

21 QUOTATIONS



Peter DeVries

(1910-1993)

Peter DeVries was a satirical novelist, poet, essayist, editor and wit. A prolific and versatile writer, he edited *Poetry* magazine from 1938 to 1944, then he moved to the staff of the *New Yorker* where he worked for over 40 years. Of his 23 novels, 4 were adapted in movies and 2 in Broadway plays, yet all his novels went out of print before he died.

ORDER OF TOPICS: personality, education, life, vice, virtue, marriage, family, writing, style, satire and humor, God:

PERSONALITY

Everybody hates me because I'm so universally liked.

EDUCATION

We all learn by experience, but some of us have to go to summer school.

LIFE

Life is a zoo in a jungle.

Pain is the question mark turned like a fishhook in the human heart.

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

VICE

Gluttony is an emotional escape, a sign something is eating us.

Celibacy is the worst form of self-abuse.

VIRTUE

We are not primarily put on this earth to see through one another, but to see one another through.

MARRIAGE

The bonds of matrimony are like other bonds—they mature slowly.

The difficulty with marriage is that we fall in love with a personality, but we must live with a character.

The value of marriage is not that adults produce children but that children produce adults.

FAMILY

A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after.

There are times when parenthood seems nothing more than feeding the hand that bites you.

When I can no longer bear to think of the victims of broken homes, I begin to think of the victims of intact ones.

WRITING

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.

I write when I'm inspired, and I see to it that I'm inspired at nine o'clock every morning.

Confession is good for the soul only in the sense that a tweed coat is good for dandruff—it is a palliative rather than a remedy.

STYLE

The tuba is certainly the most intestinal of instruments, the very lower bowel of music.

SATIRE AND HUMOR

The satirist shoots to kill while the humorist brings his prey back alive and eventually releases him again for another chance.

GOD

The universe is like a safe to which there is a combination. But the combination is locked inside the safe.

It is the final proof of God's omnipotence that he need not exist in order to save us.

