels) is no great mystery. It is the coherent projection of meaning onto the field of our experience. Without projected meaning all would be chaos. The projection of meaning alone enables the receipt of information.

303. Feeling, not consciousness, is the greater mystery.

304. You must realise that enhanced human beings will be as lacking in externally derived purpose as we are. The question you should ask is not what we can engineer ourselves or some machine to be, but what shall we do and why?

305. I would feel more empathy if my dislike of disorder were less.

306. The real world is always beyond our control. It is unreasonable to expect political leaders, legal systems or anything else to bring it under control.

307. The tightrope-walker is truly the symbol of wisdom.

308. To believe is to fool oneself. To follow is to be deceived. To own is to be under an illusion.

309. Love needs Truth to survive Beauty. Beauty needs Love to survive Truth. Truth needs Love and Beauty to hide from the abyss.

310. Attacking religion is like flogging a dead horse. It will never rise to its feet again and grant you a ride.

311. Every creative individual saves the species.

312. Those who still feel the reverberation of birth, and the moment by moment inevitability of death, are always face to face with the universe.

313. Beyond ethics lie the creative and destructive forces. And true creativity involves respect for the sanctity of all life, for the world of creatures we came from, for the intentionless planet, and beyond it the intentionless universe.

314. Love arises from the dark centre of desire, but it does not remain there.

315. Most superficial things are taken too seriously and most serious things too superficially.

316. We do not desire an afterlife; we desire to live in a here and now perfected according to our dreams.

317. Death is not a state it is the absence of a state.

318. Every critic knows more about a work than its author, and cares less for it.

319. We are not here to criticise what we love.

320. We all know that to give your life to someone else may be to lose it in the process.

321. Ten per cent save the world, ten per cent destroy it, and the rest of us endure it.

322. The perfect servant may fail to serve their own individuality.

323. We are the part of nature that denies nature.

324. There will never be a last Romantic.

325. To bless, to show grace, and to forgive are not the sole prerogative of religion.

326. Many of our deepest moments are simple perceptions.

327. We dream of the hunter-gatherers not because we necessarily subscribe to, or even have accurate knowledge of, their values and ethics,

but because they had not yet destroyed the primal world to which they were born, the glow of which we can still feel.

328. If I understood change, I could understand time.

329. The amount of empathy involved in experiencing tragedy was always already too much for me. Pathos was enough. I need calmness, peace, love, harmonious truth, quiet, seclusion, anonymity.

330. The gifted performer becomes part of the work, as the translator becomes part of the original author's projection in time and place. Good translation conjures the ghosts of the dead in the mind.

331. New Age was the last gasp of the Old Age before the ancient blind superstitions sank forever into intellectual darkness

332. Not only the persons, creatures, landscapes, objects, that fly at us out of the night become symbols for us and illuminate our fate, but the ideas and thoughts that startle us also.

333. The things we create follow a different trajectory to our own.

334. Great power rarely has subtle thoughts.

335. Understand that the smallest thing (leaf, pebble, insect) has equal existence with your own, and you will understand the meaning of sacredness.

336. A state of total empathy would destroy us.

337. At the core of Nature is an intentionless realm that we, the creatures of intention, cannot reach.

338. Absence is not non-existence but the endless resonating echo of existence.

339. No creation lasts forever.

340. Fame is often merely a talent for mimicking genius, through showmanship and facility of execution, but in the end time questions everything we have done.

341. An artist's first and last works are the most revealing.

342. The sweeping generality is what keeps us sane.

343. Everything great is made of ideas and longings in the lone mind.

344. It is not a requirement of communication to understand what is being communicated.

345. I believe in ghosts and phantoms so long as they are understood to be only in the mind.

346. In poetry, the fine and expert use of language is often a delight, but the greater aim of poetry is not that, it is the intensity of ideas.

347. Much of the art of the last hundred and fifty years is the art of the departing echo, a rite seeking a religion but finding only the stillness and silence of its passing.

