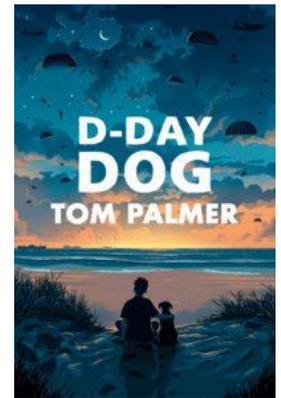


# D-Day Dog by Tom Palmer

## Black Out Poem Challenge

Thursday 6th June 2019 is the 75th Anniversary of D-Day.

Mark this significant anniversary using “D-Day Dog” by Tom Palmer in a Black Out Poem challenge.

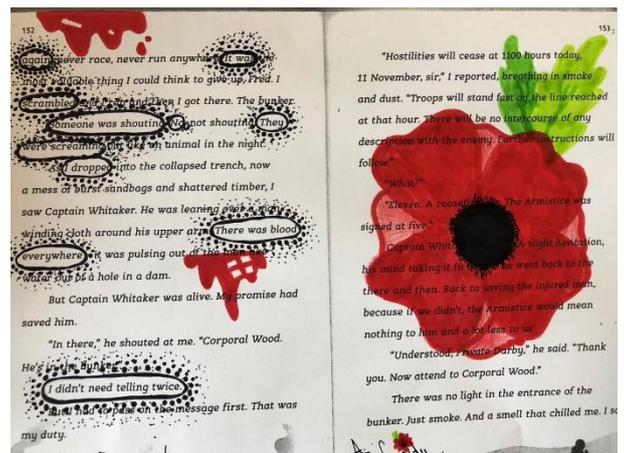


## 1 Introduction:

Poets have developed ideas about rearranging words since the 1920's in the Dadaist and Surrealist movements. The poet Tristan Tzara set off a riot at a surrealist rally when he proposed to create new poems by pulling words randomly out of a hat. The Beat writers and poets of the 1950's (e.g. William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin) pushed this idea further by using scissors to cut up existing texts, like newspaper articles. In 2010, author, illustrator and web-designer Austin Kleon invented Blackout poetry itself, overcoming his severe case of writer's block. Blackout poetry uses a technique of crossing out words to create a different meaning or highlight a mood in the words left behind. Kleon recommends finding one or two "anchor words" -- or a combination of phrases -- in the text that you are using. This will then reveal a message hidden inside the original text which you have unlocked.

## 2 How to do it?

- You can choose to read the whole text beforehand or just jump right in. Sometimes it is best not to read it too closely. Try not to be too influenced by the original text and focus on create your own unique effect
- Think what mood you are trying to create beforehand and develop this as you go along
- Use a permanent marker to remove or eliminate unnecessary or irrelevant words and leave behind words that for whatever reason, really strike you
- Choose between creating a punchy poem made of impactful big words like nouns, verbs, and adjectives or a more narrative style adding in little words like "is," "of," and "the" to move the story along more coherently.
- You can completely eliminate all the white paper and just leave your words or draw bubbles around words or phrase you want to particularly highlight
- You might like to draw lines to lead readers from one phrase to another, or focus the eye on a particularly striking image
- You can decorate the sheet with lettering, pictures and doodles to further develop your mood
- The rules are only as limited as your poetic imagination, there are no right or wrong answers here.



3 Selected text from “D-Day Dog” by Tom Palmer to experiment with or choose your own.

4 Finished examples from pupils at Greenbank School using “Armistice Runner”.

5 D-Day Anniversary Black Out Poem Challenge commemorative certificate



wasn't interested in what the driver was saying.

"What do you mean you don't care? You don't care about learning about the war?"

"It's stupid. That's all."

"What's stupid?" the driver asked.

"War," Jack answered.

"Is it?"

"Yes."

"Every war? Every soldier?"

"Yes."

"Have you always been a pacifist?"

"A what?"

"Pacifist. Someone who is against war."

"No."

"So, what brought it on?"

Jack turned to the driver. "I found stuff out."

"What stuff?"

"Stuff about war. D-Day. And Syria. It's stupid."

"Go on."

Jack paused. He thought about Corteil throwing Glenn out of the plane and gritted his teeth, feeling angry again. Why did people want to make him stop thinking that war was stupid? Why were they always trying to make him feel like he was wrong?

