



BLACKOUT POETRY¹

We walked over to the window. On a three-legged stool sat the Oracle – a shriveled female mummy in a tie-dyed dress. Tufts of black hair clung to her skull. Glassy eyes stared out of her leathery face. Just looking at her made my skin crawl.

If you wanted to leave camp during the summer, it used to be you had to come up here to get a quest. This summer, that rule had been tossed. Campers left all the time on combat missions. We had no choice if we wanted to stop Kronos.

Still, I remembered too well the strange green mist — the spirit of the Oracle — that lived inside the mummy. She looked lifeless now, but whenever she spoke a prophecy, she moved. Sometimes fog gushed out of her mouth and created strange shapes. Once, she'd even left the attic and taken a little zombie stroll into the woods to deliver a message. I wasn't sure what she'd do for the "Great Prophecy." I half expected her to start tap dancing or something. But she just sat there like she was dead – which she was.

"I never understand this," I whispered.

"What?" Annabeth asked.

"Why it's a mummy."

"Percy, she didn't used to be a mummy. For thousands of years the spirit of the Oracle lived inside a beautiful maiden. The spirit would be passed on from generation to generation. Chiron told me she was like that fifty years ago." Annabeth pointed to the mummy. "But she was the last."

Blackout Poem by: _____



BLACKOUT POETRY²

I told myself that even if she did notice, she wouldn't care.

I understood why this was happening to me. In the eyes of the student body, she was part of my identity. I was "her boyfriend." I was Mr. Stargirl.

Students said things. Not to me, not directly, but tuned for me to overhear even as they pretended I was nowhere near. They said she was a self-centered spotlight hogger. They said she thought she was some kind of saint – I cringed at that – and that she was better than the rest of us. They said she wanted everyone else to feel guilty for not being as nice and wonderful as she was. They said she was a phony.

Most of all, they said she was the reason why the Mica Electrons were soon to become Arizona state basketball champions. Kevin had been right: when she started cheering for other teams, she did something bad to her own team. To see one of their own priming the opposition did something to the team's morale that hours of practice could not overcome. And the last straw – everyone seemed to agree – was the Sun Valley game, when Stargirl rushed across the court to aid Kovac, the Sun Valley star. All of this was affirmed by our own star, Ardsley himself, who said that when he saw a Mica cheerleader giving comfort to the enemy, the heart went out of him. She was why they lost the next game so miserably to Red Rock. They hated her for it, and they would never forgive.

Blackout Poem by: _____



BLACKOUT POETRY³

All at once she bloomed. Huge, enormous, beautiful to look at, from the salmon-pink feather on the tip of her hat down to the little rosebuds on her toes. I couldn't take my eyes off her tiny shoes. Up, up, up the stairs she went with the baby boy in a blue blanket, the man carrying her suitcases, her lavender hatboxes, a dozen boxes of satin high heels. Then we didn't see her.

Somebody said because she's too fat, somebody because of the three flights of stairs, but I believe she doesn't come out because she is afraid to speak English, and maybe this is so since she only knows eight words. She knows to say: He not here for when the landlord comes, No speak English if anybody else comes, and Holy smokes. I don't know where she learned this, but I heard her say it one time and it surprised me.

My father says when he came to this country he at hamandeggs for three months. Breakfast, lunch and dinner. Hamandeggs. That was the only word he knew. He doesn't eat hamandeggs anymore.

Whatever her reasons, whether she is fat, or can't climb the stairs, or is afraid of English, she won't come down. She sits all day by the window and plays the Spanish radio show and sings all the homesick songs about her country in a voice that sounds like a seagull.

Home, Home. Home is a house in a photograph, a pink house, pink as hollyhocks with lots of startled light. The man paints the walls of the apartment pink, but it's not the same, you know. She still sighs for her pink house, and then I think she cries. I would.

Blackout Poem by: _____



BLACKOUT POETRY⁴

She needed to learn about what she was. “You can do that here, Sugar,” he said. “I need to do it on my own, she said. “I can’t think. All I see here is what I am not. I am not brave. I am not good. And I wish someone would call me by my real name. My name isn’t Sugar. It’s Chanhassen.”