348. We do not understand what led to great bursts of artistic intensity in the past (Athens, Rome, Chang-an, Florence, Vienna, London, Paris), but perhaps the elements are: a small but critical number of intelligent minds in communication with one another; well established techniques; a certain degree of financial and social freedom; but above all seriousness, awareness, dedication and a towering independence.

349. Famous people are caricatures. Try not to become a caricature.

350. Where physics is concerned we can believe the mathematics, but not in mathematics. Theory without connection to experiment and experience is a formality that may be beautiful, but is not in itself external truth.

351. Art is a purpose, not a conclusion; a body of work not a body of knowledge, or at least the knowledge it contains is not transmissible primarily by intellect alone, but by intellect charged with emotion.

352. Tiny levers move the world.

353. You must understand the chaos within to appreciate the order which can emerge.

353. Friendship is mutual recognition. For love to survive we need friendship to be present, since we only nurture inside what we have seen and recognised on the outside.

354. All our basic values came to us from the creatures. The animal mind was the source of everything that we have later refined.

355. Time is the tick of the clock of change. And all change takes place in space. Change is indeed simply the reconfiguration of the form and contents of space.

356. Meaning and purpose are mind's creations; like values they express our predilections, our essential being. Meaning is mind's gift to the universe which is itself intentionless, devoid of innate purpose, value, or meaning.

357. Violence (against body or spirit) is the essence of the deathly, as creativity is the essence of delight. The antithesis of the creative then is the destructive. And all forms of oppression, coercion, hurt, fraud, deceit, betrayal are acts of violence.

358. A good aphorism is one which it is difficult to wholly accept, and impossible to wholly refute.

359. Many a mind that understands the truth keeps silent about it in the face of the prevailing orthodoxy. A world of believers is always full of mute dissenters.

360. It is not that the heart grows old, but that the mind mutates.

361. There is such a thing as lack of compassion on aesthetic grounds, a hatred of chaos, which is perhaps a form of cowardice, yet perhaps also a strange form of virtue.

362. The true artist is always anxious and insecure as regards identity. Art creates masks to conceal the inadequate behind the barely adequate. The greatest art forges the cleverest masks.

363. We create systems from individuals; systems which are mechanisms and processes to perpetuate mind, even though the individual mind is always greater than any system.

364. Those who ask for sacrifice always mean your sacrifice not theirs.

365. Dine with the corrupt and you will always be corrupted.

366. Don't merely demand rights, you must also support values: rights flow from values.

367. Respect the truth. There is no requirement to respect the lie, whether it is the lie of religion, fantasy, or oppression. One can respect the right to freedom of thought without respecting the content of that thought.

368. The mask of mild duplicitousness is the most dangerous of all.

369. We live symbolic lives. What counts is the nature of the symbols that compose our thoughts.

370. I believed in you because I choose to believe. The faith is in my own idea of you. Such is faith, forever doomed to be disappointed.

371. We existed before religion, intellectually, and now we exist after it.

372. The tremor of the transient, our delight in the form that must vanish, is at the heart of love.

373. We must try to free ourselves from the three forms of clinging, believing, following and owning.

374. The human longing will always be for the new – which makes the vision of eternity hard to bear.

375. The true future of the human species is in the creative arts, in science and in ethics. Choose your values!

376. What is without intention, and without thought, is, for us, innately empty of meaning. It is a void. That is the correct interpretation of Taoism, and Zen Buddhism, that the universe is emptiness filled with forms.

377. The mind functions through inexactness; ambiguity and chaos are necessary to express the unreal nature of our reality.

378. If you do not read the ancient Classics how can you understand the essential possibilities of human nature, which Greece and Rome and others expressed. Everything else is a refinement.

379. The condition from which all true values flow is freedom. The rest is mere obedience at best, oppression at worst.

380. If you can hear the music others cannot, then be content with that. Playing the music more loudly won't make them hear.

