



## HMS Press Publishing BookClub BookLits 2020

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### **Creative Plagiarism**

*To steal the language, ideas or thoughts from another, representing them as ones own original work. (Random House Dictionary, 1980)*

*Text discovered in some non-poetic setting, removed from its context, and presented as a poem. (The Poetry Dictionary, 1995)*

Everyone has plagiarized in one form or another at some time in their past. They have picked up and used a word or phrase from a song or story or movie and stored that word or phrase in the back of their mind and invariably slipped it into a poem or song or piece of prose.

Most of what we have read has been written or thought of long before we were born. Writers have borrowed ideas from one another for as long as ink has passed over paper (or velum). While true plagiarism is wrong (claiming entire pieces of another s work as your own), borrowing an idea or phrase that you find interesting or important can be as good as a compliment to a writer (whether they in turn, borrowed it or not). This can be categorized to some as Writer s License or as it is called here . . . Creative Plagiarism.

The first form of Creative Plagiarism that will be discussed is one that has been growing in popularity over the past few years. This writing form is known as the Found Poem. Found poetry can be created from any existing written material or conversation. While the original material should still be credited to the original author, the changed form and not the actual words become your credit or authorship. Original material can be obtained from graffiti, speeches, lists, conversations, stories, books, etc.

This author's first attempt at Found poetry first occurred in 1974. While working as the Assistant Foreman for Metro Toronto Parks Department at James Gardens in Etobicoke during the spring cleanup of the Monument Garden a large piece of paper was discovered with parts of a letter and other scribbling on it. It was wedged in the slats of a park bench and contained the rambling and thoughts written to a girl named Judy from a young man named. The letter was filed away for ten years when this author was the Grounds Foreman at the University of Toronto in 1984. As synchronicity would have it, a crumpled letter written on yellow paper was accidentally discovered and was written by a young woman named Judy to a young man named Mike. Upon returning home and comparing this discovery with the one from ten years earlier, they were found to be compatible in content and even though they were not written by the same people (even though the names were the same) they could have been. A Found Poem was created:

## **Rochdale 1**

### **Art Shoes, Yellow paper:**

*Mike and Judy a psychotic love affair*

Hello Judy  
down the hall from me  
is a lady piano teacher  
and if you like I'll ask her if you  
could play her piano for a while.  
I love you more than a sister for a sister I  
never had.  
I love you more than a daughter  
because even though I had her mother, she  
has told them not to love me.  
Oh Judy I miss you  
and there was so much I didn't say  
(did I listen when you were  
telling me an importance?)  
I love your concern  
for even a hardened cicada  
protests inside a paper bag.  
(forgive my packrat mind, my  
stupidity for fumbling  
and you laughed at how warm I felt)  
womanly beauty, the ability to express it,  
a warm thought that covers  
the feelings of each moments nearness,  
space time a word that is gracious,  
complementing,  
(as needed as the nuts on a nut loaf)  
forgive me for you  
find beauty in the junkyards of my mind.  
I need a simple room, a quiet room,  
completely black with a candle,  
a room for contemplating only,  
I seemed to really upset you  
last night when you . . .  
Please express specifically what  
your thoughts were at the moment  
you began to cry and then sob?  
Dear please, I am concerned for you,  
what hurts you, I also feel.  
May I say there is no logic as  
to how you felt at the time.

You are a woman and  
I couldn't get over it so please specify:

SEX

how often where you want  
how you want when you want  
(how honest should I be with her?)  
Your friends, my friends,  
what do they want?  
What do you want?  
True affection bull shit games.  
Oh Judy, the tears well up in my eyes.

## **Rochdale 2:**

Mike and Judy a psychotic love affair  
Art basics, props not  
so much alive on basics  
but I can't speed.  
I've got to get in touch with coops,  
find out about . . . etc.  
Is it more or less accessible to students  
an inevitability - geo aesthetics  
constant thoughts of suicide  
and I have to consider the light at Rochdale.  
Yellow futures,  
applying for starship birds,  
flexibility shoes, and  
the board committee is involved  
in the feasibility of the  
expensive and the old.  
I've only been a grub in the co-op,  
whose people can little afford new ideas  
and borders.  
I've only been a parasite.  
I've taken from Lori  
and given nothing back,  
and from Mike I've taken much  
and given in return  
what money can't afford,  
others are indifferent.  
Mike I care about.

Much less bed feeling . . .  
Usually bed nothing  
(he s having ego attention)  
I have not given  
what a human being can be paid for  
when words they will be spoken  
all these thoughts of all these days.  
I don t give much care  
about philosophical dilemma,  
a divider of suspicion reigns Michael,  
unlock the ravages of this room.  
Show me the whole little girl,  
she must touch, act, sense, feel,  
(she felt she had composed all these things)  
The other night I dreamt that we were  
ordering food which in the end  
we did not eat and the waitress  
got angry and the others with us had left  
and there we were paying nothing,  
later I was bringing up some food  
on a downtown street and I remembered  
that I saw several people,  
people I had to eat to know  
although in reality I already did,  
(we make so much of the  
little nothings in our brains)  
can you paint the prom?  
I think the world needs another citizen  
who firmly believes that they are right.  
Perhaps your paintings are too intense.  
Too much open mindedness  
and some sense of connection, is it fear?  
The kind of undermining techniques  
of the adversary which is built  
into people, oh well . . .  
Well. . . what promise is there  
in casting free shadows on the beach?

From an anonymous postcard writer, found  
in the mail stream at Canada Post 2008:

### **Midwinter**

The physical consciousness of a plant in  
midwinter is not directed toward the past  
summer but toward the coming spring.  
If plants are certain of a coming spring,  
through which they will come out of  
themselves, why cannot f a human plant, be  
certain of a spring to come, in which I will  
be able to fulfill myself?

