

# Arctic Star by Tom Palmer

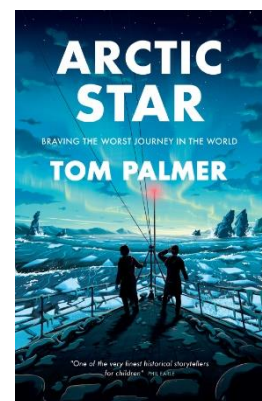
## Armed Forces Day is Saturday 26 June 2021.

Armed Forces Day is a chance to show your support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community: from currently serving troops to Service families, veterans and cadets in the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

Mark this with Arctic Star by Tom Palmer. More here [www.tompalmer.co.uk/arctic-star](http://www.tompalmer.co.uk/arctic-star)

## 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 *Arctic Star* by Tom Palmer to experiment with.** We've suggested a piece that demonstrates how three young naval recruits, serving on HMS Forgetmenot, risk their lives to support their crew and complete their mission to deliver crucial supplies to the Soviet allies. Or Feel free to choose another extract.

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

**5 *Arctic Star* Blackout Poem Challenge certificate.**

thick woollen Arctic gloves as the wind roared wildly around him.

HMS *Forgetmenot* rolled into another deep trough between waves, forcing Frank to reset his feet as the angle of the deck shifted again. And then his ice-chipping team were on the move. Frank, Joseph and Stephen staggered forwards into the storm, attached to each other by a rope – a lifeline.

Frank went first, ignoring the nausea of seasickness. He was immediately struck by a blast of wind so cold it was impossible to breathe. His lungs just couldn't take in the freezing air as he felt his feet slip underneath him on the icy deck. This was madness! But the lifeline did its job – as did his two friends. Frank stayed upright. Just.

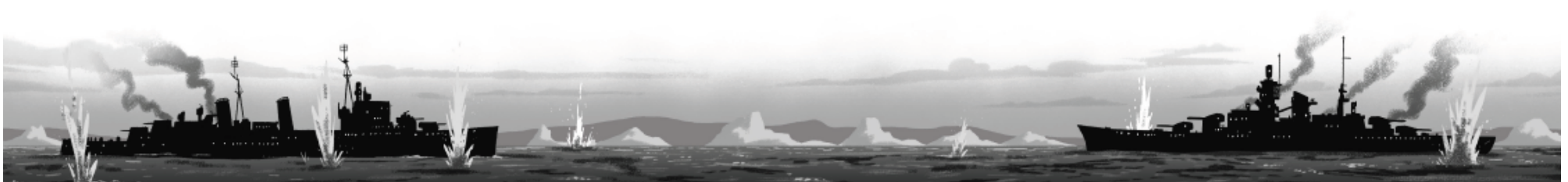
Out in the open, the wild ocean rolled and roared and thumped at the side of the ship's metal hull. Frank felt grateful for the warm clothing of his

Arctic kit as shards of ice hit him like a hail of bullets.

There was a name for this ice, like there was a name for everything at sea. *Spindrift*. It was created as the wind whipped the surface water off the tops of the waves and froze it into hard sharp particles.

Frank flinched from the spindrift but kept moving. If he didn't, he knew that over the next hour ice would build up on the deck of the ship, freezing the guns, the lifeboats, the racks of explosive depth charges. Then HMS *Forgetmenot* would become top-heavy and capsize, pitching them all into the sea. The entire eighty-five-man crew would be dead in minutes.

Out of the corner of his eye, Frank could see some of the other forty-seven ships in their Arctic Convoy. No doubt junior sailors like him were having to do the same terrifying job on their decks as they all battled through the storm.