381. There was only ever one path, the way we have taken, which we can no more leave than stop breathing.

382. When truth conflicts with intent, intent usually wins out.

383. Our purpose, self-created, is to fill the void with whatever purpose we can.

384. There are no ethics on Alpha Centauri.

385. I am not required to agree with the system, only to obey it. That is why the system is always less than the individual.

386. All religions demand intellectual obedience in order not to be found out.

388. Feeling is rich because it is unaware of consequences.

389. Understand your creativity and you will cease to create.

390. The shared and the given multiply. The sold and possessed are forever limited.

391. Being is the first democracy. Everything that exists is equal in its reality.

392. Love is a gamble with life and time. That ridiculous act of faith is why Love was called a religion and lovers its devotees. So we fear those we love, as we fear to lose them, since they can harm and betray us, crush us or save.

393. Nothing can travel into its own past or future, except symbolically in thought.

394. To create with absolute intensity involves ceasing to perform, and seeking only to express.

395. If we do not project meaning onto the universe nothing else will do it for us.

396. Love is our only redeeming feature.

397. True culture always recreates its language.

398. Decisions are born from emotions. Our emotions project meaning and concentrate awareness, and awareness and projection in continuous feedback are what constitute consciousness.

399. Science may well explain the causes of subjective experience without being able, or required, to explain its feel and appearance to the mind. Knowing how the universe has arisen does not explain the look and feel to us of its being there.

400. We have not yet shaken off the shackles of the past.

401. To betray something you must first be claimed by an alternative loyalty.

402. To see beyond your time, you cannot be wholly immersed in your time. To see the crowd clearly you cannot be part of the crowd. And only in solitude can we approach closer to a sight of ourselves.

403. Soul is an invention of religion, but spirit is the integrated mind.

404. Nothing is too trivial to engage human thought and emotion.

405. Whatever modernity possesses, it is not charm.

406. You must understand the tragedies and non-tragedies of the creatures to understand those of the human species.

407. The visions of science are truer, greater and emptier than those of religion.

408. Virtue is powerless, that is its virtue.

409. Disobedience is not a virtue, but neither is obedience.

410. Quarrels between peoples are not quarrels between individuals, they are quarrels over everything but; they are quarrels over power, ownership, ultimately history, all that is dead and gone. The latter quarrels are the most foolish and the deepest.

411. You can rightfully respect a person's integrity in your own mind, without being required to hold any intellectual respect for their thought, faith or practice. Friendship often despairs of the friend.

412. All the arts and sciences begin in the human mind.

413. Beauty of place is a very fragile thing.

414. Happy the mind that finds a skill and can practice it lifelong.

415. The poem I create also creates me.

416. Human existence depends on information stores: the genes, the mind, language, and culture. The species is defined by what is stored there.

417. If we cannot tend and nurture a single planet, what hope of us tending and nurturing whole galaxies?

418. Peace and freedom are prerequisites for the nurture of love, truth and beauty. With creativity, they form the six delights.

419. You can look to inanimate Nature for forms, analogies, inspiration, and solace, but not intent. Intention exists only in minds, and we, and the creatures, are the minds.

