

PSST!

People's Song SocieTea - A Night of Music, Artful Words & Personal Reflections

Thursday, July 30, 2026

Now Time

By Cash K. Allen

The people are pining
For gay men in love
Or something reminding them of a sport they once
loved

They flopped the ending
Of your friends favorite show
You haven't watched since the second season you
caught up recently though

Everyone's talking
They're coughing up mold
They call it the flu in Chicago but in Toledo we call it
a cold

Good people are dying
You saw it on your phone
So you voted right in a country where you do what
you're told

I sat and colored with a toddler and felt fine
We laughed at how you misspelled I'm crine
You do your crocheting and I'll write
Why don't we focus on our now time?

They hate some new movie
The sex scenes were dumb
They tried to act like they knew what kind of dog that
was

Old lady was kissing
On everyone she saw
She's looking for somebody special ever since her
someone's been gone

I sat and colored with a toddler and felt fine
We laughed at how you misspelled I'm crine

You do your crocheting and I'll write
Why don't we focus on our now time?

You left the dentist half your face paralyzed
Covered it up with your hands you can't help but
smile
My dad saw that dude at the mall dressed like a feline
Why don't we focus on our meow time

Why don't we focus on our now time
Shifting my focus to the now time
Spending each day inside the now time
Peanut butter and jelly now time!

Casting Stones; A Short Story for the Children of Gaza and all Children of War and Genocide

By I Medina

She stood, 4ft tall, 9 years old
Her skin held a gray tint from all of the soot and ash
from walking through a city in targeted collapse and
ruin
The fires just calmed
Clouds of smoke followed her every step through the
rubble
She looked to her left
That was the park she used to walk to with her 2 best
friends each day every summer, when school was out
She remembered how much she loved walking in
between them
Holding hands, skipping, laughing loud, girlish shrieks
about silly things
She walked to the remnants and climbed over the
gravel
She notices a swing seat

She missed the swings and kicking up, touching the
sun with her feet
Mariam always won when they played tag
She was so fast, she remembered
There used to be a water fountain, right near the
public restrooms that now left no remembrance of
their existence
She looked in that direction, like a mirage appeared in
front of her
Closing her eyes, imagining her friend pushing the
button while she cupped her hands collecting water
from the fountain and splashing it on her face for
refreshment

How many days had it been?
It's so hard to find a clock anywhere now
Reminding us that time is a man-made measurement
Sections of seconds don't matter much when your
world has been turned upside down
What is time?
What is day?
What is night?

She walks away from the park
Feels too much like a ghost town now
A holding pattern of memories she will never live
again

It hurts

She tries not to cry as much lately
It doesn't seem to wash away the pain or fill her belly
with anything but sorrow

Back on the main road
She looks to her right
And sees the remains of a small family restaurant she
loved
Only a couple of gray walls were left
Sahan was her favorite dish
Her brother always snuck pieces of chicken under the
table to their family dog
That scrappy little thing was so annoying
She misses his familiar barking and whining
Now, it feels too quiet
She remembers the sounds of Ataba from a gathering
after a wedding at the restaurant
It smelled so good in there

The scent of flatbread and onions traveling up the
street

She picks up a rock
Rubbing its smooth and jagged surface, she places the
rock in her pocket
How can something go from colors and life and
laughter and music to this?
A pile of rocks
Dreams, hope, love disintegrated, as if it never was
A boy holding his little sister's hand so she doesn't
run off
A mother, carrying the days' groceries to make a
simple, delicious meal
The man selling eggplants from his cart
He used to wave and smile with yellowish-brown
chipped front teeth
He was always nice
She smiled, remembering her mother making stewed
eggplant with onions and sumac
She taught her how to chop the olives into a fine
paste, for briny saltiness
Watermelon for dessert

She shakes her head to try to remove the memory
It was making her more hungry than she already was
and she hadn't eaten in days
She wonders
Has it been a week since they last bombed us?
Time is tricky these days
She can only count the number of times she sees the
sun in the day and moon at night
Counting stars as she sits awake to pass the time until
her eyelids become too heavy to remain open
There wasn't much left before the last flash of
terrifying light

Looking off onto a distant hill
She sees 3 soldiers, standing there
Lording over rocks and halted futures
Lives gone in an instant of...

