

Screaming Towards Peace

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Chester Bennington stands at center stage, a study in opposites: slacks and sneakers, full tattoo sleeves peeking out from under an impeccably fitted black suit, dark amber shades that look only a hair too casual for a funeral. No one can see his eyes, and one wonders if this was intentional.

The bald white Arizona-born singer and his bandmates are seated on stools, suggesting a quiet, somber performance, but he grips the mic stand tightly, almost desperately, like he wants to either hit something with it or swing it around like a dance partner. The outdoor stage is large and dark and mostly empty, the backdrop speckled with points of light that would look like a star field were it not for the huge Mercedes-Benz logo to the side. The crowd is cheering, raising arms and making what's known in the heavy metal community as the sign of the horns: middle and ring fingers held down by the thumb, index and little fingers extended like devil horns. The atmosphere feels like a rock concert, but as soon as Chester starts speaking, everyone goes quiet. Everyone is listening.

“We were going to come out and play ‘Heavy’ first,” says Chester, “but in light of our dear friend Chris Cornell passing away, we decided to play our song ‘One More Light’ in honor of him, to start this off. We love you Chris.”

The occasion is the taping of *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* on May 18, 2017. The band is American nü-metal/rap rock group Linkin Park, currently promoting their new album *One More Light*. And Chester,

the man with the tattoos, is Linkin's co-lead-singer of 18 years, one of their most prominent voices and faces (alongside rapper and other co-lead Mike Shinoda) throughout their 21 years. But in this moment, he presents himself not as the rock star, not as the artful screaming tenor behind Linkin's distinctive sound, but as a mourner. The suicide of Chris Cornell, frontman of the band Soundgarden and Chester's close personal friend, is less than a day old. Chester may have just have found out hours before performing.

And so Chester sings. He sings "One More Light," one of the quietest and most mournful songs on a quiet, mournful album of the same title. *One More Light* has been heralded as a distinct departure from Linkin's previous musical stylings, most of which have been angry, up-tempo, and loud. And a week later, on May 26, 2017, Chester performs another quiet song—Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah," accompanied by Linkin's guitarist Brad Delson, at Cornell's funeral. One of rock's most iconic screamers is in pain, and he isn't mourning through noise, it seems, but through silence, stripped-down guitar melodies, and vocals as slow and measured as they are impeccably sung.

"Who cares if one more light goes out? / In a sky of a million stars," Chester sings, note-perfect, his voice not yet wavering. "It flickers, flickers."

When a singer dies, a fan's first instinct is to immediately start playing their songs, which is either quite beautiful or quite sad. On the one hand, it's the perfect act of remembrance—one can literally hear the voice of the deceased even after their passing. This is the gift that musicians can give the world; every replay is memory, tribute, and resurrection all in one go, and all of it in their own voice. Very few people get any say in how they're remembered, but musicians do.

On the other hand, one can't help but think of how very small such an act is. Many of us never meet our idols, never get to know them as people, never get to see beyond the public persona, the brand, the airbrushed photos and orchestrated mp3's. When we mourn an artist by replaying their songs, a cynic might say, we reduce them to products, which is tragic in its own way if that's the only way we knew them. It's an interesting intellectual exercise: how do we mourn someone we never really knew? And, for that matter, why do we even bother?

But when Chester killed himself, a few months after he sang for

Chris Cornell's suicide, I found myself not thinking about any of this. I just wanted to listen to him sing.

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When a singer dies, a question must be asked: with what song will we remember you? It's at once as trivial as hitting *Shuffle* and as heavy as the world, especially for fans of more established artists with more material from which to choose. "What part of you represents all of you?" we ask. In other words: "What song are we going to play now that you're gone?"

When I went on my memorial sound trip on the morning of Chester's passing, I found myself alternating between two Linkin Park songs. There was "Leave Out All the Rest," a slow keyboard-and-guitar-driven ballad from *Minutes to Midnight*, one of the band's most famous albums. In it, Chester's voice is somber, melancholic, and reflective, as he asks to be remembered fondly after he dies. "When my time comes," Chester sings, "forget the wrong that I've done / help me leave behind some reasons to be missed."

