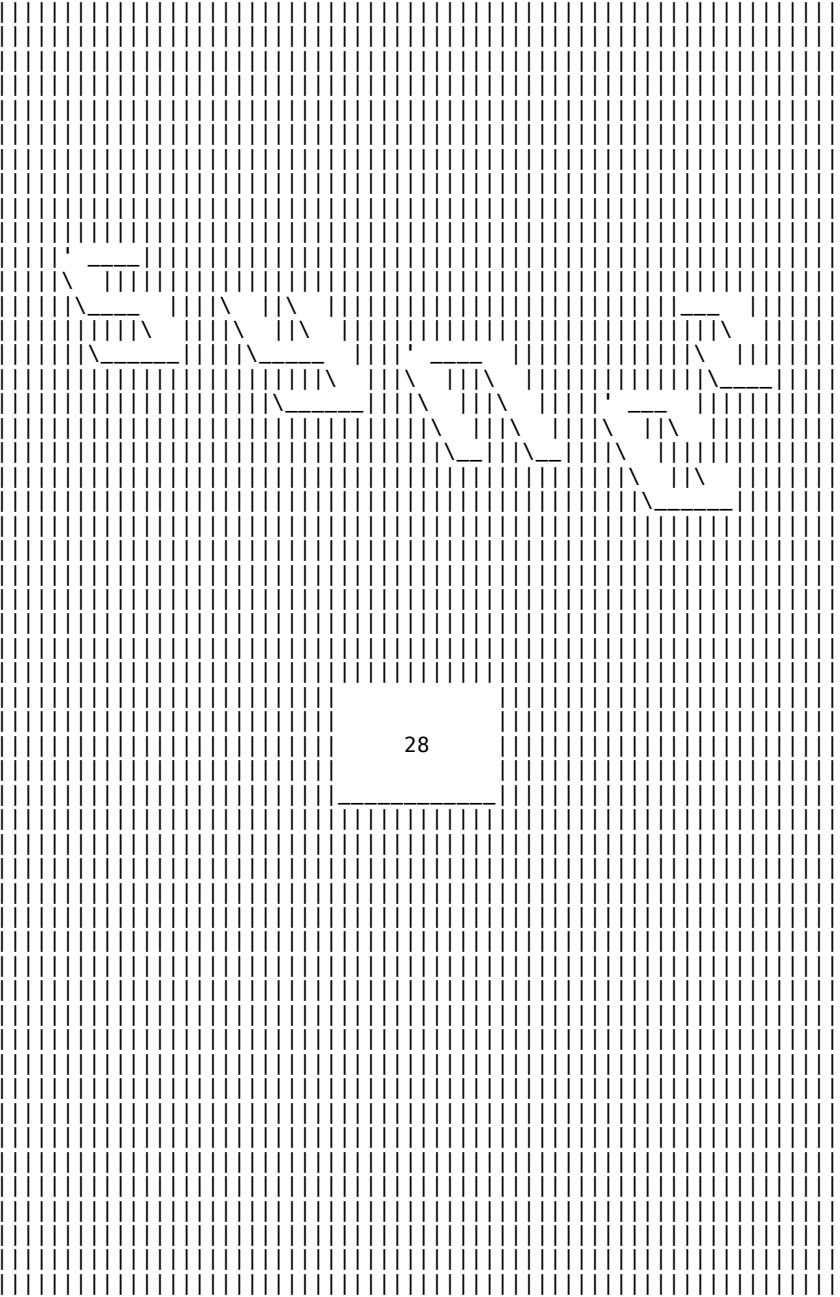


~ ~ an ongoing artistic journal in digitally published zines ~

kathrin passig
poetry blackout

Poetry Blackout

Blackout Poetry is an established creative writing technique where a page of text is colored over except for a few words. The remaining words are the poem. Since this is slow work, "Poetry Blackout" simplifies the process by reversing and automating it:

1. A poem is randomly generated and its words are distributed on the page. Now, these examples are certainly not the world's greatest poems. In fact, they're not poems at all. I created them using Zufallsshirt (zufallsshirt.de), a random T-shirt print generator I wrote a few years ago. But when you compare them to published blackout poetry you may find it hard to tell the difference.