She had not been well. She had had some terrible shocks, it is true, but I did not understand why she could not get better with us. I begged her to take me with her, but she said I could not miss school and my father needed me and besides, she had to go alone. She had to.

I thought she might change her mind, or at least tell me when she was leaving. But she did neither of those things. She left me a letter which explained that if she said good-bye, it would be too terribly painful and it would sound too permanent. She wanted me to know that she would think of me every minute and that she would be back before the tulips bloomed.

But, of course, she was not back before the tulips bloomed.

It nearly killed my father after she left, I know it, but he continued on doing everything just as before, whistling and humming and finding little gifts.

Blackout Poem by: _____

Original text from: Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech



BLACKOUT POETRY⁵

"Let's not talk any more for a while, Charlotte. I'm getting sleepy. You go ahead and finish your web and I'll just lie here and watch you. It's a lovely evening." Wilbur stretched out on his side.

Twilight settled over Zuckerman's barn, and a feeling of peace. Fern knew it was almost suppertime but she couldn't bear to leave. Swallows passed on silent wings, in and out of the doorways, bringing food to their young ones. From across the road a bird sang "Whippoorwill, whippoorwill!" Lurvy sat down under an apple tree and lit his pipe; the animals sniffed the familiar smell of strong tobacco. Wilbur heard the trill of the tree toad and the occasional slamming of the kitchen door. All these sounds made him feel comfortable and happy, for he loved life and loved to be a part of the world on a summer evening. But as he lay there he remembered what the old sheep had told him. The thought of death came to him and he began to tremble with fear.

"Charlotte?" he said softly.

"Yes, Wilbur?"

"I don't want to die."

"Of course you don't," said Charlotte in a comforting voice.

"I just love it here in the barn," said Wilbur. "I love everything about this place."

Blackout Poem by: _____

Original text from: Charlotte's Web by E.B. White



BLACKOUT POETRY⁶

Olivia and I are sitting on her front stoop. she's helping me with my lines. it's a warm march evening, almost like summer. the sky is still bright cyan but the sun is low and the sidewalks are streaked with long shadows.

I'm reciting; yes, the sun's come up over a thousand times. summers and winters have cracked the mountains a little bit more and the rains have brought down some of the dirt. some babies that weren't even born before have begun talking regular sentences already; and a number of people who thought they were right young and spry have noticed that they can't bound up a flight of stairs like they used to, without their heart fluttering a little....

I shake my head. can't remember the rest.

all that can happen in a thousand days, Olivia prompts me, reading from the script.

right, right, right, I say, shaking my head. I sigh. I'm wiped, Olivia. how the heck am I going to remember all these lines?

you will, she answers confidently. she reaches out and cups her hands over a ladybug that appears out of nowhere. see? a good luck sign, she says, slowly lifting her top hand to reveal the ladybug walking on the palm of her other hand.

good luck or just the hot weather, I joke.

of course good luck, she answers, watching the ladybug crawl up her wrist. there should be a thing about making a wish on a ladybug.

Blackout Poem by: _____

Original text from: Wonder by R.J. Palacio



BLACKOUT POETRY⁷

my hands in my pockets trying not to notice the people standing in line behind Ty'ree getting impatient.

When the train finally came, I took my seat by the window and stared out at the rainy darkness until the train went back into the tunnel and took us downtown.

I tried not to think about how poor we were, but when we got off at Fourteenth Street and walked up the stairs, all the lights from the stores hit me. There were toys and clothes in the windows and people dressed in nice warm coats and hats or getting out of fancy cars. As we walked along Fourteenth Street, I remembered the first time I realized we were poor. I was in third grade and my teacher gave everybody in the class a letter to take home. When Mama got home from work that night, I gave her the letter and sat beside her on the couch while she read it. I tried to read over her shoulder, but there were a lot of words typed real small. After Mama finished reading the letter, she folded it up — again and again until it was real tiny.

“If your teacher asks about it,” she said, taking the letter to the kitchen and putting it in the trash, “you tell her we don’t need anybody’s Fresh Air Fund. You tell her we appreciate her thoughts though. You hear me, Lafayette?”

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Original text from: *Miracle's Boys* by Jacqueline Woodson