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Fires and time

Helprin enjoys fires, and likes building them in the fireplace of his grand study. "Fires take a lot of labor," he says. "As a method of heating, it is inefficient. But it's worth it. Fire engages the senses. The light is richer than artificial light, and heating systems don't crackle or give off the scent of wood smoke.

"Tending a fire enforces a sense of patience and tranquility," he continues. "In that way it is like sailing a boat. You're engaged by it and trapped by it; fire is captivating. Your time is captured so you have enforced idleness. Like music, it somehow coordinates the rhythms in your brain, or in your soul. It clears the air. Enforced idleness is the way I want to live. I want to be a prisoner of things that make me stop still."

Source: <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2005/05/literary-warrior.html#Helprin#fire#time#leisure>

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