

After the War by Tom Palmer

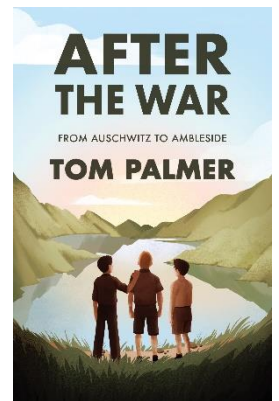
Holocaust Memorial Day Blackout Poem Challenge

Wednesday 27 January 2021 is **Holocaust Memorial Day**. Mark this with ***After the War* by Tom Palmer**.

"A moving and thought-provoking read which shares the experiences of the Windermere Children. Tom has worked carefully with survivors, including members of our much-loved survivor family, to create a book which captures many of their memories of arrival and first months in Britain. For students, 'After the War' will be a first glimpse into the importance of listening, and witnessing to, the testimonies of survivors of the Holocaust." **Louise Stafford, Director of Learning, The National Holocaust Centre and Museum**

1 Introduction:

Poets have developed ideas about rearranging words since the 1920s 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 1950s (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 Extract from *After the War* by Tom Palmer to experiment with. We've suggested a piece where Yossi remembers his childhood to celebrate the warmth of Jewish family life in Poland before the German invasion. Feel free to choose another extract. More here www.tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war/

4 Finished examples using this extract and from pupils at Greenbank School using *Armistice Runner* to show layouts and decoration ideas.

5 *After the War* Holocaust Memorial Day Blackout Poem Challenge certificate.

Yossi and his father had cycled into town to buy bread and meat, as they did once a week for the special Sabbath meal they ate together as a family every Friday night. His mother and sisters – Mina and Anna – stayed at home to prepare the dining table, laying out the tablecloth and the silver candlesticks with the candles his mother would light before sunset.

The short shopping trip was one of the highlights of Yossi's week. It was a special time with his father, when he felt like he was one of the men. Yossi's dad would speak to friends in the square, share stories and have a drink in the cafe. And he would always buy Yossi a small bar of chocolate.

But everything was different that first Friday in September 1939. As he unwrapped the paper around the chocolate, Yossi noticed that the men were standing together in larger groups than normal. No one was smiling and some were talking in fast

agitated voices. Then a truck arrived and the driver stood on its bonnet and started shouting.

As Yossi tried to make out what the man was saying, his voice and all the other arguments were silenced by a droning noise. Distant at first, until, louder and louder, it became a roar. A single aeroplane was flying low over the town, following the long curve of the river, tipping slightly so that Yossi could see a black symbol on its side.

It was the first time he had seen the German cross.

The plane made a sharp turn, its engine screaming. Yossi's father grabbed him by the arm, told him to jump onto his bicycle and they raced home.

Yossi dropped his chocolate in the road.

It all happened so quickly. One moment a normal happy life, out with his father. Then the German plane with its black cross.