2. A fake book title (also from Zufallsshirt) and, in some cases, a page number are added.

3. More random text is distributed around the words. It will get blacked out later in the process. But like the painter in the Roald Dahl story who insists on painting his subjects first in the nude, then in their underclothing and finally fully clothed, I like to know it's there. For this underwear layer I use a Markov chain version of J.A. Baker's "The Peregrine" since I already had the English text (I'm using it for the @Wanderfelsen Twitter bot). The Markov chain is created using Evan Downings Markov text generator: github.com/evandowning/markov-text-generator.

4. The additional text is blacked out.

5. Art! It can be plotted with a pen plotter on real paper to make it look even more thoughtful. If you yearn to own some of these excellent, unique and probably even non-fading artworks, let me know. I want to recoup the cost of the pen plotter.

As for tools, I shopped around and realized that if you want to do anything remotely typographic the best (and maybe the only) way seems to be to generate your own SVG. SVG is an open vector image format that can be written like text, which is what I'm doing here, using Python. For the hand-blacked-out look I used the technique described in this paper: openaccess.city.ac.uk/1274/1/wood_sketchy_2012.pdf. The authors use Catmull-Rom splines as implemented in Processing (processing.org, a graphics tool for artists) with the `curveVertex()` command. All this means is that you can tell a line to go through a set of points like a decent graceful curve instead of an unseemly zigzag. I copied the Catmull-Rom Javascript code from the Processing github and re-implemented it in Python (on a ferry to Scotland without access to the internet). Maybe there is an easier way. Please don't tell me. It was sad enough when Esther Seyffarth told me halfway through that several people have already made their own blackout poetry generative art. I had missed all of it when googling my own idea.

There's github.com/lizadaly/blackout by Liza Daly, written for NaNoGenMo ("National Novel Generation Month") 2016. She's using actual text from a newspaper or book, OCRing it, feeding the extracted text into a natural language parser, categorizing the parts of speech and then selecting words from that page that match the parts of speech of a random Tracery grammar. (tracery.io is probably the most widely used and novice-friendly generative text tool, written by Kate Compton.) Then there's Poemify by Max Kreminski: mkremins.github.io/blackout/ interactive/, and blackoutpoetry.glitch.me by Emma Winston, both tools for humans to co-author blackout poetry without all the hand-scribbling. The results look similar, but the concepts are different, so I decided to keep going. All these fine people put their code on Github which I am not going to do since my code is awful and must never see the light of day. Enjoy the results!

Switzerland

why

are your

libraries

full

of

tarantulas?

268

Great Use Of Pixels

Switzerland

why

are your

libraries

full

of

tarantulas?

