

Cut-Ups Self-Explained

Writing is fifty years behind painting. I propose to apply the painters' techniques to writing; things as simple and immediate as collage or montage. Cut right through the pages of any book or newsprint... lengthwise, for example, and shuffle the columns of text. Put them together at hazard and read the newly constituted message. Do it for yourself. Use any system which suggests itself to you. Take your own words or the words said to be "the very own words" of anyone else living or dead. You'll soon see that words don't belong to anyone. Words have a vitality of their own and you or anybody can make them gush into action.

The permuted poems set the words spinning off on their own; echoing out as the words of a potent phrase are permuted into an expanding ripple of meanings which they did not seem to be capable of when they were struck and then stuck into that phrase.

The poets are supposed to liberate the words - not to chain them in phrases. Who told poets they were supposed to think? Poets are meant to sing and to make words sing. Poets have no words "of their very own." Writers don't own their words. Since when do words belong to anybody. "Your very own words," indeed ! And who are you?

CUT THE TEXT INTO THREE COLUMNS:

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(The letters struck out were those sliced by my scissors. Now, permute the columns to form the new texts.)