She doesn't really understand

Why they hate us so much
Why they want to destroy us
Why they won't let us have food or water
Or hospitals

Why they destroyed our schools
Why her family and friends are gone

She looks again at the soldiers on the hill, laughing,
smoking cigarettes
Cradling their guns like babies
A tear escapes from her left eye, streaming down her
cheek
She hastily wipes it away

She takes the rock out of her pocket
And fantasizes about all the things she'd like to do
with that rock

A_B

By V.v.itch

...
I can still believe, I still believe these iterations.
When cycles need repeat then they repeat past
iterations.
Left a mark and it was deep and now it needs a little
mending.
So let it be our feet that beat the path, our hands the
lending.
I might be left depleted as a face in dinner frames.
But wealth is a lot of names upon the 'thanks to those
who' page.
Whether others take the reins or take the mic or take
the stage.
I might be grinning grey hair knowing we are all the
same.
I know it's hard
Rumors out I'm mostly made of ash and bone.
The only part of raising hell they don't disclose is
sticks and stones.
They don't just break your bones, they will try to take
your soul,
and let your body walk through stable doors, yet
fragile homes.
Just make it stop.
Just make it not be what it's not.
Reconcile with the retreat before the last tick, the final
talk.

A gossip's bridle on that quick wit, we make art that
crisp sin.
When the witness has a death wish do you pitch in is
the question?

Shake me like a tree,
break me like a leaf,
I can take it...

This is not the end of days,
it is the end of theirs,
then we rebuild it...

We go from A to B...

You got a piece of that same muscle in your chest.
It aches when it feels defeat, and wilts without the
rest.
It is the knowing eyes of mothers having had to make
a choice.
Life is not a test, but it's a push, it has a voice.
Trust was never base camp for most of us anyway,
The thin air can be dizzying when you're stretched
out at the end of days.
So keep your eyes wide on that absent horizon.
People can be surprising when you let them be
surprising.

Shake me like a tree,
Drag me up from hell,
I can take it...

This is not the end of days,
I can let it fade,
then we rebuild it.

We go from A to B...

I went from memorizing voices into finding my own.
I went from treading water to simply floating in the
stream.
I'd rather be a baker than a collector of thrones.

We go from A to B...

We go from A to B...

...

Pretty Darn Good

By Brad Yoder

what if today was pretty darn good?
what if you did the best you could?
and what if your best is just what we need?
what if you didn't have to bleed?
started to fall, somehow you stood,
pretty darn good..

people wear masks to block out the light,
on darkness retreats, days at a time,
when they take them off, they start to cry,
colors have never seemed so bright,
in a past life I understood,
pretty darn good..
some days I dress in rags,
play my own punching bag,
recite my sins by heart,
where do I even start?..

once, in a dream, you were a child,
wand'ring this world, pristine and wild,
now a child laughs, then a child cries,
the wound and the wonder, side by side,
write your own poem, I knew you would,
it's pretty darn good..
started to fall, somehow you stood,
pretty darn good...

JULY PSST! ARTISTS

Cash K. Allen is an indie folk songwriter from Northwest Ohio, currently residing in Pittsburgh. He writes personal and referential songs that anyone can relate to, and is known for vulnerable, acoustic-driven storytelling.

Insta: @cashk.allen

David Wang is a multi-disciplinary artist. He is everything and nothing and love and hate all at the same time.

Insta: @wangd08

I Medina is a poet, writer, spoken word artist, mother, creative cultural producer, pleasure activist and plant based culinary enthusiast. Originally from South Berkeley, CA, she moved to Pittsburgh in 2001 and has been committed to the city ever since.

Insta: @medina.jackson.16

V.v.itch is a trip-hop and art project by Tavi Vojacek started in Oct of 2022. She blends her influences, love of music, and nature into a sample driven soundscape that can be hard to pin down. Her first EP, "Halloween", Was released in 2023. And her first Album "Wake Up In The Mourning" came out in November of 2025. Check out some of her work at thevvitch.bandcamp.com

Insta: @v.v.itch

Brad Yoder is a Pittsburgh singer-songwriter whose thoughtful, witty, and emotionally resonant songs have made him a beloved fixture of the local music scene for more than three decades. A many-time Pittsburgh City Paper Best Acoustic/Solo Artist, his music has appeared on television, NPR, and stages across the country.

Insta: @bradyoder

Hold On

Singalong; By Heidi Wilson

Sung by protesters in Minneapolis, January 2026

Hold on
Hold on

My dear ones
Here comes the dawn