The other song was "Battle Symphony," part of *One More Light*, the last album Chester recorded before he died. Its sound is at once more like "classic" Linkin Park than that of "Leave Out All the Rest," and less so: their signature crashing percussion and guitars are back, but without the dense layering and texture of the band's usual complex orchestration. The song sounds more like a rock band, but also more like *any* rock band. Nevertheless, when the chorus ends—the words "And my eyes are wide awake" rising in volume until the instrumentals cut out, leaving silence where before there might have been noise—you get the sense that this isn't just any anthem about not giving up, but one about facing one's demons and looking them straight in the eye. The tone and themes (to say nothing of that drumline-like beat) are more optimistic than one might expect from Linkin Park, but the undercurrent of pain and desperation and rage is still there, driving the hope forward, giving it grounding and gravitas.

But neither of these, precisely, encapsulated what Chester meant to me, not really. Neither of these could quite explain why, out of all the celebrity deaths I've experienced, this was the one that hit home. And neither of these, on the morning of Chester's passing, were enough to stop me from searching for songs to replay.

This is the signature Linkin Park sound: aggressive guitar riffs, crashing cymbals and percussion, intricately layered keyboard and instrumental work, and Chester Bennington's smooth tenor yelling out a chorus while Mike Shinoda's sniper-precise rap rounds out the verses. They're known primarily as a nü metal/rap rock hybrid, but their influences range from heavy metal to alt-rock and even electronic pop, and this shows in their habit of trying out new sounds and styles with every album (particularly pronounced with 2010's *A Thousand Suns* and everything that came after it, after the mid-2000's "golden era").

A casual listener would say that Linkin Park sounds like anger: rising frustration in the verses, bursts of controlled fury in the rap breakdowns, screaming release in the choruses. But to me, they've always sounded more like pain, in all its forms and oscillations: dull migraine aches, sharp violent spasms, a raw punch to the gut, an open wound. And throughout their long career, they've continually found new forms and musical expressions for pain: the dense overlapping noises of *Hybrid Theory* and *Meteora*, the somber keyboards and marching percussions and quiet storms of *Minutes to Midnight*, the hungry electronic prayers of *A Thousand Suns*, even the hard-edged bitterness of *Living Things* and the messy clashing instrumentals of *The Hunting Party*—and, yes, the soft desperation of *One More Light*.

When it was released in early 2017, *One More Light* was a hit with mainstream critics, who heralded it as a successful experiment for a band known for changing their sound with every album (and a return to form after *The Hunting Party*, which many felt had been unremarkable at best). Much of Linkin's core fanbase, however, decried *One More Light* as being too much like mainstream pop, as being too electronic and not rap-rock enough. *The Hunting Party* had been unremarkable, yes, but at least it was *Linkin*. At least it didn't sound like they'd sold out.

But after Chester died, Linkin's fanbase seemed to look upon *One More Light* with new eyes. It was almost too perfect—downright eerie—that the band released its quietest, most somber album just before its frontman took his own life. *One More Light* was perfect eulogy music, but more than that, it felt almost prescient, like an anointing of the sick performed on well-worn guitar strings layered over experimental electronic beats. In the wake of Chester's passing, many fans called each other out for their

earlier reception of *One More Light*, accusing each other of unnecessary cruelty when the album first dropped (because really, what else besides unnecessary cruelty would you expect from YouTube comments?) and of changing their tunes only out of guilt. The rules of engagement for those who've spoken ill of someone who's passed away, it seems, are just as true for rock star suicides as they are for anyone else.

