

BLACKOUT POETRY INSTRUCTIONS

MATERIALS

- Copies of the book page on the back of this handout
- Pencils
- Black markers, sharpies, or pens

STEP 1

Skim the book page on the back of this handout. Pick some words that catch your eye and stand out to you as meaningful or interesting. Draw a clear box around each of these words in pencil.

STEP 2

Look again for any other words you might need. Search for smaller words to connect the words you already boxed. In pencil, draw a box around any other words you want in your poem.

STEP 3

With sharpie or marker, color over all of the words except the ones you put in boxes. Your new poem should now stand out against a black background.

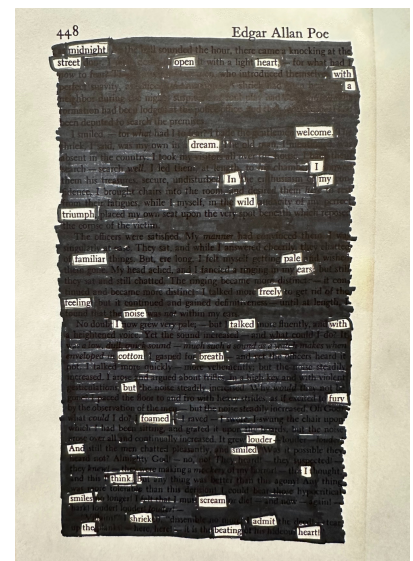
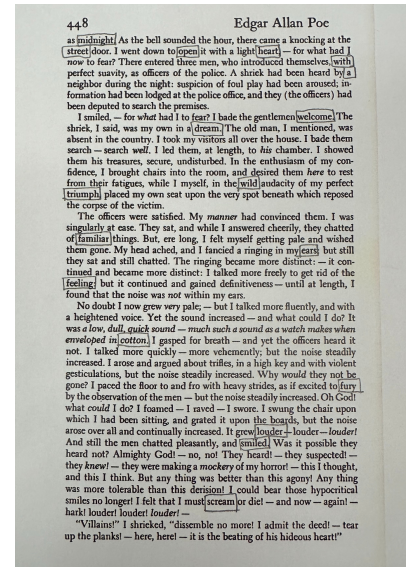
STEP 4

Read and share your original Blackout Poems!

FUN ALTERNATIVES

Try it again using pages torn out of a discarded book, magazine, or newspaper!

Add creative doodles, shapes, or textures before blacking out the rest of the words (see example).



The practical thing was to find rooms in the city but it was a warm season and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog, at least I had him for a few days until he ran away, and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

“How do you get to West Egg Village?” he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighborhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees—just as things grow in fast movies—I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

There was so much to read for one thing and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Mæcenās knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college—one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the “Yale News”—and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the “well-rounded” man. This isn’t just an epigram—life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York and where there are, among other natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemi-