

What I Talk About When I Talk About Running

Haruki Murakami – 2009

A gentleman shouldn't go on and on about what he does to stay fit. v

Somerset Maugham once wrote that in each shave lies a philosophy. vi

The sounds of my footsteps, my breathing, and my heartbeats, all blended together in a unique polyrhythm. 13

I just run. I run in a void. Or maybe I should put it the other way: I run in order to *acquire* a void. 17

I felt like I'd reached the top of some steep staircase and come out to a fairly open place and was confident that because I'd reached it safely, I could handle any future problems that might crop and I'd survive. 26

The most important thing we ever learn at school is the fact that the most important things can't be learned at school. 45

Tokyo poster: Muscles are hard to get and easy to lose. Fat is easy to get and hard to lose. 50

There are three reasons I failed. Not enough training. Not enough training. And not enough training. 54

It's pretty thin, the wall separating healthy confidence and unhealthy pride. 54

At around twenty-three miles I start to hate everything. 64

Nothing in the real world is as beautiful as the illusions of a person about to lose consciousness. 66

As I've grown older, I've naturally come to terms with this. You open the fridge and can make a nice – actually even a pretty smart – meal with the leftovers. All that's left is an apple, an onion, cheese, and eggs, but you don't complain. You make do with what you have. As you age you learn even to be happy with what you have. That's one of the few good points of growing older. 86

In most cases learning something essential in life requires physical pain. 140

But in real life things don't go so smoothly. At certain points in our lives, when we really need a clear-cut solution, the person who knocks at our door is, more likely than not, a messenger bearing bad news. It isn't always the case, but from experience I'd say the gloomy reports far outnumber the others. The messenger touches his hand to his cap and look apologetic, but that does nothing to improve the contents of the message. It isn't the messenger's fault. No good to blame him, no good to grab him by the collar and shake him. The messenger is just conscientiously doing the job his boss assigned him. And this boss? That would be none other than our old friend Reality. 145