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I first became aware of Linkin Park in grade school, back when I still watched TV and didn't yet know to pretend like I had any taste in music. I was a sheltered middle-class Filipino kid without any peers who lived close enough to make excuses to not hang out with me, so I would spend a lot of my time watching music videos on Studio 23, during commercial breaks in the middle of superhero cartoons. The most commonly played video was Linkin Park's "Points of Authority," which I loved not for any musical merit—it was a good if unremarkable rage-against-the-man song from a band that had done far better—but because the video featured alien soldiers laying siege to a futuristic military base ruled by disembodied heads and defended by glowing blue tentacles. It was brash, weird, and give-no-fucks kitsch, which meant it was tailor-made for a lonely grade-school boy's definition of cool. And because Mom and I still lived with Dad and his family, he would tape the cartoons on VHS for me sometimes, and while I didn't always remember which episodes were which, I always remembered which tapes had the Linkin Park videos on them.

It was also around this time that Dad began to be—for lack of a better term—difficult. He'd always had a temper problem, but my second and third grade were when he began taking it out on me. At first, it was just a certain harshness when it came to low grades, a particular intolerance for instructions being disobeyed and homework being delayed in favor of leisure. But over time, it escalated into near-weekly yelling from Dad over minor indiscretions (which invariably included scolding me for crying over being scolded), all while he never showed up for family dinners and honors ceremonies. The first time I didn't get first honors and told him I'd done my best, he said, "Yeah, but your best wasn't good enough." After that, I was no longer sure I wanted him around for honors ceremonies after all.

I could never relax around Dad; when he was around, I'd clench my fists to keep my hands from shaking, and every breath was a deliberate effort to not look scared. Every spare moment was spent mentally cataloguing everything he'd told me to do and making sure I'd done it correctly, making sure I hadn't given him any reason to be mad. My father had at this point become something to be survived, a walking, talking, stalking lesson in how to live with pain: clench your fists, keep your head down, say nothing, wait it out.

I wish I could say that Linkin Park was how I coped with my father's worsening attitude. It would certainly make sense, what with all their lyrics about frustration and anger towards authority figures. When I hear "Points of Authority" now, I listen to the chorus—"You like to think you're never wrong / You like to act like you're someone / You want someone to hurt like you"—and I think of the time my father screamed at me for trying to comfort a cashier at whom he was already yelling. I think of how his head whipped around and seized me with a glare as he said, "Do not countermand me in public." Today I think of how Mom told me later that my Lolo yelled at Dad too when he was a boy, and I wonder whether Dad's sins were anything like mine.

But the truth is, when I was in grade school, I never once heard that chorus and thought of Dad. I didn't listen to "Points of Authority" because I wanted to sing it at Dad, because at that age, I genuinely didn't know how to be angry at my parents. (I didn't know how to let myself be angry at my parents.) Yelling from a father, even unjustified, was just something you lived with; fighting back was anathema. If I imagined any connection between myself and the speaker in "Points of Authority," it may have been this: the speaker has enough hurt to scream, and decides that he's going to take that scream and turn it into something people will want to hear.

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Here is what we know about Chester Bennington's death:

He was found dead by hanging on the morning of July 20, 2017 in his home in Los Angeles County. He was alone.

He was a recovering alcoholic—he'd struggled with addiction throughout much of Linkin Park's golden era, claimed to have kicked

the habit by 2006, but relapsed sporadically in the year leading up to his death—and there was an open bottle of alcohol in the room where he died.

Bennington's father was a police detective who worked on child-sex cases, but was described by an adult Bennington as “not emotionally stable.” When Bennington was sexually abused by an older male friend in his childhood, he didn't tell his father until much later.

Despite this, Bennington decided not to pursue a case against his abuser after learning that he had been a victim too, earlier in his life. Strangely, conspiracy theories after Bennington died would try to link both him and Chris Cornell to a supposed investigation into Hollywood pedophiles, but nothing seems to have come of that.

He died barely two months after Cornell's suicide, and only a week before Linkin Park was set to go on tour for *One More Light*.

After Cornell's memorial, with *One More Light* having received widespread accolades from mainstream music critics and significant radio play for its lead single “Heavy,” Bennington tweeted that he'd just written six new songs, and had told friends he was feeling creative.

