



ENTERTAINMENT

Blackout Poetry Series

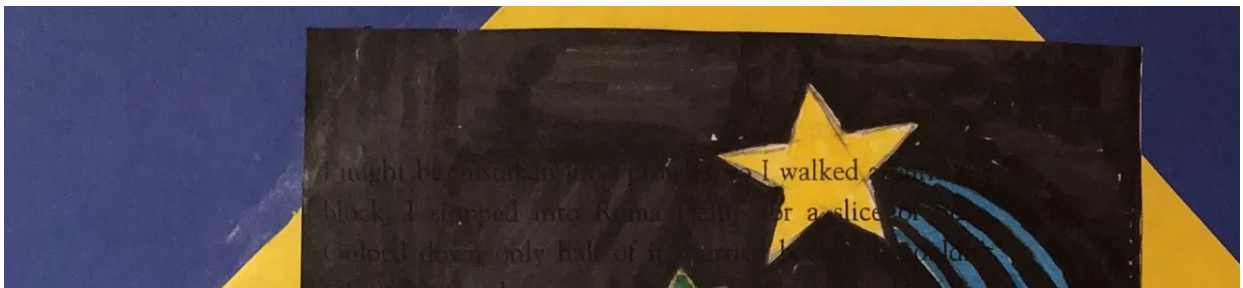


BY CARRIE STEINGRUBY
DECEMBER 2, 2019

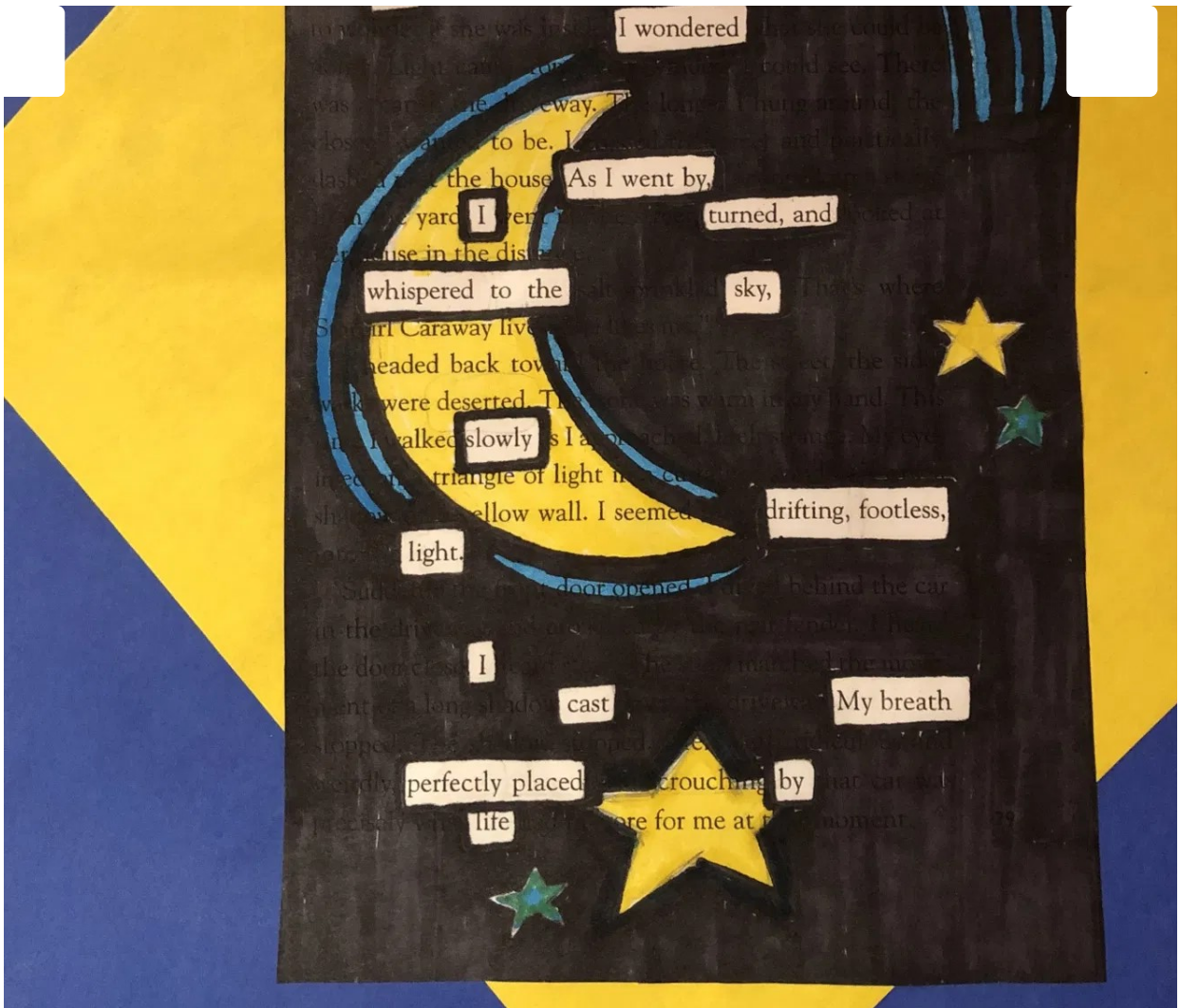
COMMENTS 2

Blackout poetry is a form of creative expression that uses preexisting texts to uncover hidden messages and create new poems.

I first learned about blackout poetry three years ago, and it has been one of my favorite hobbies ever since. Below is a slideshow of seven poems that I created. They vary greatly in terms of content, seriousness, and artistic expression. Interpret them as you please and feel inspired to create your own blackout poems!