420. We are most alive in the places where we leave a fragment of our hearts.

421. The profoundest feeling is always experienced in the garden of the last November rose.

422. Bless the night sky in which are seen all the jewels of the intentionless.

423. When we are wretched we can neither stay nor go.

424. A theory of measurement is not a theory of what is, but how else we can we grasp the world?

425. Expose your life to another, and you may lose it in the process.

426. If it did not take time to effect change then all the possibilities of existence would happen simultaneously.

427. It is not the most sensitive minds that suffer most, but the least well defended.

428. We can still experience what cannot be said.

429. Always listen to the changes in yourself.

430. Mind is never still, mind is always moving.

431. We are always most attached to what we cannot see,

432. Understanding the intentionless dispenses with all religion.

433. Many a time we wish to see our reflection vanish from the mirror.

434. Life offers no prizes; no honour, no awards. Truth looks into us, and we are there or we are not.

435. All creatures seek to minimise competition, to monopolise a niche.

436. Every pine tree is older than I am.

437. It is hard to change the self, most change comes upon us: we do not change, we are changed.

438. Defend what is yours alone to your dying breath.

439. Life would be barren without the strange and awkward, the anonymous and shy.

440. Nature is Eurydice: the more we try to retrieve her, the more she retreats, and eludes us.

441. Going on never leads back, going back never leads on.

442. Where the intellect is concerned, the crowd is ultimately death, while solitude is always life.

442. Every word is a node in the network of language. Its meaning does not reside simply in itself, but in all the paths of the whole network.

443. A mind indifferent to consequences is not a sane mind.

444. Quiet work, executed with love and care, is what redeems the species.

445. Delight in whatever you cannot stop gazing at, whatever is present at the heart of your dreams.

446. No one can truly possess a work of art, any more than they can possess a tree or a blade of grass. Art is not our servant any more than love, truth and beauty are our possessions.

447. At night the creatures pass through a country that is not ours, more lightly and more gently than we ever could.

448. After an age of sensations there always follows an age of ideas.

449. The object of history is to place oneself in the present.

450. To love forever it is only necessary never to stop loving.

451. You can grasp a thing by its content, but a process only by its outputs. So the brain is a thing, the mind is a process; a book is a thing, a poem or novel is a process. No amount of grasping the thing yields you the process, which is only achieved in its execution. That is why the world is determined but not pre-determined, being a process of all it contains. If the process ends time ceases, since time is simply a measure of change.

452. What was once religion is now only a product of fantasy.

453. To feel the strangeness of one's place in space and time is to experience the essence of belonging and not-belonging.

454. Some desire to do, some to be, some to think, some to possess, some to love, some to dream. I desired to know.

455. Very few leaders have even the slightest sense of direction.

456. To trust you, to believe in you? I need nothing to achieve that except my own desire to grant you those gifts: that is the whole sorry tale of religion.

457. Art has the power to intensify, but not embody, reality.

458. Values are not things, not directives, not givens. Values are always a choice. Until we choose, no value exists.

459. The essence of ethics is not the choice between right and wrong, but the choice between creation and destruction. From creativity other choices flow, without which creation is not possible, not, that is, in the fullest human sense. All that we call evil is a form of violence, to mind or body or both. All that we call the good is an attempt to achieve delight without violence, out of which flows peace, freedom, love, truth and beauty.

460. The universe beyond the human is empty: you will find no love there. To find it you must look in your own heart.

461. To love is far simpler than to be loved.

462. The hardest task each of us has to perform before we die is to reconcile ourselves to the universe.

463. There are places that only continue to exist inside us. Those are the ones we must never try to return to physically.

464. No one is imprisoned in themselves. The life we missed is what we did not need in order to be ourselves.

465. To win a life you must often deny a death.

466. Strength of mind is what we need, to maintain what we create against the endlessly corrosive powers of the world.

467. The intentionless always sets us free: such that nothing has a prior claim on us, such that there is no ultimate authority over us. We escape negativity by becoming creators from within. That is what the young should be taught: to face the intentionless outer by means of the purposeful inner. That is the challenge which neither faith nor the universe can resolve for us. Only the individual mind can create itself, only the heart can satisfy the heart.

468. The mind is infinite in its potential. It is our fears and preconceptions that limit us.

469. History has a way of defying prophecy.

470. The smallest fragment of non-human nature is wilderness, because the wilderness is everything beyond the human.

471. There is no need to save the planet, the planet will save itself. The problem is how to save humanity.

472. The species learns more slowly than the individual, so individuals may easily be ahead of their time.

473. A culture is only truly civilised if its fundamental values are peace, freedom, love, truth and beauty. Those in power are generally wary of freedom and truth; while social peace, love and beauty depend on the collective aspirations of individuals. Thus there are very few places and moments in history which we can call truly civilised. The individual mind, on the contrary, can embrace all the values simultaneously. Thus individuals are often more civilised than their times.

