Education is art. It creates conversation, challenges perception, and can never be recreated with the same integrity as an original form. As artists, teachers work with different mediums and materials, different backgrounds, experiences, and interests that all contribute to a unique and genuine body of knowledge and spirit. Teachers must be willing to take risks, start over, give up, but always, ALWAYS return with a new vision. Teachers must maintain the passion that fuels an artist to create something whole and vulnerable and real, while also accepting that it may never be completed or right.

Like art, education cannot be objectively evaluated, but its role in political decision making necessitates its assessment. Content standards and standardized testing are used to make a personal experience into a common one. They take education, which at its heart is a deeply individual endeavor, and make it a practice in conformity. Teachers' resistance to government decisions regarding public education is often in defense of its integrity.

The individual nature at the heart of education applies both to students and teachers. Teachers bring their own interests and skills into the classroom. Varying styles of pedagogy and focuses in content knowledge can be equated to different types of brush strokes. Each artist creates a different type of artwork. Teaching is as personal as art is. We bring our vulnerabilities into the classroom and invite our students to pick away at them. We make our mistakes public. But a good teacher knows that in reviewing these mistakes, we are reviewing ourselves. We are every part of the classroom and we must be committed to constant reflection.

Education as art is always changing; it's never stagnant or stale. When we grow tired of revising ourselves, settling for reproductions instead of original art, we've lost the heart of teaching. We've lost the passion for creation and the transparency of the artist. I can't change the implications of education on society. I can't revive the individual wonder once associated with learning or the value of intellect for the purposes of art. But I can teach with passion and wonder. I can reflect and I can revise and I can change. I can be vulnerable. I can offer my heart.