"To the Sky"



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ABOUT CARRIE STEINGRUBY

I'm a St. Louis native currently studying Professional Writing at Fontbonne University. My special skills include baking, playing music, and dishing out

sarcastic comments. If I won the lottery, I would a buy Volkswagen hippie van and a lifetime supply of Nutella and take a road trip across the country with my dog.

2 COMMENTS ON "BLACKOUT POETRY SERIES"



Luke

December 4, 2019

These are beautiful! <3

Like

↪Reply



Linda Markway

December 2, 2019

Great job of explaining and demonstrating Black Out poetry

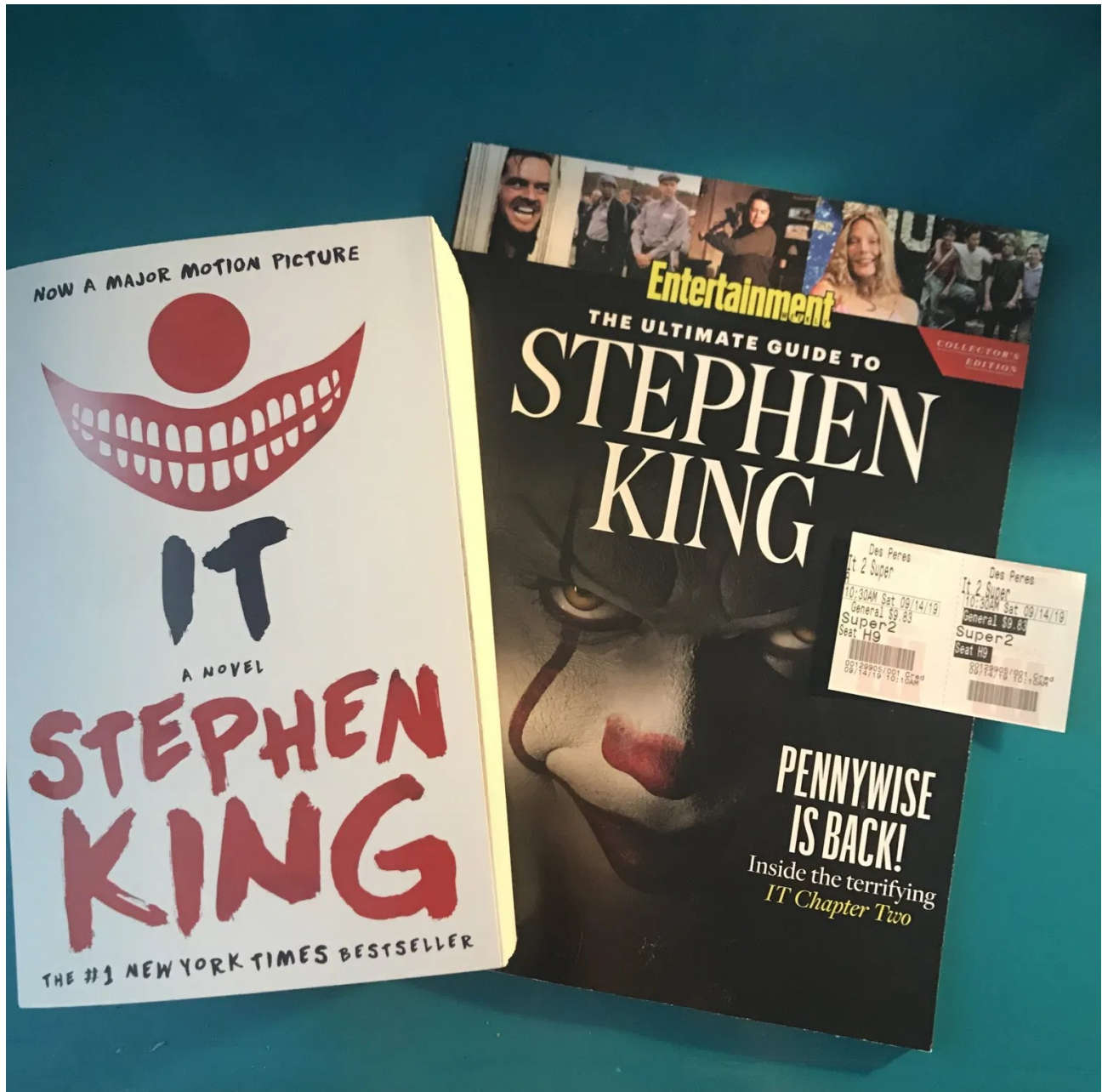
ISSUES

IT: Did Chapter 2 Live up to the Hype?



BY MADDY LYNCH
DECEMBER 4, 2019

COMMENTS 0



IT: Chapter 2 is the highly anticipated sequel to the current king of horror, *IT* (2017).

These movies are based on Stephen Kings novel *IT* published in 1986, which is quite the read at roughly 1,100 pages and is also a #1 *New York Times* bestseller.

In 1990, director Tommy Lee Wallace created an adapted mini-series from King's novel that was aired in two three-hour parts. It was aired on November 18th and 20th 1990 and attracted about 30 million viewers. The mini-series received an award for Outstanding Music Composition for a Limited Series, Movie, or Special. It rated decently but nothing compared to the two new editions created in the past few years.

The first *IT* remake was released on September 8, 2017 and had a [gross revenue](#) of \$700.4 million. It won an MTV Movie Award for Best On-Screen Team for their actors playing The Losers Club. The Losers Club was made up of actors Finn Wolfhard, Sophia Lillis, Jaeden Lieberher, Jeremy Ray Taylor, Chosen Jacobs, Jack Dylan Grazer, and Wyatt Oleff. This excellently cast band of misfits makes the movie what it is. This movie is in the horror genre, but these teenagers bring an innocence and comedic air through their friendship and sarcastic remarks, that eases the tension in the more twisted scenes of torment they receive from It/Pennywise. It/Pennywise is played by Swedish actor Bill Skarsgård, who is part of a family of very successful actors. Skarsgård creates a Pennywise that captivates and can leave viewers haunted for weeks after watching the movie. This first movie of the recreation of King's book set the path for *IT: Chapter 2* to take over the box office just as this one did.