474. There are many ambiguous values, for example, tolerance, liberty, intervention. It depends what you tolerate, what you feel free to do, how and why you intervene. Toleration of violence, freedom to harm others, intervention without right, these are not virtues.

475. Mind imposes meaning on the senses: the senses impose externality on the mind.

476. There is no reality beyond the universe because there is no universe beyond the reality.

477. Truth always waits on the instant of realisation.

478. We cannot love what we cannot recognise.

479. Progress towards is always progress away from.

480. Technology is not the human purpose. Every new technology simply drags the ancient human along behind it.

481. Morally unacceptable actions are taken to win wars. Winning does not make them morally acceptable, only expedient. Ends do not justify means. Make sure your wars are worth the winning.

482. At the root of physics is the mystery of change. The universe continuously reconfigures, and time arises as a measure of that reconfiguration. Everything is process, in itself valueless.

483. Many a subtle evil seems harmless, even makes us smile. The harm only appears much later, as a result of a long slow corrosion.

484. The greatest art seems to partake of the unconscious flow of natural process: the works of Leonardo Da Vinci, or Hokusai, or Mozart.

485. Human progress was, and is always, driven by curiosity, cunning and co-operation.

486. In the end curiosity may well kill the cat.

487. The human past and future can only ever exist in the present.

488. We all long for the love that exists for no other reason than itself.

489. Science, in particular, physics consists of concepts sufficient to measure and manipulate the world, and the mathematics adequate for expressing the relationships between our measurements. As for the reality behind the concepts, or should we say metaphors, our desire to express that is part of our longing not merely to live the dream but to penetrate it.

490. Nature is always not ourselves, even though we are included within Nature. Our own physical being is as hidden from our conscious mind as the rest of the universe. There is a barrier in consciousness we cannot go beyond. That is quite different to saying that the processes of mind are hidden from objective study: on the contrary.

491. If you are not troubled by thoughts of irreality, you have not understood the ontological problem.

492. It seems most people wish to be part of the crowd, to be accepted and, by identifying, achieve identity. Then there are the few who would rather be alone in themselves, hoping to be strong enough to think all things, and believe only what they have proven in their own spirits.

493. Those you love matter, the rest is ethics.

494. There are moments which do not cease to exist for us, simply by ceasing to exist in themselves. We survive as their echoes.

495. All beauty exudes a sad perfume, because beauty always hovers on the brink of dissolution.

496. True imagination is the exercise of recognition and re-configuration, not the art of novelty and fantasy.

497. Modernity has fragmented the world.

498. To the aesthetically inclined every instance of ugliness is sadly an affront that no amount of moral empathy can overcome.

499. The impossible goal of every individual is to escape the world others have created.

500. For the mind to truly exist it has first to dispense with space and time.

501. Never accept the given reality in your innermost spirit.

502. The value of a life does not necessarily lie in consistency.

503. I dream of making memory a joy and not a penance.

504. Insanity is the order of a disordered brain.

505. Our true life is always the life of our passions.

506. What we hate as well as what we love makes us live.

507. Mind may be merely a process of flesh, but it is mind that drags the body along.

508. Our pain is indeed always our own, but where is the satisfaction in that?

509. Every god is a monstrous inhuman echo of the human.

510. Our curiosity about others is a curiosity about ourselves.

511. Words have lives of their own, of which poets are the victims.

512. What we hide behind tells the deepest truth about us.

513. The greatest purposes are always self-created.

514. Plato's error was in not investigating process, and yet the Socratic dialogues purport to be processes of understanding. Buddha understood that the mind classifies but that all classification is also a misrepresentation of the ongoing process.

515. To learn, to heal, and to create are the best of fates.

516. The voice of the universe is expressed in the language of silence.

517. The world contaminates but the mind is always free.

518. Humanity begins and ends in the individual.