



BLACKOUT POETRY

Blackout poetry is a popular form of creation. A composer uses already written text to create a new poem by blacking out parts of the text. The parts of the text that are still visible create a new poem. Below is an example of a blackout poem made from the first stanza of “A Madrigal” by Paul Laurence Dunbar.

Dream days of fo and hours
rosy, are mine.
Love'
Brewed from the heart
softly
save the world

The blackout poetry format was popularized by [Austin Kleon](#), and can take as many forms as a writer imagines. Since an eclipse means the obscuring of light, this type of poetry seems like a perfect fit for eclipse writing.

Try It:

- Choose a poem or text as your base. For the solar eclipse, you may choose Paul Laurence Dunbar’s “A Madrigal” posted below, just make a copy, or information about an eclipse from NASA.
- Black out some words and leave others.
- If you want to try this digitally, you can find Dunbar’s poem at the shared sky collection and you can make an erasure poem and post your new poem online. <https://emergepoems.com/collections/shared-sky> ([How to Video](#))

These resources are designed by OWP in partnership with the National Writing Project and the Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Park.

A MADRIGAL

By Paul Laurence Dunbar

Dream days of fond delight and hours
As rosy-hued as dawn, are mine.
Love's drowsy wine,
Brewed from the heart of Passion flowers,
Flows softly o'er my lips
And save thee, all the world is in eclipse.

There were no light if thou wert not;
The sun would be too sad to shine,
And all the line
Of hours from dawn would be a blot;
And Night would haunt the skies,
An unlaid ghost with staring dark-ringed eyes.

Oh, love, if thou wert not my love,
And I perchance not thine—what then?
Could gift of men
Or favor of the God above,
Plant aught in this bare heart
Or teach this tongue the singer's soulful art?

Ah, no! 'Tis love, and love alone
That spurs my soul so surely on;
Turns night to dawn,
And thorns to roses fairest blown;
And winter drear to spring—
Oh, were it not for love I could not sing!