Writing Your Own Found Poem

After you have selected the piece of text (about a paragraph or so) from a book, magazine, or newspaper you're reading, follow these guidelines to create your own found poetry masterpiece!

- Read your selected text again and decide what its central focus or emotion is. Decide whether you want to work toward getting across this same feeling—or something totally new and different—in the transformation to a found poem.

- Cross out any words or ideas that seem dull, uninteresting, or unsuited to expressing the central idea. You might want to get rid of words like *a*, *an*, and *the* as well as those like *but*, *and*, and *so* (but this is up to you!).

- Looking at the remaining words, phrases, and sentences, begin to make the changes you need to create your poem. Move things around, repeat words or phrases, and generally re-arrange the language to suit your goals.

- Change punctuation as necessary and tend to any other fixes you need to make after moving and removing words and phrases in the previous steps.

- After making these changes, decide if you need to add anything to make the sound and meaning of the poem flow smoothly.

- Copy the draft onto a clean sheet of paper or type it into a word processor. Take the opportunity to arrange the words, phrases, and sentences as poetically as you wish. Pay attention to line breaks, layout, and other elements that will emphasize important words or significant ideas.

Here are some final tips:

- Read aloud as you arrange the words. Test different line breaks based on the rhythm of the new language and the way you want the ideas to be expressed.
- Consider spacing words in an interesting way. Space words out to slow the line down. Run them all together for a rushed effect.
- Consider putting key words on lines by themselves for greater effect.
- Shape the poem into an object or idea related to the poem's content.

Give your found poem a title and be sure to include the name of the original text and author that inspired your creation!