Found Poem

What is a Found Poem?

A found poem is created by reading through a prose piece (book, magazine, etc.) and choosing only the most important words to add to the finished piece – a 'found' poem. Then, the rest of the prose piece is covered – by coloring, blacking out, or otherwise.

Directions:

Step 1: Find a book or magazine and scan the page. Keep an eye out for an **anchor word**, or a word that stands out to you because it is packed and loaded with meaning and significance. Starting with the anchor word is important because it helps you to choose a possible theme and topic for your poem.

Step 2: Now read the page of text in its entirety. Take a piture of it and use a pencil to **lightly circle** any words that connect to the anchor word and resonate or 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.

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.
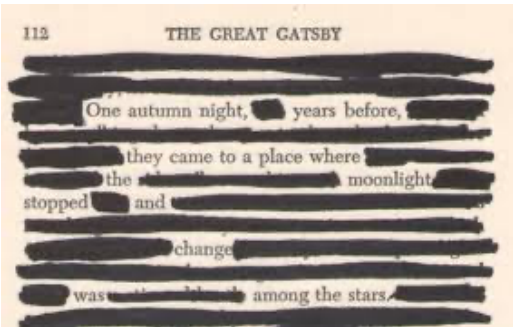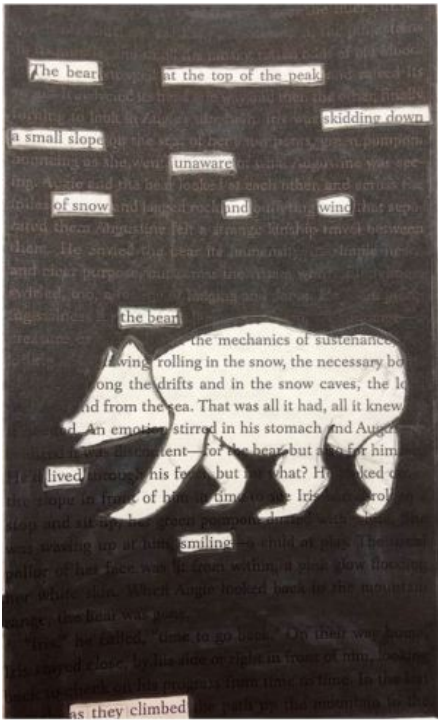
Step 6: You have two options now!
Option 1: Black out everything but your poem, OR
Option 2: Add an illustration or design to the page of text that connects to your poem, then color your design or leave it as is.

Remember! Be very careful not to draw over the circled words you selected for your final poem!

Examples:

Maybe it's a she-dog.

"Here, girl!" I say. Dog still don't come.

I decide to wait the dog out, but after three or four minutes on the log, it gets boring and I start off again. So does the beagle.

Don't know where you'd end up if you followed the river all the way. Heard somebody say it curves about, comes back on itself, but if it didn't and I got home after dark, I'd get a good whopping. So I always go as far as the ford, where the river spills across the path, and then I head back.

When I turn around and the dog sees me coming, he goes off into the woods. I figure that's the last I'll see of the beagle, and I get halfway down the road again before I look back. There he is. I stop. He stops. I go. He goes.

And then, hardly thinking on it, I whistle.

It's like pressing a magic button. The beagle comes barreling toward me, legs going lickety-split, long ears flopping, tail sticking up like a flagpole. This time, when I put out my hand, he licks all my fingers and jumps up against my leg, making little yelps in his throat. He can't get enough of me, like I'd been saying no all along and now I'd said yes, he could come. It's a he-dog, like I'd thought.

"Hey, boy! You're really somethin' now, ain't you?" I'm laughing as the beagle makes circles around me. I squat down and the dog licks my face, my neck. Where'd he learn to come if you whistled, to hang back if you didn't?

I'm so busy watching the dog I don't even notice it's started to rain. Don't bother me. Don't bother the dog, neither. I'm looking for the place I first saw him. Does he live here? I wonder. Or the house on up the road? Each place we pass I figure he'll stop—somebody come out and whistle, maybe. But nobody comes out and the dog don't stop. Keeps coming even after we get to the old Shiloh schoolhouse. Even starts across the bridge, tail going like a propeller.