



***Float*: Two woven visual poems**

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Float is the working title of a series of small visual poems created by weaving paper lines cut from pages of various second-hand copies of R. D. Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*. The intention was to further examine the potential of weaving as a method for making found visual poems. The duo presented here result from an exploration of the nature(s) of mothering – as tending, as sovereignty – informed by listening to Sharon Blackie's *Hagitude* (2022).



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On a recent course with The Poetry School on 'Women Making Visual Poetry' tutored by acclaimed visual poet Astra Papachristodoulou (2023), I was tasked with exploring more textural and sculptural approaches to making found poetry. I'd had some limited experience with paper weaving for an accordion-style zine I'd constructed as well as having attended a tapestry weaving workshop led by rug-weaver Christabel Balfour (2017), and I was keen to further examine the potential of weaving for making visual poems and as a method of textual intervention, to find out if paper weaving, other than just creating a pleasing visual texture, could be used as a method for the "veiling to unveil" approach for creating erasure or black-out poetry as discussed by Michelle Detorie and Helen Devereaux in their interview in *The Women in Visual Poetry: The Bechdel Test* from The Essay Press (2015).

I was specifically interested in using the idea of the float: in weaving, this refers to any weft that goes over more than one warp. With careful positioning of each text strip and the assistance of some precision-tip craft tweezers, I created a successful prototype and the first in the series which was published online at Poem Atlas (2023). The float is the paper weft that contains the fragment of text that is to be read – the unveiled text – and all other visible text is fragmented and rendered illegible – or veiled – by the weaving process. The resultant poems are micro poems created by uniting two text fragments from the same source page, which appear as the two largest floats in a small weaving.

I'd been collecting copies of classics including Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Blackmore's *Lorna Doone*, keen to explore via found poetry (making new poetry from existing source texts) the relationship between women and the land, from moor and plain to pasture and beyond. On reading *Lorna Doone* to find fragments fitting my current thematic concerns of women, the body, nature, love and care, I was struck by how often the characters reference their mothers. The duo presented here came about from exploring the nature(s) of mothering – as tending, as sovereignty – and have an affinity with Sharon Blackie's *Hagitude* (2022): 'Women weave themselves – and the world – back together again after they've been broken.' The duo aims to reframe the text, centralising the representation of the mother figure.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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