

Below are the first two paragraphs of John Steinbeck's [Of Mice and Men](#).

(The hyperlinks are Google links to help students understand text)

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A few miles south of [Soledad](#), the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky [Gabilan Mountains](#), but on the valley side the water is lined with trees -- willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, [recumbent](#) limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of raccoons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

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Found Poem Creation Instructions:

- 1) Highlight or circle words and phrases you really like in the text provided.
- 2) In your mind, move the highlighted words and phrases around to create interesting new phrases. Build a line or two (or more) of poetry based solely on the words you find in the original text.
- 3) Record the poetic lines into your writer's notebook with the intention of later writing more about something in your found poem. Don't write it down unless you intend to come back to it someday. Write a line or two of poetry that you really like.

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This handout comes from an online writing lesson at the [Always Write](#) website.

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