IT: Chapter 2 was released in an atmosphere of excitement from fans of the first remake on September 6, 2019. This next chapter of *IT* grossed \$450.6 million its opening weekend. When the second chapter was announced to be in production, fans of *IT* went *wild*. They went even crazier whenever the teaser trailers and then official trailer were released as they now got to see what was in store when they went to theaters that September.

The adults casted as the older versions all bore a striking resemblance to the kids who had played the Losers Club teens in the 2017 movie. Wolfhard's character was played by Bill Hader, Lillis's character by Jessica Chastain, Lieberher's character by James McAvoy, Taylor's by Jay Ryan, Jacobs' by Isaiah Mustafa, Grazer's by James Ransone, and Oleff's by Andy Bean. Each of the adults playing these older versions of the kids had extensive time with the teens who played the Losers to learn how they

envisioned their characters as adults. One of the methods used for their [character development](#) of the adults were letters written by the teen actors about where they think their adult-selves would be emotionally and how they handled life now that they are older.

Bill Skarsgård continues as It/Pennywise in the second movie, and, once again, nails it. Pennywise is a vision of anger as he comes back to Derry, the town in which the movies are placed, to get revenge on the Losers for weakening, and almost defeating him, all those years ago. The acting, effects, storyline, romances, etcetera are all pulled together to create a great movie, but did *IT: Chapter 2* live up to the hype?

From my perspective, *IT: Chapter 2* almost lived up to the hype. The movie seemed to center around the now-grown Losers reliving their past, more than Pennywise attempting to get his revenge. The roughly three-hour movie spends the first hour and a half showing the Losers reuniting in Derry, and each of them reliving their past experiences in the previous attacks from Pennywise when they were young. We see new scenes that give a deeper look at what each of them went through in their time apart in the first movie. It helps show more of why each character has grown into who they are now that they are older. Even though they can not remember what happened at that time, until they return to Derry, they are still somehow scarred and molded by these past experiences. While I enjoyed this part of the movie, it could have been presented in a way that was quicker and didn't drag on.

Another thing that kind of drained the movie's appeal was the intense CGI work done to actor Finn Wolfhard's face. Wolfhard was around fourteen years old when they shot the first movie, so now that he is sixteen, his face looks more matured. Wolfhard's whole face looks off with the CGI: his eyes are enlarged by his glasses, his head looks a bit misshapen, and they've digitally erased the freckles on his cheeks. I completely understand needing to alter some but this was very over the top.

The scene depicting the demise of Pennywise in the final battle between it and the Losers did not deliver what this viewer, and others, were expecting. Instead of an on the edge of your seat, gory, thriller, the scene somewhat reminded me of a cheesy Boss Battle in a video game, but instead of them defeating Pennywise with actual physical fighting like their first battle twenty-seven years earlier, they defeat Pennywise by insulting it until it shrinks down to fit in their hands. Then they all

crush it's heart in their hands, and that's that. I don't believe that final battle had the physical intensity that was expected by viewers.

Despite all this, I still enjoyed the movie and thought it was a great take on what Pennywise's revenge on the Losers might look like based on Stephen King's novel, but it was still lacking in speed and overall thrill. It is definitely worth watching, and a good follow up to the IT of 2017; however, to me, it still did not quite live up to all the hype.



PEOPLE

What Would You Like to Say to Your Future Self?



BY NICOLE SHELLEY
DECEMBER 4, 2019

 COMMENTS 3

The future is something that has, for centuries, mystified and amazed scholars and poets alike. Many people have wondered what the future holds for them. In this interview piece, I asked a question that would open a gateway to the future: “what would you like to say to your future self?”

Some people wanted to continue on as they are now, keeping on the right track or working toward a magnificent goal.

Some people had amazing hopes for their future selves, wanting to improve their quality of life, habits, or just general position in life.

Others found this question as an opportunity to let their humor come through, with answers that use fun language and electric descriptions of future events.

Their counterparts used this opportunity to share their most sincere thoughts and aspirations for their future selves. They used deeper thoughts to center their statements.

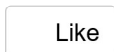
Most people hoped to improve some aspect of themselves in the future. Whether it be a new job, a successful career, or just graduate, everyone had a bigger goal in mind for the future.

Having people reflect on their future really forced them to picture how they might turn out if they either continue as they are now or find ways to improve their trajectory. This article will serve as a time capsule of sorts for the participants to look back on, try to picture their goals, and hopefully make more strides into completing those goals.

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3 COMMENTS ON "WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO YOUR FUTURE SELF?"



Jason Finley

December 10, 2019

Well done Nicole. Here's another kind of response to my future self: It's okay if your goals end up being different from mine. Be as you choose.

Like

↪ Reply



Carrie Steingrubby

December 7, 2019

This is super cool! I loved watching this, and it made me think about how I might respond to your question. What a great idea for your multimedia assignment!

Loading...

↳ Reply



Heather Norton

December 5, 2019

I really enjoyed this and hope it becomes a series—maybe next “what would you tell your young teenaged self? Great job!

PLACES

“Colorful Colorado”: A Photo Essay



BY MAURA RABUN
DECEMBER 5, 2019

 COMMENT 1

“I like this place and could willingly waste my time in it.”

