

## How to create blackout poetry

Blackout poems can be created using the pages of old books or even articles cut from yesterday's newspaper. Using the pages of an existing text, blackout poets isolate then piece together single words or short phrases from these texts to create lyrical masterpieces. Blackout poems, as I'm sure you can imagine, run the gamut from absurd to sublime because all of the words are already there on the page, but the randomness is all part of the fun! Some pages of text, admittedly, work better than others.

Creating a blackout poem involves steps that are all about deconstruction then reconstruction.

**Step 1:** Scan the page first before reading it completely. Keep an eye out for an anchor word as you scan. An anchor word is one word on the page that stands out to you because it is packed and loaded with meaning and significance. Starting with an anchor word is important because it helps you to imagine possible themes and topics for your poem.

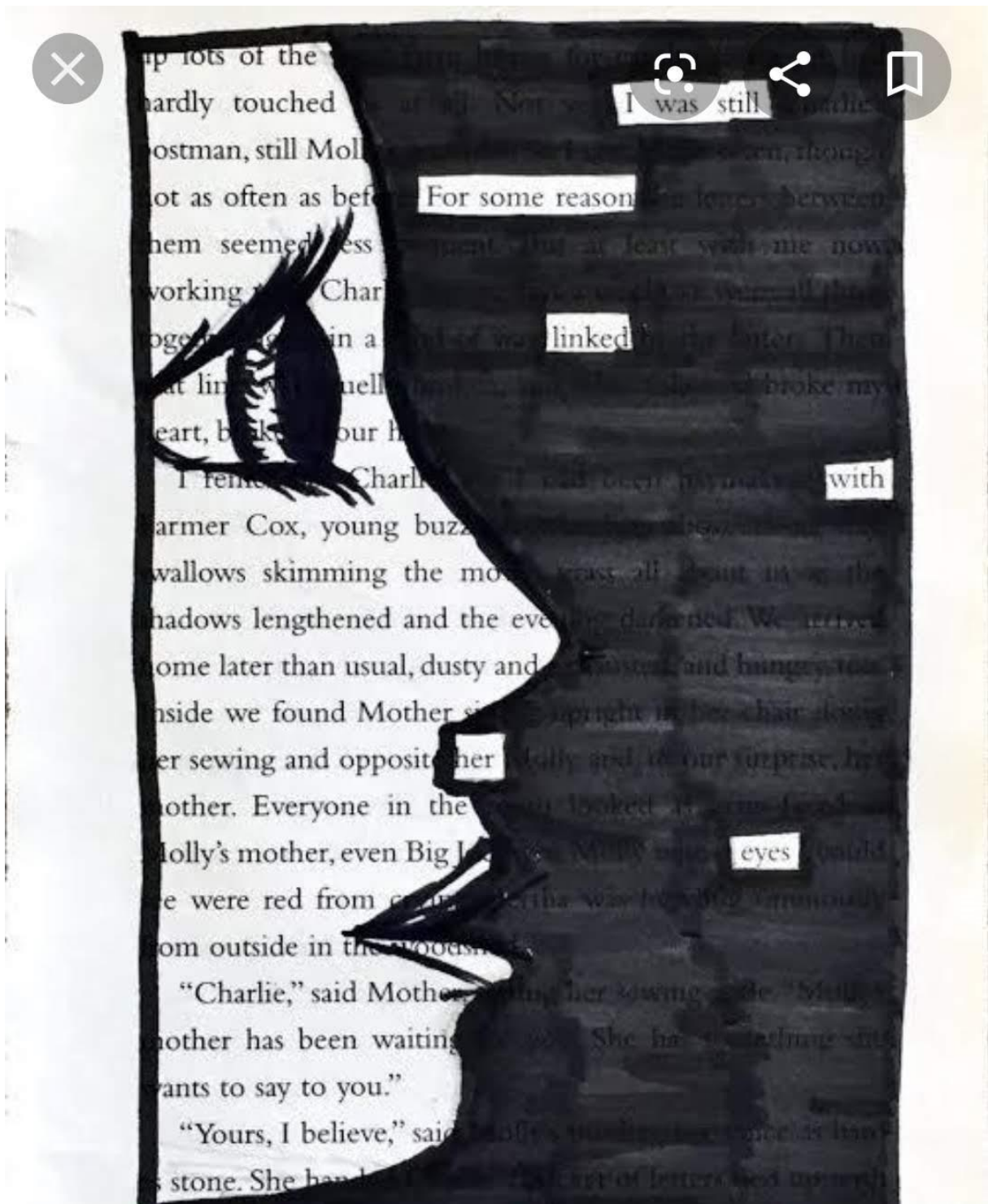
**Step 2:** Now read the page of text in its entirety. Use a pencil to lightly circle any words that connect to the anchor word and resonate with you. Resonant words might be expressive or evocative, but for whatever reason, these are the words on the page that stick with you. Avoid circling more than three words in a row.

**Step 3:** List all of the circled words on a separate piece of paper. List the words in the order that they appear on the page of text from top to bottom, left to right. The words you use for the final poem will remain in this order so it doesn't confuse the reader.

