Creating a Found Poem

Creating a "found poem" from a Holocaust survivor's testimony can be a way to pay respectful attention to and honor his or her experiences. A found poem is one that is created using only words that have been copied and rearranged from another text.

Once you have identified a survivor testimony (from a reading, video, or in-person presentation), use the following steps to create your poem.

1. Read the testimony at least two to three times. If possible, read it aloud at least once.

2. While reading the testimony one additional time, copy down at least 15 to 20 words or phrases from it that you find memorable or powerful.

3. Arrange the words and phrases you have selected into a poem. You might want to copy the words and phrases onto notecards or separate sheets of paper so that you can easily rearrange them. Try to arrange the words in a way that captures what you think is the essence of the testimony, as well as your experience of hearing it.

   Here are a few more guidelines for creating your poem:

   - You DON'T have to use all of the words and phrases you chose.
   - You CAN repeat words or phrases.
   - You CAN'T add other words besides those you copied from the testimony.
   - Your poem DOESN'T have to rhyme.

4. When you are satisfied with your poem, give it a title.