— William Shakespeare



Estes Park, Colorado



Avon, Colorado



Avon, Colorado



Estes Park, Colorado



Estes Park, Colorado



Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado



McCoy, Colorado



Bond, Colorado



Idaho Springs, Colorado



Idaho Springs, Colorado



Idaho Springs, Colorado

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1 COMMENT ON “COLORFUL COLORADO”: A PHOTO ESSAY



Linda Markway

December 5, 2019

You do have the eye for photography



LIFE HACKS

The Race for The End: How to Finish The Semester Strong



BY MAURA RABUN
DECEMBER 5, 2019

COMMENT 1

In The Beginning...

There isn't long before the end of the semester and this is probably one of the hardest times of the year. Paper after paper, project after project. There are plenty of things to keep you busy before the week of finals is upon the university, so the real question is: How are you supposed to focus on studying and when should this studying even take place? Have no fear, your guide for the end of the semester is here and ready to instill words of wisdom on how to stay focused and motivated up until the end of the semester.

No Phone, No Problem

We're so close to the finish, we can nearly see the end: The glory of Christmas break right around the corner. Before we give in to the relaxing vibes of the break, there are many things that need to be done. I know for me it's hard to actually focus in when I'm trying to finish assigned reading or a paper completed. I've learned that it's easier to reach goals and deadlines by simply putting my phone in a drawer in my room so I don't have the temptation to check my notifications or get caught up watching funny dog videos on Facebook. We are all so caught up on our phones and there are

certain times where they need to be put away so work can be done.

Beethoven and Mozart and Stuff

When your phone is out of sight and out of mind, another thing that can really help the studying vibe is classical music. Classical music makes it so easy to stay focused and I know that it personally helps me to stay on task while writing a paper. [Studies show](#) that classical music can reduce anxiety and make you more receptive to information. If I read or study listening to songs with lyrics in them, I quickly become distracted and it is hard to focus on the task at hand. Whether you have listened to classical music or not, it is a simple and easy way to get those creative juices flowing!

Candle Scents? IDK Google It

Sometimes when I'm really not in the mood to do school work, I light one of my favorite candles and that familiar scent just hits home for me. A lot of the times, just lighting a candle focuses me in and makes me motivated and ready to study. Grabbing your favorite candle (which will give you an excuse to go to Target) and lighting it will give you hope for a productive study session. Folks that live on campus might have a harder time with this due to the fact candles aren't allowed in the dorms, but it is easy to substitute with a wax burner or an aerosol air freshener.

Find Your Place

There is always a debate among college students: Where is the best place to study? Many times the answer to this question varies among students because everyone learns differently. But, if you simply haven't found your study place yet, there's still time!

Junior Olivia Tallo gives us her insights about her favorite place to study. "My go to study are is the second floor of the library. Not a lot of people know about the study nooks. It's so easy to get focused up there!"

The second floor of the library is another good study space among the rows and rows of books. If you venture further through the labyrinth, you'll come to find some desks set up against the walls. There are also designated study rooms that are helpful to meet with classmates pertaining to group projects.

Food: My Best Friend

I know what you've all been waiting for, yes that's right, lets talk about food. When I'm studying I tend to get hungry, mostly for snacks. What's your favorite study snack?

Junior Abby Grumich gives us her all-time favorite study snack. "My favorite study snack weakness is Goldfish. There are so many options to choose from and they're just a great snack to have around if you're craving something good!"

If you're stuck studying, might as well eat while doing it. With your favorite candy or bag of chips, it's easier to feel more motivated and gives you brain power to continue on.

Until Next Time

All of these study habits can help motivate you for the end of the semester. There is limited time left and the best feeling is the achievements you make when you're done. Feeling confident with the projects you turn in, the tests you study for, and the papers you write is the most rewarding feeling. You can accomplish this by focusing in for just a little bit longer, so grab your study materials and get ready for the end of the semester the RIGHT way!

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1 COMMENT ON "THE RACE FOR THE END: HOW TO FINISH THE SEMESTER STRONG"

Linda Markway



December 5, 2019

Very good suggestions Maura. I hope people read them at this busy time

PLACES

Sunset State of Mind: A Photo Essay



BY OLIVIA TALLO
DECEMBER 5, 2019

COMMENT 1

“There’s a sunrise and a sunset every single day, and they’re absolutely free. Don’t miss so many of them.” – Jo Walton



