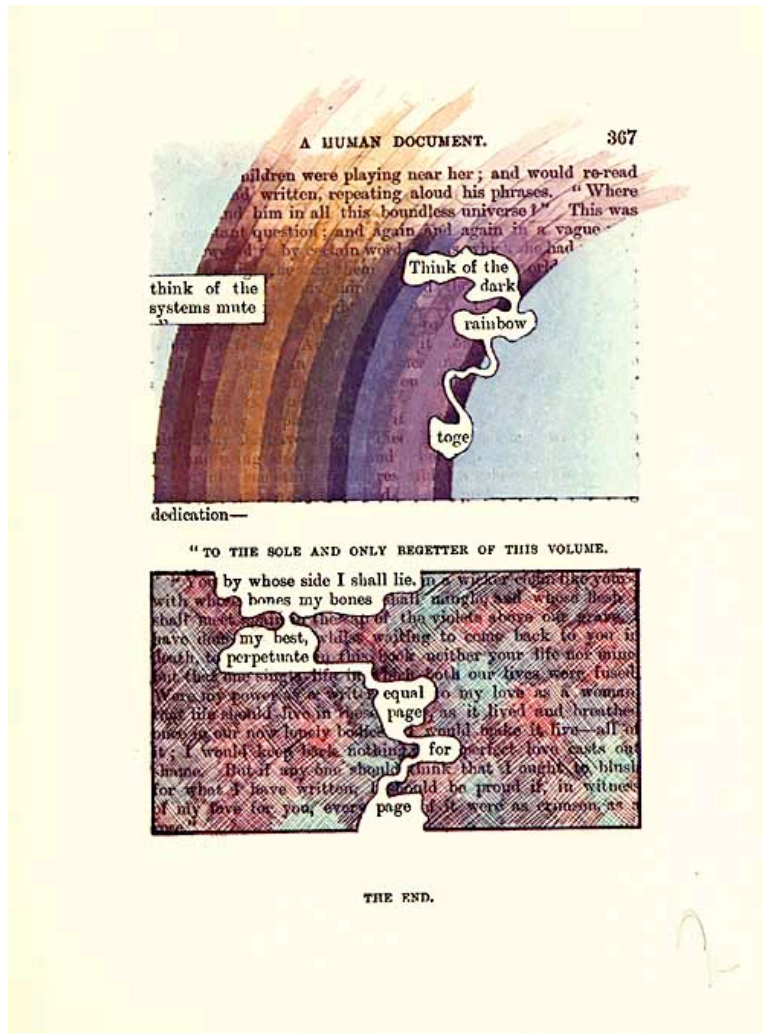


# A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel



“I took a forgotten Victorian novel found by chance. I plundered, mined, and **undermined** its text to make it yield the **ghosts** of other possible stories, scenes, poems, erotic incidents and **surrealist** catastrophes which seemed to lurk within its wall of words. As I worked on it, I replaced the text I’d stripped away with visual images of all kinds. **It began to tell and to depict**, amongst other memories, dreams and reflections, the **sad story** of one of **love’s casualties.**”

Tom Phillips, *A Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel*. NY: Thames and Hudson, 1987. Now in its fourth edition.

Dense novels, because of their length and depth, are most likely to have the rich language where poetry hides.

For this assignment, you will be creating an original free verse poem by “finding” well-written lines inside another writer’s story. Because this is free verse, your poem will not rhyme or have a regular rhythm. You will transform prose into a poem. Start with a pencil and a light hand. Circle word groups that you think you want to keep in your poem. Look for a title to emerge or irresistible imagery, evocative description, energetic vocabulary. . .

Once your poem begins to take on its shape, consider how art will enhance it. Your poem may be abstract or a concrete picture may emerge. Look at several examples by Tom Phillips and former students to see the limitless possibilities.

Entire 1970 book available as graphic images at website

Entire Fourth Edition available at website as slideshow – <http://humument.com/>

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