Perhaps our spring is not in this life -  
this life may be nothing but a winter!

Graffiti can make the easiest and best Found  
Poems. These recorded graffiti are from  
around the University of Toronto campus by  
that famous Greek author Anonymous, in  
the mid 1980's.

Reality is a cop out  
for people who can t  
handle Drugs.

Drugs are a cop out  
for people who can t  
handle suicide.

Suicide is a cop out  
for people who can t  
handle life.

Life is a cop out  
for people who can't  
handle reality.

Finally, another form of Creative Plagiarism or Found Poetry that is easily worked on is called Index Poems for want of a better phrase. If one were to pick up an anthology of poems that lists title and/or first lines, check and see if they flow coherently. Find which sections work together and which do not. It is best not to change or delete words as it should be kept as original as possible, but sometimes Writer s License makes it necessary for the flow to be maintained. In the haste to create an Index Poem, the title of this anthology was overlooked and the original author/editor cannot be properly credited. Make sure you are diligent and give credit where credit is due. Also, see: *Creative Writing & 21 Pelicans*. Below are two Found Poems created from all or most of the first lines of poems listed in the index of the first 1985 anthology, and Poetry After 9/11 ISBN 0-9718659-1-4 (2002) & OPEN: Four Anthologies, p. 431 Simon & Schuster ISBN 671-21139-0 1973; Poetry Dictionary p. 107 Story Press ISBN 1-884910-04-1

### **A Blue Grained Line**

a blue grained line circles  
a fragment of the mind,  
a dead mosquito,  
flattened against a door, after dark  
ailanthus,  
what makes you flower as  
a knight rides into the moon,  
a man in terror of  
impotence, and now  
outside the walls, this is how you live:  
a woman, children,  
an old pot, an old shoe and  
an old skin,  
a piece of thread ripped-out  
from a fierce design as solid  
seeming as antiquity  
autumn equinox  
autumn sequence the old times,  
autumn torture and  
a woman in the shape of a woman,  
walking behind grimed blinds  
slatted across a courtyard back there,  
birds and periodic blood  
blacked out on a wagon, part  
of my life cut out forever  
burning oneself in  
burning oneself out,  
can I easily say  
there is a celebration  
in the plaza,

a child with a chip of mirror  
in his eye, coming  
by evening through the windy city  
completely protected on all sides  
where cruelty is rarely conscious  
the days of spring dead, dead, dead,  
demon lovers,  
did you think I was talking about my life  
about evenings which seem endless now  
and even when I thought I prayed  
I was talking to myself  
everywhere, snow is falling,  
from here on all of us will be living frost,  
burning the cities ill  
however legendary  
hopes sparkle like water  
in the clear carafe and I  
am trying to imagine  
I am up at sunrise, I am walking  
rapidly through striations of light  
and dark, I don't know  
in my dream, children  
in my imagination, insomnia  
in the field the air writhes,  
a heat pocket in the heart  
of the queen Anne's lace,  
a knot of blood in the woods  
it is asleep in my body  
I trust only my existence  
last night you wrote on the wall:  
revolution is poetry,  
letters from the land of sinners

means there is something to hold,  
meditations for the savage child  
mirror in which  
two are seen as one,  
night pieces for a child  
now, again, the life and death talk,  
now, not a tear begun,  
now that your hopes are shamed,  
you stand nursing your nerves  
when our mother went away  
and father was the king  
out in this desert,  
rain of blood  
rape reforming the crystal  
riding the black express  
from heaven to hell  
so many minds in search of bodies  
something broken something  
the clouds are electric  
in this freedom of the wholly mad,  
their faces, safe as an interior,  
their life, collapsed,  
the music of words,  
the mystic finishes of time,  
the long sunlight lying on the sea  
the pact we made was an ordinary act,  
there were no angels,  
the trees inside are moving  
out into the forest and they say  
this is a woman's confession,  
this is how it feels to do  
something you are afraid of,  
to live, to lay awake  
trying to tell you  
we had to take the world  
as it was given,  
we smile, bound by the wheel  
of an endless conversation,  
whatever it was  
what is happening when the ice  
begins to shiver,  
when the grains of a glacier  
are caked in the boot cleats

you are beside me like a waif,  
I touch you with my fingers and,  
you are falling asleep  
I sit looking at you  
hiding there in your words,  
you see a man in your dreams,  
you show me the poems of some woman,  
you are sleeping now,  
I cover you with my heart.

## Poetry After 9/11

TOC Found Poem [2019]

Grudges in a silent room.  
Flight over the old neighborhood  
on Ash Wednesday (before 9/11).  
Friends, civilization, Whitman  
without skyscrapers or [London's] asylum.  
Circling, circling, circling,  
slowing down for death.  
Cookies for peace, gallantly streaming  
when the skyline crumbles.  
Now, the weather seems different  
in the burning air, the burning air.  
Nodding cranes I said on that  
September morning to the  
skeptic [al] New York [ers].  
Good Morning [Vietn] America!  
No immortal nocturne's at 9am  
in the Land of SHI. Mercy.  
Going to work on 9/11, this  
message will [self] destruct  
in sixty seconds, early, late.  
Flowers before I was born  
over mortal remains but not  
on All Saints Day, although all  
the Saints were there in September.  
Bad days, nights, after 9/11.  
The statue, a window on the moment  
of flame, weeping tangerine orchids  
on the following Sunday afternoon,  
writing Liberty Island poems  
after September 11<sup>th</sup>.

The bed in the wilderness is,  
softer than Ground Zero.