St. Louis, Missouri



South County, Missouri



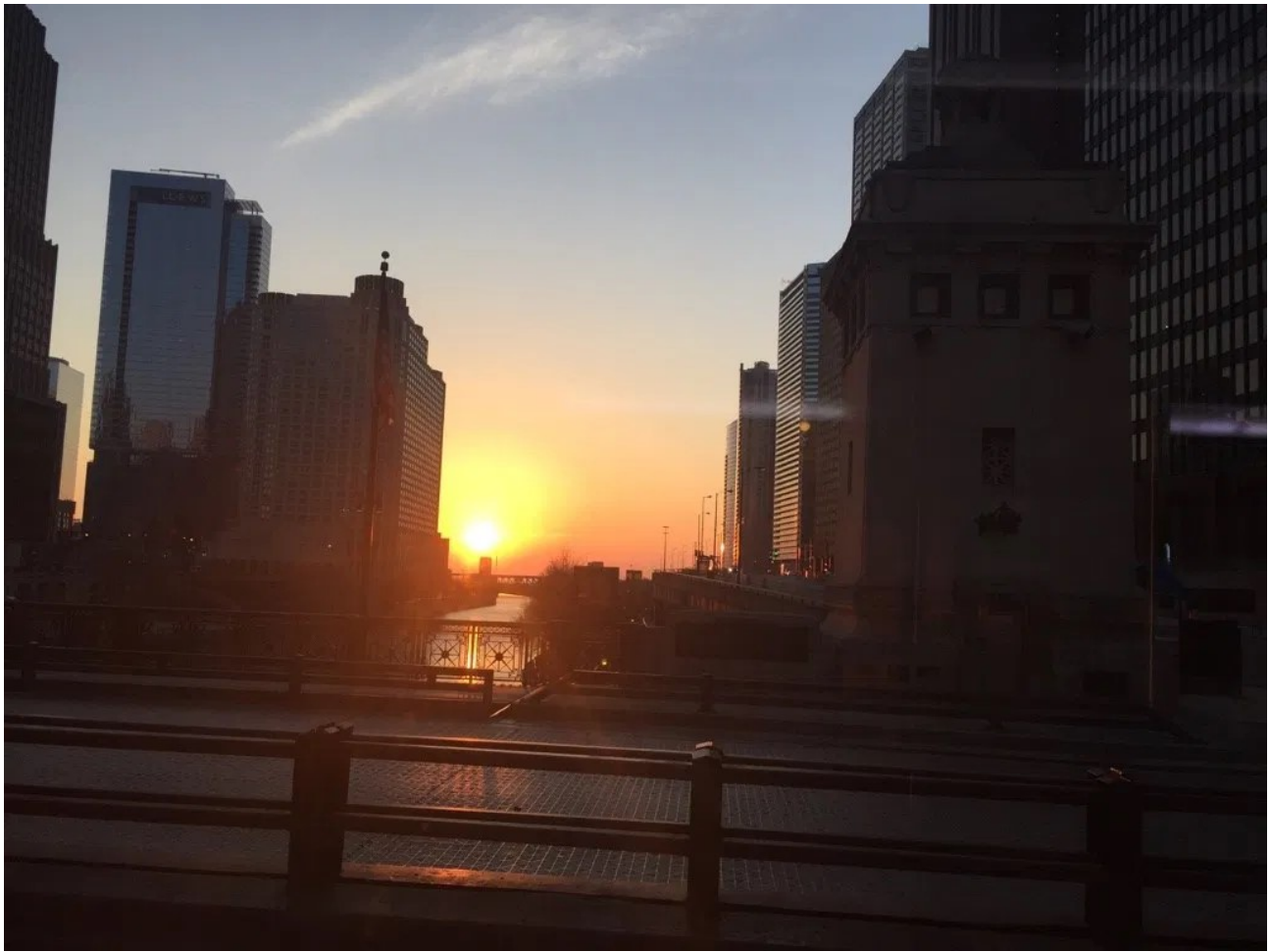
Forest Park, St. Louis



St. Louis, Missouri



Long Beach, California



Chicago, Illinois



New York City



O'Fallon, Missouri

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1 COMMENT ON "SUNSET STATE OF MIND: A PHOTO ESSAY"



Linda Markway
December 5, 2019

Beautiful pictures Olivia

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ISSUES

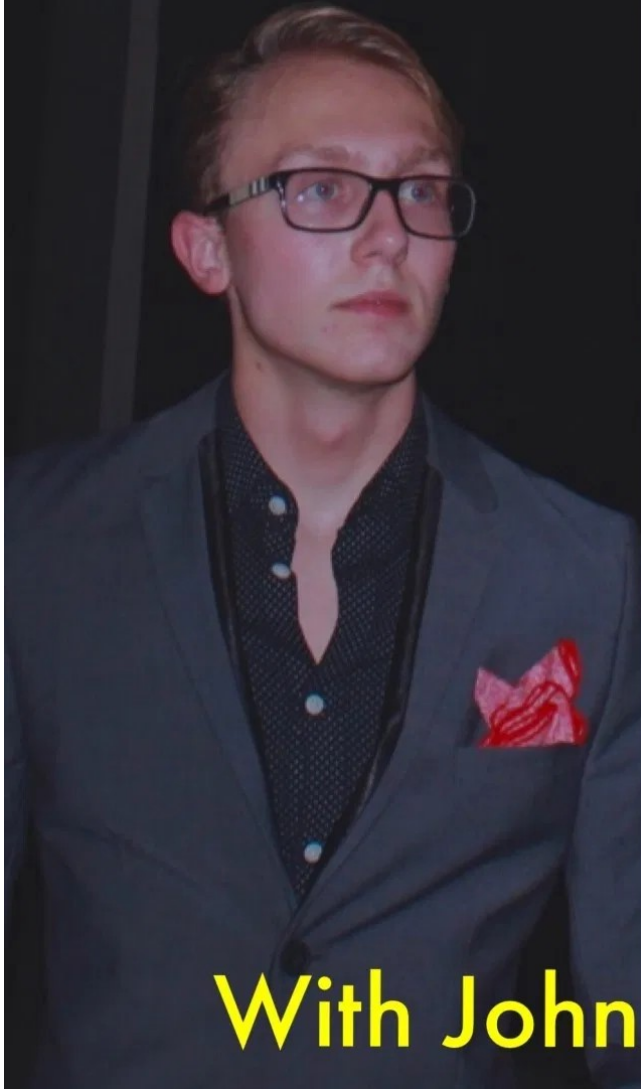
Time Out! W/ John and Mari Episode 1: Interview with Dr. Pressimone



BY JOHN HADLEY
DECEMBER 5, 2019

 COMMENTS 0

Time Out!



With John and Mari



0:00 / 44:1

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ST. LOUIS

Home for the Holidays: How to Spend Your Winter Break St. Louis-Style



BY CARRIE STEINGRUBY
DECEMBER 10, 2019

 COMMENTS 2

With the semester wrapping up and finals quickly approaching, having fun over winter break may be the last thing on your mind. However, soon you will be free from the stress of school. You may find yourself back at home, sitting on the couch, thinking: *What do I do with all my free time?*

Lucky for you, St. Louis has many holiday activities to offer. From sledding traditions that date back to 1905 to holiday fun in Forest Park, St. Louis provides endless opportunities for you to spice up your winter season. Even if you won't be in town over break, many of these activities extend into the new year, so you will still have an opportunity to enjoy these local wonders!