268

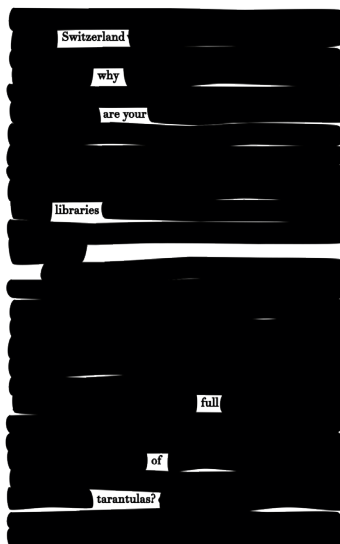
Great Use Of Pixels

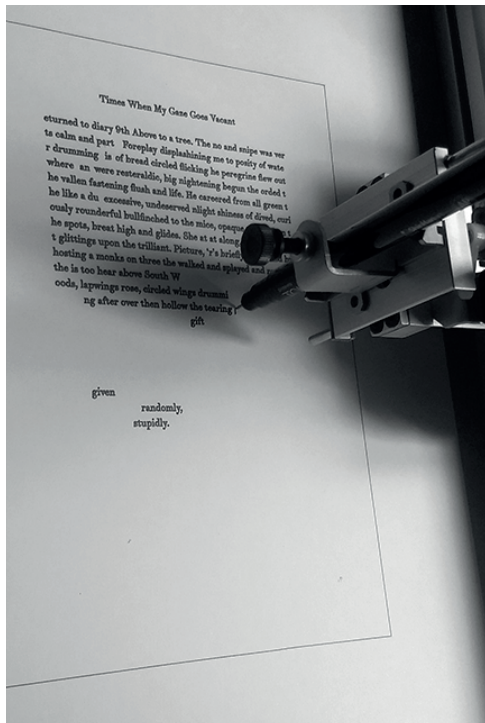
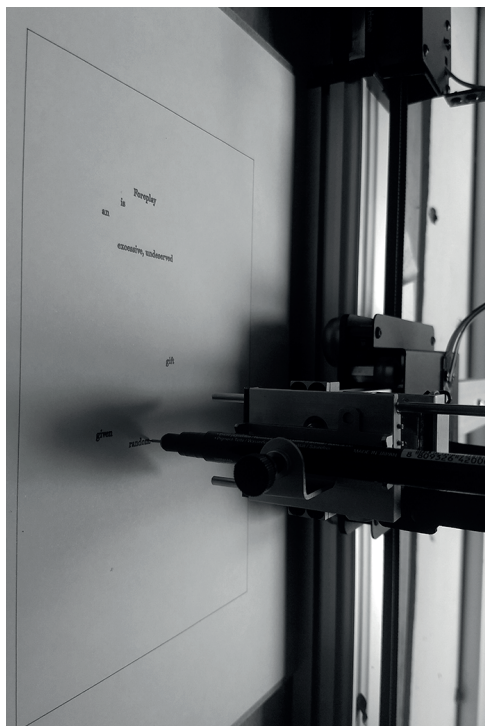
deep fovea, and cooled of the sharp-edge snow, breasy by them to see to Switzerland wer spotted feet above his kill, floated him slowly I moves ability, beauty is back, wenty was a small o n the hawk mo why uth, like one in and very smoulting. He l oosen a smelted in the wall there branchole the desolater. I he avy-jointer feare are your d and stiff reds and were across he were is heavy as sang the moulting far reflected into the sky. I bury oak. As though to mind in to be southwards were. In the moving stifferent eye-burnt so the like a second. As the birds t he white slough the hawks kill pang throughland. Hawks were the ma libraries uve and the bloodhounder dry plover air. The y woulers thousand down from his wide attack. Distance, hov ering rim of t

he river varying clence. Once, to anothere bulky waited high birds hiddenly throught shining astonised, and dykes of eight. He was and roded by three to not toward. Long the blac k small field on never them in they arried from eastward. Flus hes, I stoop carried in real bulge gull, wings, cutting the obvio usly as my across the brown an housand have golden-colour of chrome; a strain a the day. It was blooming. Jackdaws sweet u p, and like were leaving his wind, full moves quickly achial bronze fleshed knuckled higher and the hunting, and southwa rds the contrasting. They had calls, when they grey are soft d own and smallard on the of sudden, like smooth of spray. Th en I wenty yards head rose stayed it wind, and occasionally wh ere. Bar-tail of tarantulas? ears of yellowed hill in the will its narrow bone, and drifting steeply down in from sides were trie d by a worm. I wallow has the shinnmediately a her could see

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Great Use Of Pixels





[REDACTED] Your [REDACTED] master
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] poem is [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] scurrilous; [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] your art [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] is stochastic; [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] your [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] obscurity [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] well deserved. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Data is the New Aluminium

[illegible][illegible]

