‘…the world’s most complicated simpleton.’ (p5)

'The rarity of this little book seemed to give off a heat I could feel through the thick brown wrapping paper..' (p3-4)

'..a precarious form of transport when the wind, rather than the pilot set the course.' (p5)

‘..a beautiful woman loved and wanted to be loved by a large, clumsy, balding fellow who could hardly believe his luck.’ (p7)

'...before I let it reach us, let me freeze the frame - there's a security in stillness - to describe our circle.' (p12)

‘..less than one adrenally incensed heartbeat later, another variable was added to the equation: someone let go...’ (p14)

‘Suddenly the sensible choice was to look out for yourself. The child was not my child, and I was not going to die for it. The moment I glimpsed a body fall away – but whose? – and I felt the balloon lurch upwards, the matter was settled; altruism had no place. Being good made no sense.’ (p15)

'...there was a chance that a freak physical law, a furious thermal, some phenomenon no more astonishing than the one we were witnessing would intervene and bear him up.' (p16)

‘We watched him drop. You could see the acceleration. No forgiveness, no special dispensation for flesh, or bravery, or kindness. Only ruthless gravity…I’ve never seen such a terrible thing as a man falling.’ (p16)

'Best to slow down...What occurred simultaneously or in quick succession, what was said, how we moved or failed to move, what I thought - these elements need to be separated out...so much branching and subdivision began in those early moments, such pathways of love and hatred blazed from this starting position...’ (p17)

‘The best description of a reality does not need to mimic its velocity...Vertigious theories of chaos and turbulence are predicted upon the supremacy of initial conditions which need painstaking depiction.' (P17)

'A beginning is an artifice, and what recommends one over another is how much sense it makes of what follows. (P17- 18)

'Like a self in a dream I was both first and third persons. I acted, and saw myself act. I had my thoughts, and I saw them drift across a screen. As in a dream, my emotional responses were non-existent or inappropriate.' (P19)

'I said to Parry, 'You'll come.' I meant it as a suggestion, but it came out as a request, something I needed from him. He looked at me, unable to speak. Everything, every gesture, every word I spoke was being stored away, gathered and piled, fuel for the long winter of his obsession.' (P21)

‘What we could do,’ he said with a seriousness which warned against mockery, ‘is to pray together?’ Before I could object, which for the moment was impossible because I was speechless, Parry added…At times like this, you know, it really does help.’…I was embarrassed, and my first thought was not to offend a true believer. But I got a grip on myself. He wasn’t concerned about offending me.’ (p25)

'Because, my friend, no one's listening. There's no one up there.' (P26)

'I love you more now I've seen you go completely mad,' she said. 'The rationalist cracks at last!' (P35)

'It may have been exhaustion, or perhaps my concealment was protective of her, but I know I made my first serious mistake when I turned on my side and said to her, 'It was nothing. Wrong number. Go to sleep.' (P37)