So, say “goodbye” to boredom this holiday season and get ready to spend your winter break St. Louis-style.

Steinberg Skating Rink

Welcome to the largest outdoor skating rink in the Midwest! Located in Forest Park, Steinberg offers public ice skating all day, every day.

Bring your cash, a pair of skates (if you don't want to rent them), and get ready to have a fun time. Once you pay for admission, you can skate any time the rink is open that day.

The current skating season ends on March 1, 2020, so you have plenty of time to enjoy this St. Louis specialty.

For photos and more information about pricing and hours of operation, check out their [website](#).

Sledding on Art Hill

Once upon a time, not long after the 1904 World's Fair, a new St. Louis tradition was born at Art Hill. Located between the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Emerson Grand Basin, Art Hill is one of Forest Park's most iconic locations.

An article by the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) explains that following a snowstorm in January 1905, "World's Fair workers grabbed folding chairs and rode them down Art Hill."



This image shows the expansiveness of Art Hill, but it is a good idea to wait until there is some snow before you grab your sledding gear. Photo by Luke Steingrubby.

Since then, whenever it snows, hundreds of St. Louis residents gather their sledding gear and head to Forest Park for an epic sleigh ride adventure at no cost.

The [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) continues: "The hill slopes downward at an 8 degree grade for a 430-foot run to the wall around the Grand Basin."

Some may opt for smaller hills at local neighborhood parks due to the chaotic and

crowded atmosphere at Art Hill. However, if you try this St. Louis tradition, it will definitely be one you won't forget.

Garden Glow at Missouri Botanical Garden

If you want to experience the magic of Christmas within nature, head to the Missouri Botanical Garden for the annual Garden Glow. This event runs from November 23, 2019 to January 4, 2020. Once you purchase your tickets, you and your friends can stroll throughout the gardens and see a wide variety of lights and decorations. You can also roast some marshmallows at the bonfire stations and enjoy plenty of fun photo opportunities.



Author Carrie Steingrubby and her childhood friend, Megan Catlett, pose at one of the Garden Glow's festive photo spots. Photo by Laura Catlett.

For more information on dates and ticket pricing, see the [Garden Glow page](#) on the Missouri Botanical Garden's website.

U.S. Bank Wild Lights at the Saint Louis Zoo

Steinberg and Art Hill are not the only holiday attractions that Forest Park has to offer. Like the Missouri Botanical Garden, the Saint Louis Zoo also builds an elaborate light display for the public to enjoy. Wild Lights takes place from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on select nights and requires tickets in order to enter. This event features many animal-themed displays and offers winter crafts for children and live entertainment on weekend nights.

For a complete calendar and list of ticket prices, see the Saint Louis Zoo [events page](#).

Candy Cane Lane

If you're looking to see a beautiful local light display for free, you may enjoy driving through Candy Cane Lane. It is located in the Saint Louis Hills at the 6500 block of Murdoch Avenue.

[Candy Cane Lane](#) truly emanates the Christmas spirit because it is decorated and organized by neighbors in the area every year. It requires a great deal of time, hard work, and a bit of friendly competition to create something for the entire city to enjoy.

But, baby it's cold outside...

You guessed it; that crazy St. Louis weather hit. Now, it's below zero, and if you step outside you might just freeze into a block of ice. But not to worry! There are still plenty of things you can do from inside the comfort of your own home.



A view of the entrance to Candy Cane Lane. Photo by Mary Steingrubby.

- **Bake:** Get creative in the kitchen by baking some cookies, dessert bars, or other treats. Scroll through Pinterest or check out these [29 easy dessert recipes](#) if you need inspiration. If all else fails, you can buy some pre-made cookie dough, pop it in the oven for 12 minutes, and enjoy!
- **Movie Marathon:** Who doesn't love a good holiday movie? Change into your pajamas and fuzzy socks, grab a cozy blanket and some snacks, and put on your favorite Christmas movie. Whether you're a sucker for the cheesy [Hallmark](#) movies or you prefer a Christmas classic, there's sure to be something for you. If you're feeling particularly St. Louis-inspired, try watching *Meet Me in St. Louis*. This movie is available to rent on YouTube, Amazon Prime, or iTunes, and it is showing [in select theaters](#) on Wednesday, December 11.
- **Make a Christmas music playlist:** Tired of hearing the same songs on the radio? Download apps like Spotify and YouTube and use their free features in order to make fun holiday playlists with all your favorite songs. Here is an [example](#) of a playlist to help you get started.
- **Make your own holiday decorations:** Get crafty this holiday season by making your own festive decorations. My personal favorite is using construction paper to make [snowflakes](#), but there are many [holiday crafts](#) to choose from.

Whether you decide to venture out to Forest Park, drive around to see local light displays, or stay indoors, St. Louis has many activities to bring out your holiday spirit.

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ABOUT CARRIE STEINGRUBY

I'm a St. Louis native currently studying Professional Writing at Fontbonne University. My special skills include baking, playing music, and dishing out sarcastic comments. If I won the lottery, I would a buy Volkswagen hippie van and a lifetime supply of Nutella and take a road trip across the country with my dog.

2 COMMENTS ON "HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: HOW TO SPEND YOUR WINTER BREAK ST. LOUIS-STYLE"



Nicole Shelley

December 10, 2019

This turned out great! I can't wait to see some of these places over break!

Loading...

↪ Reply



Linda Markway, CSJ

December 10, 2019

Great job Carrie...definitely worth passing along. Blessings

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LIFE HACKS

Everything You Need to Know About Your First Succulent



BY NICOLE SHELLEY
DECEMBER 11, 2019

COMMENT 1

Some are fat, some are thin, some are tall, others are short. Some will bring you flowers, others may only bring you thorns. Some are beautiful and luscious, while others should probably be avoided. Of course, I am talking about succulents. Succulents are [defined](#) as plants that have fleshy, moisture-conserving tissues, like cacti or agave.