There is a video of Bennington performing in June 2017 at Hellfest, a French hard rock and heavy metal festival, where he appears in full shirtless tattooed glory, and performs “Heavy” to the tune of an audience nearly booing him off the stage. They warm up to him by the second chorus, but one wonders how he managed to get that far.

Bennington was easily the most jokey and outgoing member of Linkin Park. Watch any behind-the-scenes video of the band touring or producing music, and you'll see that half of it consists of Chester messing around and making faces at the camera.

After Bennington died, his second wife Talinda became outspoken on her social media accounts about suicide awareness. She posted videos and photos taken days, hours before Bennington's death, showing him smiling, laughing—seemingly the literal picture of happiness—to show that “depression doesn't have a face.” In response, Bennington's ex-wife, Samantha, later posted an angry Facebook rant about Talinda, in which Samantha accused Talinda of withholding Chester's belongings from their son Dra, and of capitalizing on Chester's death with a funeral that she claimed was not what he (or she) would have wanted.

After Bennington died, the five remaining members of the band—co-lead-singer and rapper-in-chief Mike, guitarist Brad, drummer Rob Bourdon, keyboardist Dave Farrell, and bassist Joe Hahn—released a new logo, in which the hexagon that framed their stylized “LP” was now missing one of its sides. As of November 2017, there is no word on whether the new logo will be permanent, or what the band will do now that its lead vocalist has passed.

After Bennington died, the band released the official video for “One More Light.” It’s notable in that it never shows him looking anything but happy, at peace, the picture of lighthearted dignity. Concert spotlights, lens flares, and the dozens of lights from people’s raised cellphones become a painfully beautiful visual motif, twinkling steadily as Chester’s voice sings, “Who cares if one more light goes out in a sky of a million stars? It flickers, flickers. Who cares when someone’s time runs out? If a moment is all we are, or quicker, quicker, who cares if one more light goes out? Well, I do.” The last images in this video are of Chester ending a performance: in one, he’s bending down and reaching out to his audience, and in another, he’s facing the crowd, his back to the camera, as he spreads his arms wide and bows.

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Here is what we don’t know about Chester Bennington’s death: what role any of this actually played in Chester’s own decision to hang himself.

The old cliché: when someone you love commits suicide, you go through their journals, their social media, every interaction you’ve ever had with them, searching for the signs you think you should’ve seen earlier. “If only they’d told us,” we tell ourselves, “if only they’d said something about what they were going through, maybe we could’ve helped them.”

Being a Linkin Park fan in the wake of Chester’s passing isn’t like that, though, because the signs are everywhere. Every single album features Chester singing of hurt, of loss, of anger at fathers and the world and life itself, in the grand tradition of the metal and rap that form the core of Linkin Park’s influences. And in his interactions with fans, Chester never hid his personal demons—addiction, depression, being sexually abused as a child—but many seemed to assume that screaming his vocal cords out onstage, tattooed torso as bare for the world to see as his heart, was

exorcism enough for him. The signs of pain were there in abundance; we just didn't think anything would actually *happen*.

The insidious thing about mental illness is that, like any illness, it operates not by killing you directly, but by subverting your own natural processes and turning them towards self-destruction. Depression wins by making suicide make sense. This is why all the advice to “choose to be happy” misses the point completely: it's the faculty of choice itself that is sick. And with a singer like Chester, it's even harder to speculate. We're lost not in the absence of answers, but in an overabundance of them. “Maybe this song is the one that explains his suicide,” we theorize, “or maybe this one, or maybe this other one.” And so it goes.

I find myself going back to “Heavy,” the widely played single from *One More Light* that nevertheless got heaped with scorn by many “purist” Linkin Park fans. I confess I counted myself among those who, upon first hearing the song with its delicate, seemingly simplistic instrumentation, thought, “This doesn't sound like them at all,” although I like to think it may have been because I first heard it when I was drunk. Subsequent replays, however, revealed the Linkin edge under the pop veneer. The first chorus begins with the line “Holding on,” something which in an earlier Linkin work might have been punctuated by slamming drums, but which here is marked by the instruments cutting out, a sudden loss of all sound apart from the vocals, so all you get is one voice—Chester's—asking, “Why is everything so heavy?” This line repeats during subsequent choruses, and only here do they bring the drums in; the noise now comes only after the silence, as the question repeats louder and louder, with ever more urgency, ever more desperation. The signature Linkin rage inheres this song, too, but now it's willing to be quiet, to build before it bursts, to ache.

