

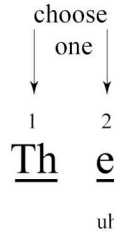
Killing Word

Killing Word is a system for the verbal delivery of a poem where each word has been divided into sections. Each performer is in charge of one of these sections within a word and must follow the directions given for that particular section with regard to both vocalization (saying the sounds with your voice) and musical accompaniment. The vocalizations will sit atop a bed of instrumental sounds, so in order to do this each performer must have several instruments available to them throughout the entire performance. At least one of these instruments must be capable of maintaining a pitch indefinitely, such as a keyboard, or a guitar played with an e-bow. Other sound making devices/tools/instruments may be whatever you'd like as long as they don't require that you play them with your mouth, hinder your ability to speak in any way, or if the instrumentation is specified in a particular piece.

So how do we move through the piece?

Before the performance, members will be assigned positions.

During the first round, **person 1** gets his choice of a single section to execute within the first word. Because the first word is "th-e", it could be either "th" or "uh".



Let's assume person 1 chose "th"

Then, **person 2** must select the section that was left over. After both sections have been discharged (which will be explained later), we may begin word two.

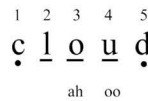


Now, **person 3** must choose first from among the sections in the next word (in this case: *cloud*). Next, **person 4** chooses from the remaining sections, and we continue in this way until all the sections have been chosen, and then discharged. Now we may begin the next word just as we began this one.

Move through the poem in this way until it has been "read" all the way through.

What does "choosing" a section entail?

You may choose from among any of the available sections of a word. The various sections are designated with numbers above that section's letters.



2

ai

When you have decided which section you want to execute, write its number and its corresponding letters on an index card so all other performers know it has been taken. Don't feel rushed. There really isn't any hurry...but don't take too long either. Just make a decision.

Since the majority of the time you will be vocalizing either an **underlined** section or a **dotted** section... here are the differences between the two:

¹
Th When you choose an **underlined** section, shortly after you've prepared your index card, you must begin your sustainable sound and vocalization simultaneously. Maintain both until it is your turn to discharge.

⁴
d When you choose a **dotted** section, you do not begin vocalization. This is because most of the dotted sections cannot be held over a period of time. They are usually assigned to letters such as *b, c, t*, etc.

So in this case, shortly after you've prepared your index card, you must make a *staccato* sound (that must be done with an instrument other than your voice). This signifies to the next performer that they may now choose.

Therefore, you actually only deliver your vocalization at discharge. At discharge deliver your *staccato* vocalization, at the appropriate time.

Sections other than those underlined or dotted will have their specific instructions written out in the poem itself, for easy reference.

What do all these symbols mean?

se
z (-s) There will be required to switch between two interpretations of that sound.

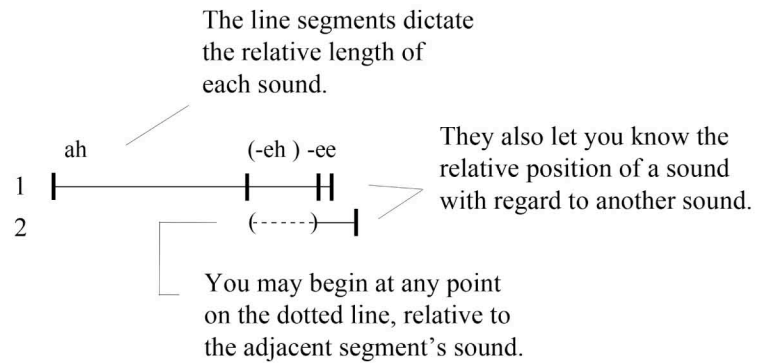
a Maintainable vocalization

c Stacatto vocalization

4
t Tells you what section this is

t
ch Tells you how to vocalize that sound if the letters could possibly be read a different way.

1
h Lets you know there are specific instructions for that section found in the text under that section.



ngg
^ During discharge, you will increase volume with the first sound of this association then cut off abruptly with the second.

tha
^ There is no discharge, just make the appropriate sounds for that section at an appropriate pace.

th - ah The next person then jumps in with the next section, after they've heard you execute both sounds .

V: Vocalization



Tells you the specific pitch at which you make your vocalization.

SS: [sustainable] sound



Tells you the specific pitch at which to make your [sustainable] sound.

What occurs at "discharge"?

At any point after all sections of a word have been chosen, the word may be discharged. The person that has chosen section 1 decides when discharge begins. Then a chain of events is set into motion and things move quickly, so you must pay attention.

Assuming section 1 is an underlined section, the person who chose it executes that section by initiating their vocalization then abruptly cutting off. Their sustainable sound is cut off at this time as well. Section 1 has now been successfully discharged.

Very quickly after that (a split second later), the person who chose section 2 must execute their section.

All sections are discharged in this way, through the end of the word, unless otherwise specified in the passage itself.