Teacher’s Guide to the Found Poem
Writing Strategy

**Purpose:** The purpose of this is to help students understand the context and setting of the book. It is also a chance for them to appreciate Steinbeck’s choices of words in his writing, as they, too, will be using the same words.

**Context:** This would be most effective just before or after the reading for chapter two because the text is taken from the opening paragraphs for chapter two. It is a description of the setting that is used in most of the book. Because the reader is introduced to the setting in chapter two, it would be the most ideal time to better acquaint the students so that they have a clear picture of what life for the characters is like.

**Directions:** Explain to your students that they will be writing poetry with an unrestricted form, but the words will be provided for them. (It is similar to the magnetic poetry kits.) Remind them that their poems need not rhyme nor contain an exact meter. You should make an overhead of the first paragraphs in chapter two. Your students should write down about 50 words (that they find intriguing) of their choice from the text. They can add two of their own words that were not in the text. From these 52 words, they are to create a poem that encapsulates the tone or the mood of the novel as they perceive it so far. Remind them to arrange the words to be “poem-like” (making it visually appealing and being purposeful with punctuation). It will take a bit if time for them to piece together their poetry. Have them create a title for it. After they are finished, you may have a reader’s circle as they share their poems (either to the whole class or in a small group). After students have shared, ask them about why Steinbeck would have chosen those exact words. How was he purposeful and why?

**Assessment:** This assignment should be weighted at a medium level. It does not take a significant amount of work (because a lot of words sound naturally poetic), but, it does require students to think on higher levels (because they were to capture the tone of the story). Perhaps extra points should be given to those who consciously wrote the poem to symbolize the tone/mood of the novel.