This is, to date, one of the only Linkin Park songs whose most memorable line is a question rather than an exclamation: “Why is everything so heavy?” The question, fittingly, remains unanswered.

(“Do you want to die because you hurt,” I ask no one in particular, while listening to the chorus again, “or do you hurt because you want to die?”)

Here is what we actually know about Chester Bennington's death: that it happened, when and how it happened, what happened afterwards,

how the people around him moved on, how they didn't. But as for beyond that—the why of it—we barely know anything at all.

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When a band resonates enough with you, it stops being an interest and starts being a language, a way to articulate, if only to yourself, the experiences for which there are no other words. Music becomes the vocabulary of memory; you begin to associate events with songs not because they were actually playing at the time, but because these songs are what these memories sound like, because there's no other way to recall them except through their music and lyrics.

For instance: it is 2003 and I am trailing behind my father in the basement parking lot of Power Plant Mall, two years after Mom and I moved out of his parents' house, and Dad is still yelling. Our unused movie tickets are crumpled in my hand, the only things blocking my nails from digging into my palm. My head is down; all I can see is pavement. Dad is angry at me for comforting the cashier at whom he'd been screaming, and whenever I try to picture what he is saying, all I hear is classic-era Linkin Park metal. Dad's voice in my mind sounds like violent guitar and slamming drums and rough electronics, and I am 13 years old and my piano-key footsteps feel tiny, soundless, in comparison.

Dad says something—I'm sure it's not "I'm like this because I love you," but that's what I hear—and for the first time in my life, I yell back at him. The guitar cuts out; the drums fall silent. The instruments vanish and only the vocals remain: one lone voice asking, "Then why did you fuck your mistress?"

I later find out that this is the moment he was afraid he'd lost me forever, that he'd not only lost his marriage but the son that came out of it. Mom—somehow still friends with Dad even after the annulment—tells both of us, separately, that whether Dad loses me or not is entirely up to me. It brings me a strange kind of comfort to know that I can hurt him too.

And yet: it is 2017, and Dad and I are having burgers in Glorietta fourteen years later. We never stopped having our weekly dinners, even after that night in the Power Plant carpark, but since then we've rarely talked of anything more serious than comic books and politics. Still, our

non-serious dinners have seen us through a lot—thirteen pairs of birthdays between us, two graduations (both mine), Dad changing jobs, me entering grad school, Dad's heart attack, my first year of teaching.

On this night in particular, though, Dad does something he's never done before: he starts telling me about a problem at work, something he's only shared with me and the half-sister I've only met once. This is not something we do—Dad and I don't do feelings—but I nod, giving away nothing. (I've gotten very good at being terrified without showing him.) I consider my options: say something sympathetic, say something generic and noncommittal, say nothing and wait it out. But before I know what I'm doing, I'm giving him advice and helping him work through the problem, and we're actually talking about something real, in a way I didn't think fathers and sons could. It feels important, in a way for which I don't have the words.

But whenever I try to recall the details of this conversation, the first of its kind in my 26 years of existence, I draw a blank. In my mind, Dad's mouth opens, and all I hear is guitar—not angry strumming this time, but a quiet, deliberate plucking, the notes coming slow and lonely and clear, like something out of *One More Light*. He doesn't sound like the Dad I grew to fear as a boy and learned to manage as a teenager, but what he does sound like is *normal*, is *like any father*, is *human*. (Is the band different, now, or is it the listener who's changed, or are these two different ways of asking the same question?) And when it's my turn to speak, it sounds to me like the piano entering the song, not drowned out by the louder instruments, but for the first time an equal part of the mix. It's not an apology, and it doesn't erase the years of hurt and harsh metal noises and rage, but it feels like a new sound altogether—more tentative, more experimental, perhaps a little less metal—and I find that I'm okay with that. Call it, perhaps, a demo track.

