

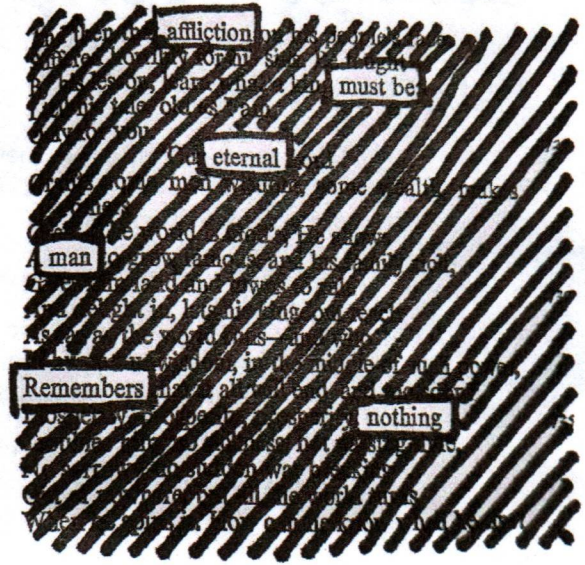
Black-out Poetry

Choose your source text.

1

Find some disposable text to begin with. You may want to start with a favorite page from an old book or an article from a magazine or newspaper.

Pages from fiction novels may have more descriptive language to choose from than an article about politics. Try making poems with different types of source text and compare results.



What will you say?

2

A prompt can be as simple as a single word that you find significant. You can come up with one of your own or use one provided to you. Look to current events or memories for inspiration!

Your source material may also give you an idea about what you want the **theme** of your poem to be. Do the words on the page stir you in agreement or protest?

How will you say it? Will you choose to tell a story (**narrative**)? Or will you choose to describe an external place (**descriptive**) or an emotion, feeling or idea (**lyric**)?

You're ready to **Black it out.**

3

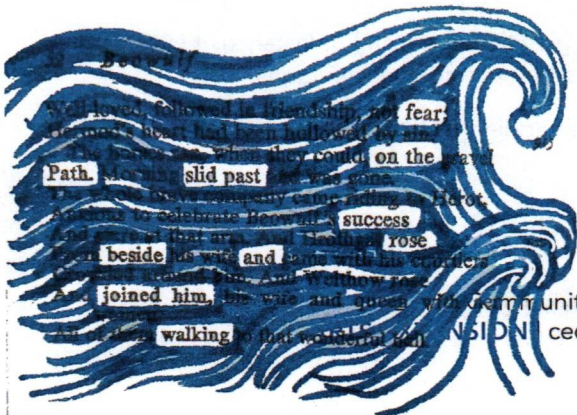
First, scan the page in front of you without actually reading the page. Find and lightly circle 4 descriptive words that stick out to you with pencil, especially words that relate to your prompt.

Now go back and find additional words that will help you tell your story or describe your feelings or environment and circle those too. Keep working until you are happy with it.

Remember that the words you choose will stay in place on the page. Poems are usually read from top to the bottom, but you can create different reading directions by using arrows.

Once you have **composed** your poem, go back over your light circles with a dark marker. Does the "shape" of your poem or its theme make you think of shapes or designs you can use to cover the remaining text and margins of the page?

Black out all remaining text on the page. Inject your own imagination in this process by marking out text in a creative way!



very large state, and before airplanes and good roads, it seemed even larger. "Here I am once more in my own Farm Home, where my weary head rests upon my own home pillows," she wrote Lucy Stone after one exhausting journey. "I had been gone Four Months, scarcely sleeping the second night under the same roof." Incredibly, she repeated the tour in 1894 at the age of seventy-four. This time she hit all sixty counties in just three months.

As the movement went national, so did Susan B. Anthony, initiating a series of journeys across the Midwest and West that continued until she was eighty-five. The pace would crack even the hardest of us today. One eight-week swing in 1871 took her through more than a dozen cities in Illinois (Peoria, Earlville, Bloomington, Lincoln, to name a few), sixteen cities in Michigan (Adrian, Jackson, Albion, Kalamazoo, Battle Creek, Lansing) and Ohio (Toledo, Ravenna, Dayton). Traveling to the Northwest in 1871, she estimated that she had logged two thousand miles and delivered sixty speeches. During the 1896 California campaign, she spent eight months navigating the state, speaking up to three times a day in more than thirty different cities—all this at a time of generally slow, dirty conveyances and often worse accommodations. The train trip to Washington from New York (which she took at least once a year) took ten hours in 1873. The eighty-four-mile stagecoach ride from Del Norte to Lake City in Colorado bumped over

mountains and through their various passes, crossing the divide between the waters that flow into the Atlantic and Pacific, at its highest point over 11,000 feet. And the ride down that mountain pass, "Slum Gullion" they call it, was the most fearful rough and tumble I ever experienced . . . even here, in this deep ravine, just wide enough for the Gunnison river and one street on its bank, the height is still 8,500 feet. All that fearfully long, but beautiful, frosty night, the moon shone brightly and on scenery most magnificent. At midnight I alighted at Wagon Wheel Gap, and with tin cup in hand trudged through the sand to the Rio Grande bank, bound to drink fresh from the pure, cold waters from the snow peaks above.

She slogged through the rain and spoke through the storms; she had her pocket picked and slept on straw-filled mattresses; and she learned as much as she taught. Crossing the drought-stricken prairies of South Dakota in an open wagon at the age of seventy, she was deeply affected to hear from her hostesses that the "hardest part of the life for women was "To sit in our little adobe or sod houses at night and listen to the wolves howl over the