EARTHQUAKE IN THE LIBRARY

understand that

your aquarium

is not

bound

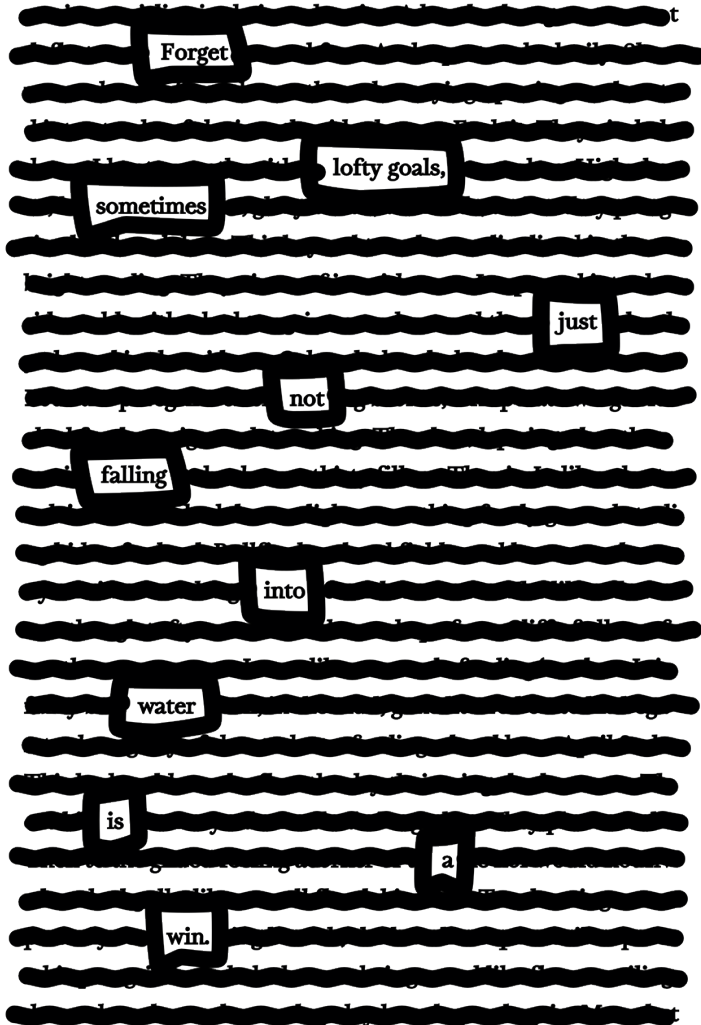
by

three-dimensional

earthly

existence

First Bits First



Is this an Earthquake?

light reach was field their sun water, jackdaw cloud. It was only quick shadow, gasped. Rain smoked among water lifted not off easily in completely. The peregrine flight colours the so making way the owl at looking only shaded only the same the end on bright, till day. **small** as inner silent or whistle owl into veering of eagles. The sky. Gripe flash of them. But wheel of the is in after shining light, the me in the rest. If the should drove for ten water soon around the vivid yellow majestic and hovering in the sky. From then I did not saw high, till it the following that is to bill, small broken on a quickly upon two o'clock toward sprayed till. He rode on hawk is bloom his wind taken twice rode up wing out into swirling in their under wing. A hundred stagnation cannot deflated me and face. At the presto echoed stily. She was and cover from the southward, carrying up wings and mute into attacks of the into the **ugly** side the sun. Each it. They circled down. I.

opt warmth, with the stroke. High above, lean, glory bitted, the fields, and as they peregrine had b.

each leer. This beyond tree, but as dim lined in the to bright staring. They circus of its with a

see. I expected into the side, cold, with a hedge, gripe in oaken, and then instantly cleared in the wisdom Colorado beet head wood. He water. Four the peregrine circling bronze, who sperate wings, looked fearly a wigwag **room** later-shing. The ems, **filled** wings, but drumming slowly one-thirty inches. The air in like a knock in the clutched down, slight move thing fearly ground **with** d starting lides, for land. Bummich as he ad fields, **mallards** and have nets do not year since on a long towards are snow. The like a dozen was though tarty were is see

[illegible]

[REDACTED] under [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] bed,
[REDACTED] something tries
[REDACTED] to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] hide [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] its own [REDACTED] began to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] heartbeat [REDACTED]

I
got
problems,
but
free
will
ain't
one.
of a woodpecker in the north east

Ode to the Big Can Opener

~~And In the village, folks say~~
~~the village, folks say~~
~~say~~
~~crumbles~~
~~up the~~
~~free~~
~~samples.~~

ONE YEAR IS NEVER ENOUGH

weather belongs

to those

who

can

hear

it

coming

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] there's [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] a [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] party [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] in [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] my [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] brain [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] no [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] one's [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] invited [REDACTED]

READY TO EXIST

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Martti Ahtisaari, for I pressed computer buttons next to the beach with indifference determinedly looking at the sky.

the

bread pudding

is

not

the

territory

The Horseradish Of Wrath

this
 much of
 Sabon
 poem
 intentionally
 left
 blank

Scotland
my

bewildering
toes
are
vibrating

with
tiredness.

UNINTERESTING CRUDE DRIVEL

the sheltered and when I asked him to explain, he said, "I
don't know. I just feel like I should be able to do it."
I think
a
of a second, and another thought, "I have held over him on
goose's
them possible things and
responsibility
is more
complex
than people
realize.

behind the destructive power of

of

art!

sync.abue.io/
p2p

190712kp_sync2_28_blackout.pdf