**Step 4:** Select words, without changing their order on the list, and piece them together to create the lines of a poem. You can eliminate parts of words, especially any endings, if it helps to keep the meaning of the poem clear. Try different possibilities for your poem before selecting the lines for your final poem. If you are stuck during this step, return back to the original page of text. The right word you are searching for could be there waiting for you.

**Step 5:** Return to the page of text and circle only the words you selected for the final poem. Remember to also erase the circles around any words you will not be using.

**Step 6:** Add an illustration or design to the page of text that connects to your poem. Be very careful not to draw over the circled words you selected for your final poem!





in a low voice as if she meant to be heard by no one else, though they were seated on different sides of the room; "but, however, I can't help wishing they had not travelled quite so fast, nor made such a long journey of it, for they came all round by London upon a course of some business, for you know (nodding significantly and pointing to her daughter) it was wrong in her situation. I wanted her to stay at home and rest this morning, but she would come with us; she begged so much to see you all!"

Mrs. Palmer laughed, and said it would not do her any harm.

"She expects to be confined in February," continued Mrs. Jennings.

Lady Middleton could no longer endure such a conversation, and therefore exerted herself to ask Mr. Palmer if there was any news in the paper.

"No, none at all," he replied, and read on.

"Here comes Mr. Anne," said Sir John. "Now, Palmer, you shall see a monstrous pretty girl."

He immediately went to the passage, opened the front door, and ushered her in himself. Mrs. Jennings asked her, as soon as she appeared, if she had not been to Allenhurst; and Mrs. Palmer laughed so heartily at the question, as to show she understood it. Mr. Palmer looked up on her entering the room, stared at her some minutes, and then returned to his newspaper. Mrs. Palmer's eye was now caught by the drawings which hung round the room. She got up to examine them.

"Oh! dear, how beautiful these are! Well! how delightful! Do but look, mama, how sweet! I declare they are quite charming; I could look at them for ever!" And then sitting down again, she very soon forgot that there were any such things in the room.

When Lady Middleton rose to go away, Mr. Palmer rose also, laid down the newspaper, stretched himself, and looked at them all round.

"My love, have you been asleep?" said his wife, laughing.

He made her no answer, and only observed, after again examining the room, that it was very low pitched, and that the ceiling was crooked. He then bowed and departed with the rest.

Sir John had been very urgent with them all to spend the next

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"Why should you imagine, Elinor, that we did not go there, or that we did not see the house? Is not it what you have often wished to do yourself?"

"Yes, Marianne, but I would not go while Mrs. Smith were there, and with no other companion than Mr. Willoughby."

"Mr. Willoughby however is the only person who can have a right to shew that house; and as we were in the country it was impossible to have any other companion. It was a pleasanter morning in my life."

"I am afraid," replied Elinor, "that employment does not always evince the

"On the contrary, not," said Elinor; "for if there had been any real impropriety in what I did, I should have been sensible of it at the time, for we always know when we are acting wrong, and with such a conviction I could have had no pleasure."

"But, my dear Marianne, as it has already exposed you to some very impertinent remarks, do you not now begin to doubt the discretion of your own conduct?"

"If the impertinent remarks of Mrs. Jennings are to be the proof of impropriety in conduct, we are all offending every moment of all our lives. I value not her censure any more than I should do her commendation. I am not sensible of having done anything wrong in walking over Mrs. Smith's grounds, or in entering her house. They will one day be Mr. Willoughby's, and

if they were one day to be your own, Marianne, you would not be justified in what you have done."

She said this with a smile; but it was even visibly gratifying to her; and after a ten minutes' interval of earnest thought, she came to her sister again, and said with great good humour; "Perhaps, Elinor, it was rather ill-judged in me to go to Allenham; but Mr. Willoughby wanted particularly to shew me the place; and it is a charming house I assure you.— There is one remarkably pretty sitting room up stairs; of a nice comfortable size for constant use, and with modern furniture it would be delightful. It is a corner room and has windows on two sides. On one side you look across the bowling-green, behind the

Kathryn/ptctw



the same time, had been admitted to the bar, and had  
pursued a successful career as a writer for the newspapers,  
and finally had been made a justice of the New  
England Court.

From Jones, who shortly after Ichabod's dis-  
appearance led the blooming Katrina in triumph to  
the altar, was seen to look very knowing whenever  
the story of Ichabod was told. He always burst into  
a hearty laugh at the mention of the pumpkin, which  
led some to suspect that he knew more about the  
matter than he chose to tell.

The old country sages, however, gave the best  
judges of these matters, maintain to this day that  
Ichabod was spirited away by supernatural means;  
and the old wives' stories often told about the neigh-  
borhood during the winter evening fire.

The bridge became more than ever an object of  
superstition and fear, and this may be the reason why  
the road has been changed in forty years, so as to ap-  
proach the church by the border of the mill pond. The  
schoolhouse, being deserted, soon fell to decay, and  
was reported to be haunted by the ghost of the mis-  
treated schoolmaster; and the parson, wandering  
homeward of a still summer evening, has often fan-  
cied hearing Ichabod's voice at a distance, chanting a  
melancholy hymn tune in the still quiet of Sleepy  
Hollow.