Many students keep plants in their dorms to liven up the atmosphere or to recirculate some oxygen and keep the air fresh. Some of these plants serve further purposes; aloe, for example, can be used for anything from hair care to face masks to a burn remedy. Other plants are there to look nice and provide a home-like feel to the room. Lots of plants require only water and sunlight while others are really needy and require a watering schedule and a three-course meal. Non-green-thumbed students can participate in the joy of raising a plant with an easy-to-care-for succulent.



Photo Credit: Daria Shevtsova Pexels.com

How to Plant Your Succulent

Succulents are one of the easiest plants to [care](#) for. All a student would need for this plant to thrive is a container, some small pebbles, some succulent soil, and the plant itself.

Simply have the container in a sunny spot (I originally used a teacup I bought from a garage sale for my first succulent) and add a layer of pebbles to help with water drainage (my advice is to cover the bottom of the container with 4 or 5 layers of pebbles to ensure easy drainage and storage.

Next, add a layer of succulent soil (often labeled as easy or quick-draining soil) over the pebbles to ensure the roots of your plant will not tangle too deep into the pebbles, have a hole ready for your plant that is deep enough to hold the root system and some of the stem steady.

Planting the succulent is relatively simple, as anyone who has gardening experience may know. Just place the plant into the hole and surround it with more soil to support the succulent.

Water your new friend according to species specifications and you will have a larger than life, easy to care for addition to your home.

Using these simple steps, you can have your own succulent to care for and appreciate for a long time.

How to Care for Your Succulent

Caring for a succulent, or any plant, is not very difficult. However, there are a lot of things to take into consideration when determining which procedures to use. Here are some techniques to care for your succulent:

Care for Root Rot:

Some succulents are susceptible to a condition called root rot. In aloe (with which I have personal experience), the leaves will turn brown and begin to droop. The roots will collapse and become soft, so simply trim the rotten roots and repot your succulent. All is now well.

Trimming Dead or Dying Matter:

Many succulents will lose leaves or branches, but be perfectly fine everywhere else. Simply trim this dead matter as to reserve nutrients for the healthy majority. Sometimes, these trimming sessions need to happen several times but do not be intimidated.

Making Baby Succulents:

If you would like to create more succulents from your adult succulent, do so by following the simple steps highlighted [here](#). Here are the main ideas:

- Essentially, if a leaf comes off your adult succulent, allow it to callous (harden, the moist tip where the leaf connected to the stem will become dry) for a while. Roots will begin to sprout.
- From there, add your new bud to either new or the same soil as the parent plant and allow it to grow.

Your Succulent and Air Quality

You could also be wanting a plant that will renew and refresh the air quality in your stuffy dorm. Certain plants, like [aloe vera](#) or some other succulents, can completely unstuff the atmosphere of your dorm or small apartment, making you feel like the

world is yours. Plants use carbon dioxide, microorganisms, and other artifacts that may be harmful to humans and release oxygen, the main element that we breathe to stay alive, helping us to breathe easier and improve the overall quality of indoor air. Some plants are more helpful than others, making certain plants better companions for people living in small, airtight spaces.

With Christmas on its way, maybe ask for a succulent to improve your life. Taking on your first responsibility of caring for a succulent is a great way to learn all sorts of things. Taking care of plants prepares you for taking responsibility and keeping a schedule, both skills necessary for adult life. Who knows, having a plant could change your life for the better.



Photo Credit: Quang Nguyen Vinh Pexels.com

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1 COMMENT ON "EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR FIRST SUCCULENT"



Carrie Steingrubby

December 12, 2019

This was super helpful! Definitely asking for a succulent for Christmas 😊

LIFE HACKS

Why It's Important to Maintain Tradition with a Busy Lifestyle



BY ALEXANDRIA SMITH
DECEMBER 12, 2019

COMMENTS 3



Being an American entails many things, but one of the most accurate national generalizations is our consistently busy and stressful lifestyles. Some engross themselves in work, others in sports, or school, or whatever else takes a majority of their time. We as a whole are always on-the-go. This forces us to set aside things like family, and the traditions we keep close to our hearts. Especially during this holiday season, I hope to help show people why we should prioritize family and the traditions that build the foundations of our beings.

One specific tradition I always set aside time to attend is my family's favorite local Halloween attraction, the Jack-o-lantern Spectacular. Held at the Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon in Washington Park in Springfield, IL, this is an extremely popular attraction for locals and many others within the central Illinois area. My family made it a tradition to attend it every year as a way to see each other and do

something different from work, school, and sports.

At this festival people gather the two weekends leading up to Halloween on both Friday and Saturday night to look at the jack-o-lanterns the others in the area created for display. That's what makes this spectacle so exciting and family oriented. It's cute and family-inclusive because the locals create the scary, silly, or cute carvings within the pumpkins! All these carvings have this unique touch, almost like you can feel the joy and family fun infused within them during the creation of each jack-o-lantern.

It's a feeling challenged by none, and I don't think I will ever forget it. My senses explode with the sensations embedded deep in my memory: the smell of the food, the taste of hot apple cider, the sound of Halloween music and people laughing or talking.

Going back each year allows me to relive the beautiful experience with the people I love most in this world, my family. It stimulates a longing for kindredness and home that I couldn't even begin to try and describe. It's like coming home and seeing or feeling the things you've overlooked before you left. That feeling, an almost distant memory that makes your heart long for home, is what makes me travel home every year. And it's not the only tradition I make exceptions for, my family has many more to get us involved and come back home.