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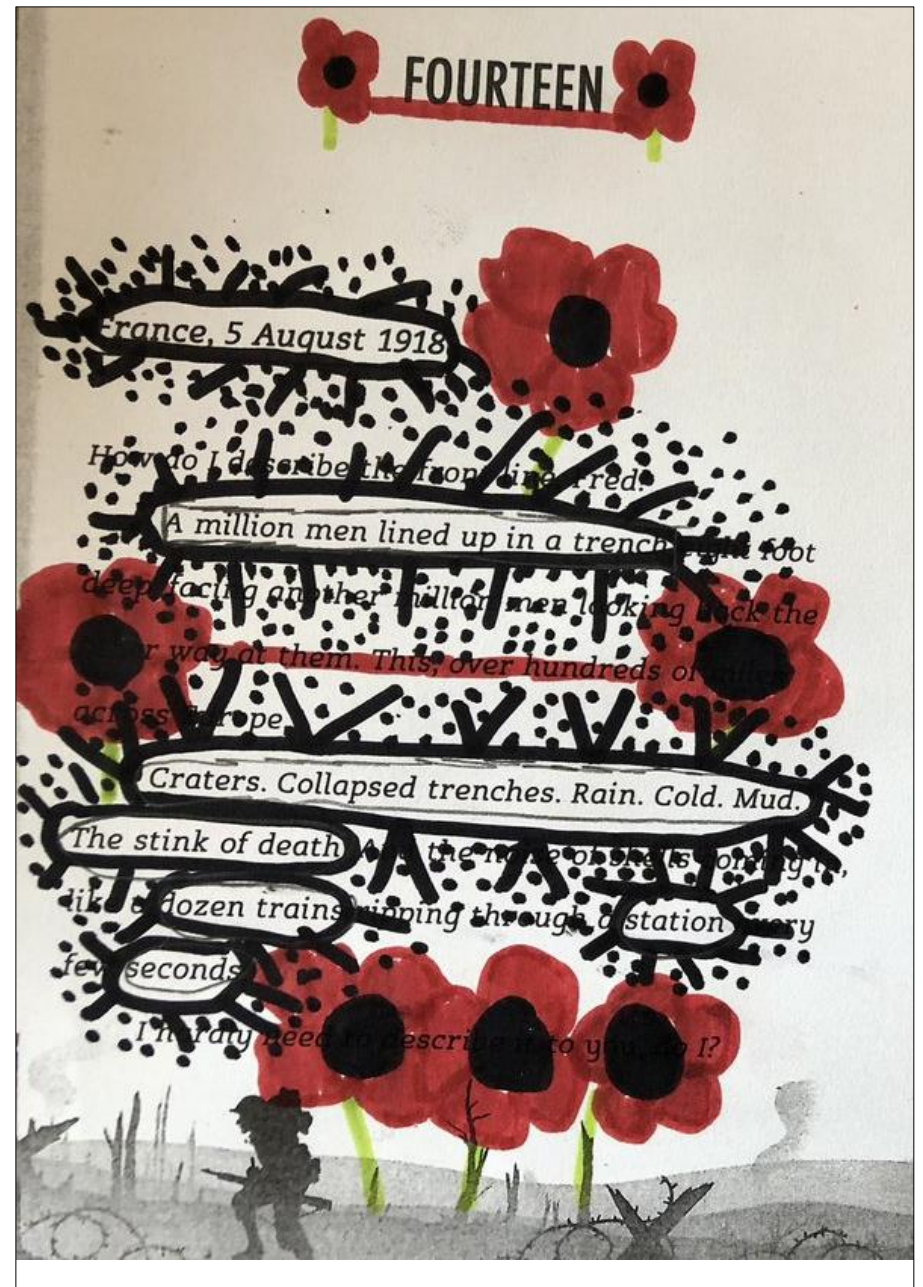
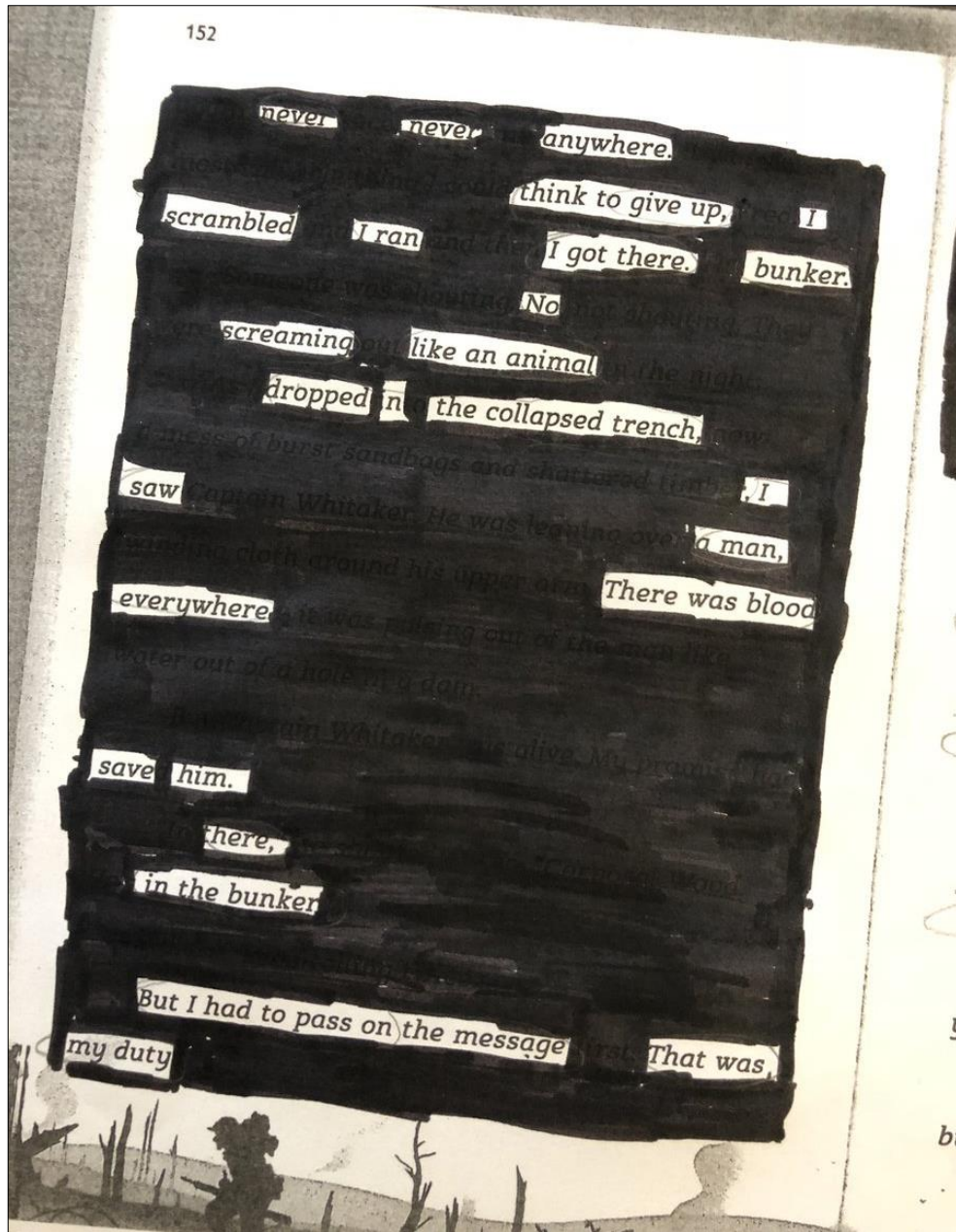
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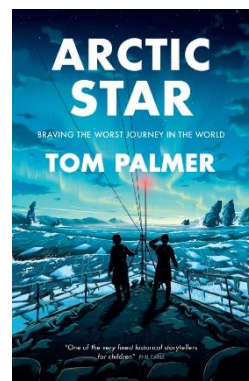




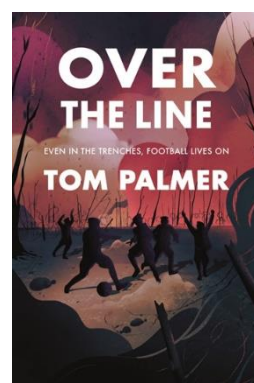




# Armed Forces Day Blackout Poem Challenge



Achievement certificate  
awarded to

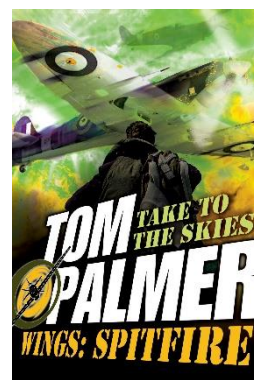


Signed

Tom Palmer

Date

26 June 2021



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

