

concrete poetry

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Writing the Poem

First stage: As this is such an imaginative thing to be doing, it is difficult to provide specific guidance on writing a concrete poem. The best advice is to be adventurous! You might like to start by considering the following words or short phrases and how they can be presented visually to highlight their individual meanings:

*whirlpool reflection mountains repetition sunshine dusk till dawn
large, larger, largest stretch elastic invisible breaking the code melt down
multiplying close to the edge breakage sinister sister dancing with words*

Second stage: When you have chosen one of the above words or phrases, or created your own, you will need to experiment with ways of presenting this visually. Be prepared to work through a number of drafts. You will need to literally play around with the words/phrases until ideas and designs begin to take shape in your head and on the page. Note how Emmett William's famous concrete poem *like attracts like* – a familiar phrase – does exactly what it says!

Third stage: Concrete poems are often 'shape' poems and some of the words above would fit this category. You can either frame your words inside an appropriate shape or write/type them into one. *Whirlpool* and *elastic* would be obvious examples.

If you are using more words, for example a phrase that you might play with and expand, this could be crafted into an appropriate shape. A famous example of this is the poem *Easter Wings* written by George Herbert. It is more complex than expanding on a single phrase, but it provides a clear model. Here is the first of its two verses:

Lord, Who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poor:
With Thee
O let me rise,
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day Thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.