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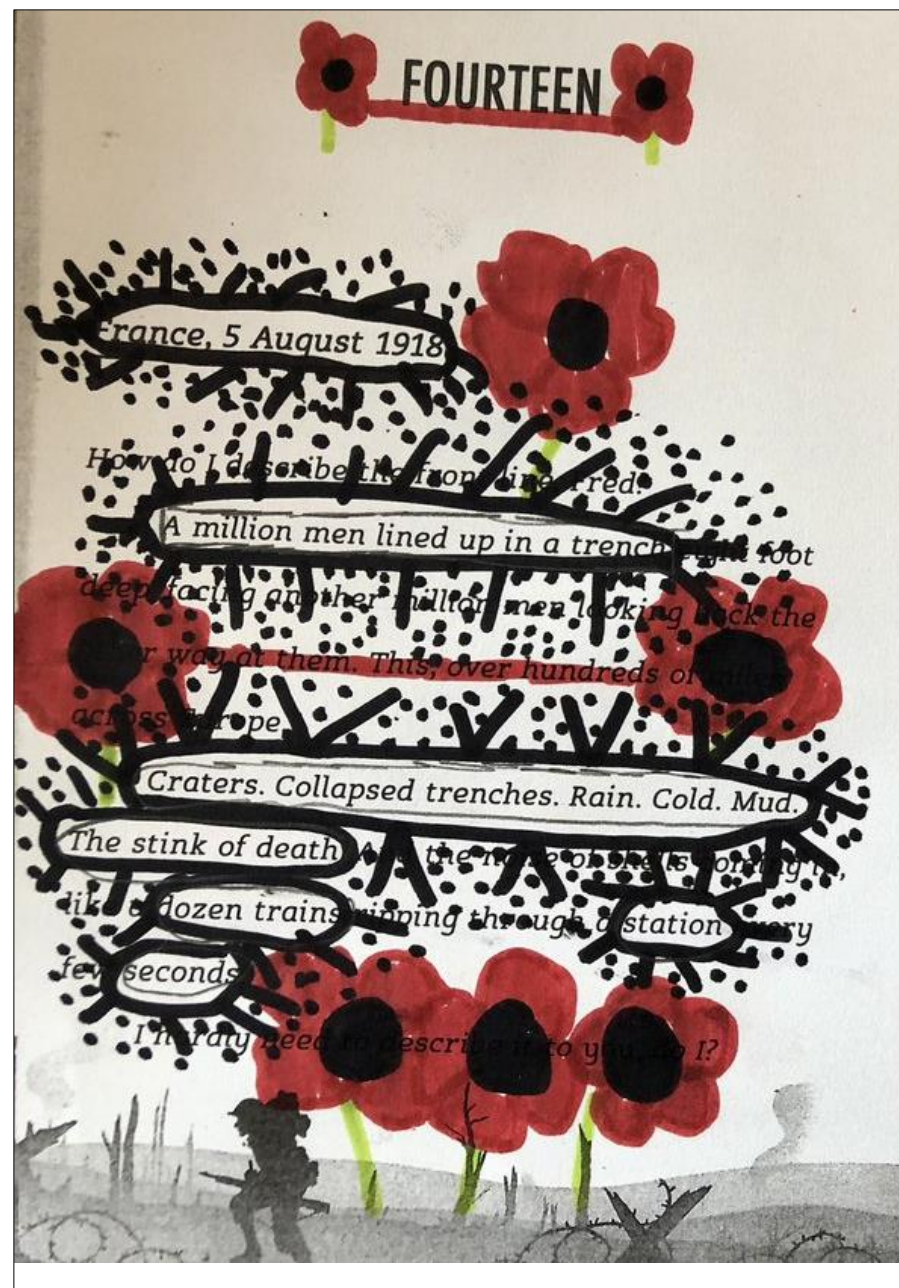
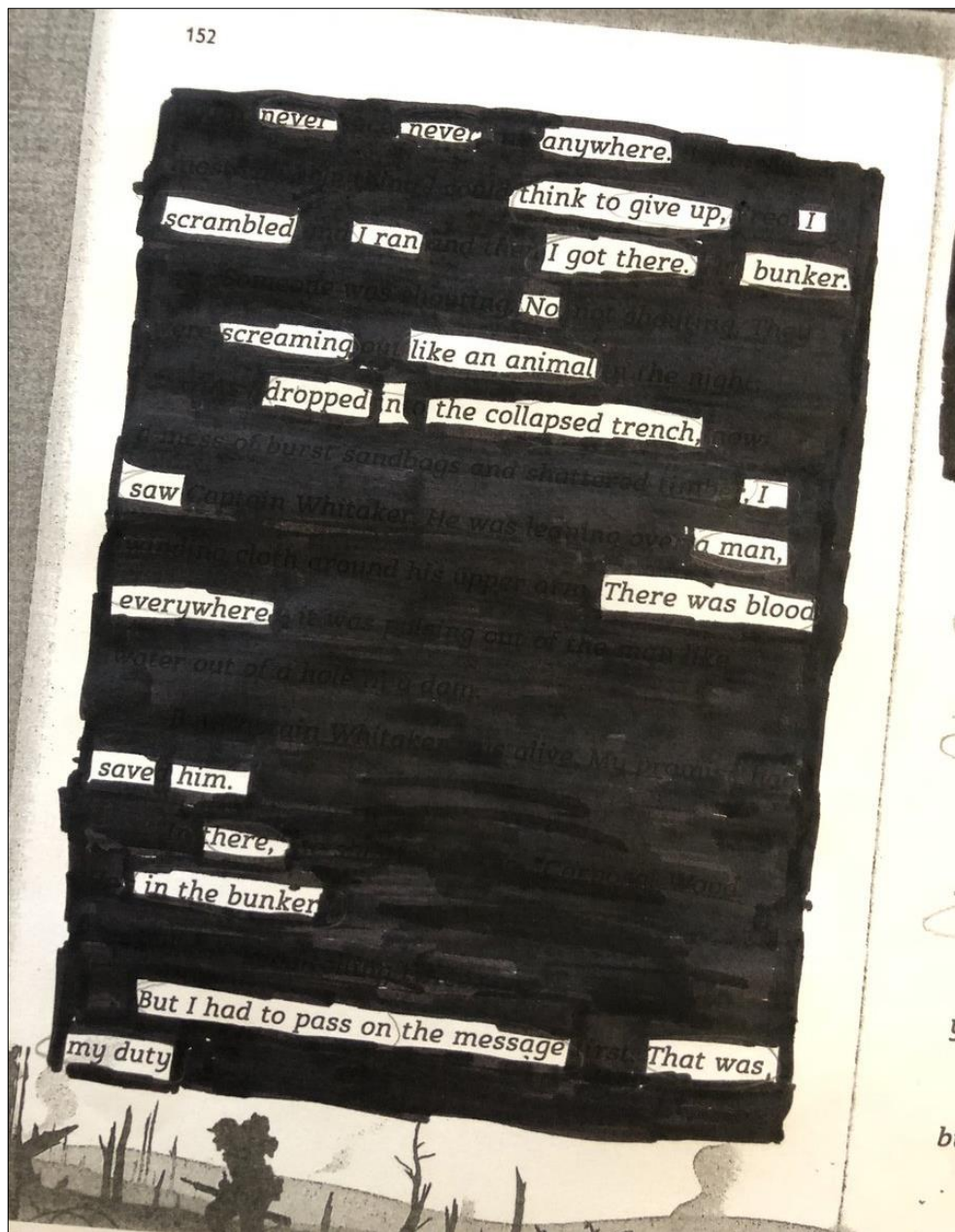
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DAY 27/1



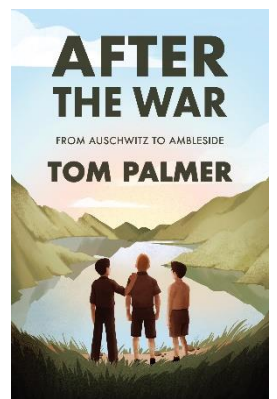
Certificate of achievement
in commemoration of
Holocaust Memorial Day
awarded to

Signed

Tom Palmer

Date

Wednesday 27 January 2021



www.tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war/

Barrington Stoke Books, 18 Walker Street, Edinburgh