One that's particularly relevant to upcoming holidays is a Christmas tradition, and also a Thanksgiving one. To explain further, this tradition has an unchanging day that allows us to prepare far ahead of time. Held the Saturday night immediately following Thanksgiving Day, we all go Christmas tree shopping. But this is no ordinary tree picking tradition.

It all starts around 4:00-6:00 pm when my mother, father, sister, brother and grandma all meet at my house. We pick out either an elf hat, a Santa hat, or reindeer antlers to wear the entire night. Now, as kids it was fun to dress up to match whatever head-wear we chose, but nowadays, we dress nice in regular clothes with our hats, and I will explain why. Not only do we go get a Christmas tree, but we also go to our local Starbucks. Oh yes, the one everyone in our small town goes to, and we go inside for everyone to see.

At first this might sound funny or fun, but it's almost always too embarrassing to go through with. However, it's being with my goofy family and being able to be myself that ends up making it fun in the end. These are the moments that allow us to become secure in our own skin and makes us proud to be ourselves. The challenges we face create the framework of our character. Spending that time with my family has allowed me to both grow as a person, and at the same time stay incredibly close with my family. Even when we were on the outs, it's what brought us back together.

These traditions have been in my family for so many years I can't even remember the first time they started. However, to the best of my recollection, I have only missed two or three times, and each of those times I truly wished I had gone. It left me feeling awful, like I may have broken tradition and let my family down. I was so emotionally unchecked and let my loyalties lie elsewhere, which just caused me pain in the end. Looking back now though, I'm glad I made the decisions I did, because it helps me cherish those moments a little more every year.

I believe that we all need to set aside time for family and the traditions they hold dear. Being with people who truly care for you and know the real you brings a sense of grounding and stability to the ever-so chaotic lifestyles we live, juggling so many things at once. And so my advice to you is simple. Spend time with your family and put traditions first, because in the end, you won't regret it.

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3 COMMENTS ON "WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN TRADITION WITH A BUSY LIFESTYLE"



Heidi Chretien

January 5, 2020

Great job Alie! So proud of you. Love your SC fam

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Carlie

December 15, 2019

I absolutely love this!

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Jon Smith

December 15, 2019

Way to go Alie!



ENTERTAINMENT

Leonard Cohen: Still Relevant for a Younger Generation



BY JOHN HADLEY
DECEMBER 12, 2019

COMMENTS 0

Image from [Kevin Ledo](#)

“I heard there was a secret chord, that David played, and it pleased the Lord, but you don’t really care for music, do you?”

Most people could tell you what this song is. Some people associate it as “that song from Shrek.” Some associate it with a Christmas song, mainly because of [Pentatonix’s](#) rendition. Some might believe that it is originally sung by [Jeff Buckley](#) or [Rufus Wainwright](#).

The song is called “Hallelujah,” and it is one of the most well-known songs of all time. However, it is a song that was originally sung and written by Leonard Cohen. The name Leonard Cohen might sound familiar, or it may not. While known

incredibly well in Canada, Europe, and worldwide, his name is not prominent among younger people in the States.

Leonard Cohen has been making music since the 1960's and has become one of the most influential modern poets. His work and fame often get compared to Bob Dylan, especially since they both started their musical careers around the same time. He has performed with [U2](#), and his songs have been covered by hundreds of prominent artists (such as [Lana Del Ray](#) and [Michael Buble](#)) over the decades. He is so well known in Canada, he is the one of the artists that inspired [Carly Rae Jepsen](#) to get into music.

Yet it seems that most people my age have never heard of him. This may be because his songs include more lyricism put over instrumentals or because his voice is coarse and rough from many years of drinking and smoking. Maybe it just has to do with how his record label marketed him in the States.

His impact, though, is very clear among my peers, even if they have never heard of him. I have watched several times in group settings where some version of "Hallelujah" will play on someone's playlist, and each time, nearly everyone in the room will start singing it. These moments are bittersweet for me; it is amazing to see one of his works so well known by nearly every age and generation, yet his name is not always associated with the song that they are singing.

Leonard Cohen [passed away](#) in November of 2016 at the age of 82. I remember the exact moment I found out, as it was sudden and unexpected. I remember having my sister telling me over the phone and sitting in my bed listening to his music for the rest of the night. Now just over 3 years since that day, Cohen's son, Adam Cohen, has produced and released nine new songs from his father. This release of "[Thanks for the Dance](#)" was cathartic for me, as it felt like one last "goodbye" from an artist that I deeply resonated with.

With that being said, the question still remains: How does one get into Cohen's music? With decades of music, where does one start listening? The good thing is that streaming services like Apple Music and Spotify exist and these often have "essential" and "best of" songs for most artists. It might be easier to listen to covers of his music by artists you like before diving into his discography.

If I were showing a peer some of his music, I would start with his earliest songs (such as “[Suzanne](#)” and “[Sisters of Mercy](#)”) when his voice was softer and not as rough. His songs have a folksier tone, and the lyrics tend to be more about love, heartbreak, and sadness and not so heavy on politics and religion.

Nonetheless, that does not negate the importance of Cohen’s posthumous album. In fact, they enhance it. The album has a nice culmination of sounds and lyrics that sound like Cohen’s music throughout his entire musical career. “[Moving On](#)” has hints of 1980’s Cohen songs and is reminiscent of Cohen’s songs about young love. Other songs such as “[Thanks for the Dance](#)” sound more like Cohen’s later music right before his passing.

The final song on the album, “[Listen to the Hummingbird](#),” is an appropriate closing to Cohen’s music because it metaphorically sums up his life and work into a simple poem. There are not a lot of lyrics, but it is a poem he seemed to resonate with, as he would tell it in [interviews](#) right before his death.

The album has been [praised by critics](#) and seems to resonate with fans that have followed him for years. His music still resonates with the masses, even after his death. His poetry continues to influence listeners, the same way I have seen “Hallelujah” influence people of all ages.