"They used animals," Jack snapped. "Dogs. Horses. Even pigeons. People can choose to go and fight in a war. But dogs don't get to choose if they're thrown out of planes by people, do they?"

"But the animals helped," the driver insisted. "Without them we might not have won the war."

"The animals died. Most of them."

"So did the men."

"I don't care about the men," Jack said. "They could choose to go. But Glenn didn't. He didn't want to jump. He was cowering under a bench. Emile Corteil threw him out of the plane anyway. That's not fair."



what you eat, what you wear, what you use to wash. Everything and anything—”

“Good. Tell me what happened, Jack,” the driver said.

“And Glenn was supposed to sniff out mines too – bombs buried underground, which would go off if you trod on them.”

“Right.”

“The Allies were dropping bombs on the beaches before dawn,” Jack said, “making it harder for the Germans to defend them. And fighter planes were searching the area around the beaches for enemy troops and may have mistaken Corteil’s group for Germans. Glenn heard them first. He stood still, so Corteil knew he had heard something. Corteil put his arm up and the men behind him squatted, expecting to be shot at. Then they heard the planes coming. The men tried to scatter off the

track, because they knew what was coming, but they couldn’t escape because the hedgerows were too thick.”

Jack stopped and watched the driver swallow, eyes fixed on the road as he drove.

“And,” Jack took a deep breath, “half of the men were killed by friendly fire. Glenn and Corteil died instantly.”

“I see,” the driver said, dropping down a gear as he prepared to turn the bus right, into a village called Ranville.

“There’s one more thing,” Jack sniffed.

“Tell me.”

“They found Corteil with his hand still gripping Glenn’s lead. They were still together even after they were killed ...”

The coach had stopped.

“Where are we?” Jack coughed.

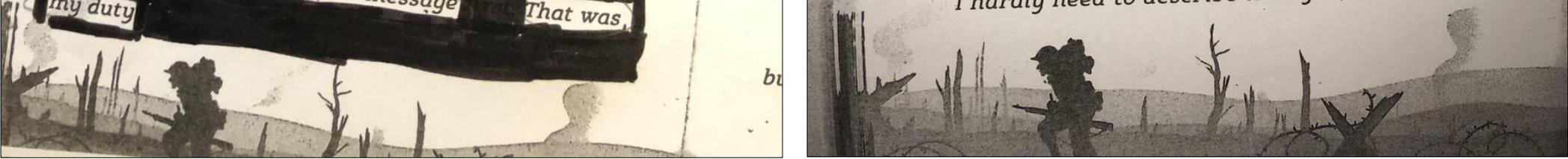
never never anywhere.  
 think to give up, I  
 scrambled I ran I got there. bunker.  
 No  
 screaming like an animal  
 dropped in the collapsed trench,  
 saw a man, I  
 everywhere There was blood  
 save him.  
 there,  
 in the bunker  
 But I had to pass on the message That was  
 my duty

# FOURTEEN

France, 5 August 1918

How do I describe the front line, Fred?  
 A million men lined up in a trench eight foot  
 deep, facing another million men looking back the  
 other way at them. This, over hundreds of miles  
 across Europe.  
 Craters. Collapsed trenches. Rain. Cold. Mud.  
 The stink of death. And the noise of shells coming in,  
 like a dozen trains ripping through a station every  
 few seconds.

I hardly need to describe it to you, do I?







Certificate of achievement  
awarded to

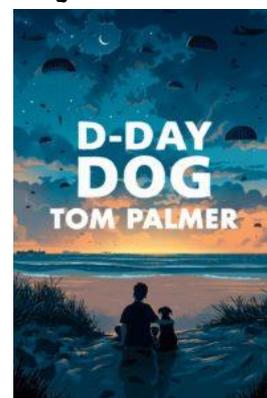
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for creating a unique  
Blackout Poem  
in commemoration of the  
75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day

Signed

*Tom Palmer*

Date

Thursday 6th June 2019



[info@tompalmer.co.uk](mailto:info@tompalmer.co.uk)

[www.tompalmer.co.uk](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk)

Barrington Stoke Books, 18 Walker Street, Edinburgh