I return to these moments now, and I think about my father, and about his father—when it was that Lolo stopped yelling at Dad, whether Dad ever yelled back, what the two of them talk about now. I think about Chester's sons listening to Linkin Park in their two separate houses with their two different mothers, and I wonder whether they fought with their dad too, if they ever heard echoes of those fights in his songs, how it must feel for them to hear their dad's music now that he's gone. And I wonder

if screaming towards peace is just how some fathers and sons learn to love each other—if all any of us are doing, really, is fighting to be heard.

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The child in me says: the lesson in Chester Bennington is *we all lose our idols sometime*. Just as our fathers aren't gods, our heroes aren't immortal, and sooner or later, whether through death or disappointment or a fall from grace to humanity, the icons to whom we look will invariably topple. Growing up, perhaps, means this: we who remain must grow to live with—and, perhaps, fill—the void they leave behind.

But the adult in me says: no, the lesson in Chester Bennington is *seek help when you can*. There is no shame in needing help, and if Chester Bennington is yet another in a long line of celebrities who've lost their lives to mental illness, maybe this is one tragic step closer to the world realizing the enormity of the fact that so many people need help. There's comfort, I think, in the idea that some good can come out of tragedy, even if it is otherwise too late.

But the artist in me says: no, the lesson in Chester Bennington is *the best art comes from a place of truth*. I go back to the Linkin songs I remember, now, and think, in hindsight, of course Chester was battling his own demons. For all that Linkin Park are craftsmen, the material with which they worked had to be raw and desperate and true and unrelenting, or it wouldn't have been so powerful. There's a kind of comfort in that, too; there is solace in the idea that pain can not only be endured, but can be molded, can be shaped, can be performed onstage for fans who will hold their hands up in the sign of the horns for you if you do it well enough, and who'll come to your concerts anyway even if you don't.

But the human in me says: no, the lesson in Chester Bennington is *there is no lesson*. The human in me says *I refuse to reduce Chester to "the artist whose every song was just an unheard cry for help"*. Nor will I eulogize him by saying *his death gave us all this beauty*. Chester may have turned his pain into his art, but art and pain are not the sum total of a life. He was a performer, yes, but also an activist, an advocate, a friend, a father. And any attempt to "solve" him, to find the one crack that explains his brokenness, to turn him into a moral lesson, to look for one song and claim that it might encapsulate everything he was, is to reduce him to a stereotype, the way

the deceased are shrunken into portraits and eulogies, the way a band is flattened into a single sound and nothing more.

So get help, if you need to, I write on Facebook, because that's part of how you mourn someone in the digital age, I suppose. *Yes, talk to somebody. Yes, Chester's story reminds us that everyone deals with their own demons, that we should never be ashamed to get help with ours, that we should be kind to each other, that everyone feels alone sometimes but no one actually is.*

But if there is anything to be gleaned from Linkin Park's discography, something to tell ourselves in order to make Chester's death more palatable, perhaps it is that it is entirely possible to live with pain, to endure for years and get better and get worse and make art out of your damage, to make one song and then make another and then make multitudes and then keep singing. The sheer length and breadth of the band's musical history is testament to this; Chester sang and shouted and screamed his way through 18 years of Linkin Park before succumbing to his demons, and the many forms their songs took are testament to how much can be made out of pain if you're willing and able to face it. Or perhaps what we take from this is not that pain can be overcome, or that pain can sometimes win, but simply this: that we can listen to each other, that maybe all we can do is keep listening, that pain has rhythm and melody and voice, that pain can be *heard*.

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The reason I keep going back to the *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* performance of "One More Light" actually has very little to do with the song itself, or with the fact that it sits right between Chris Cornell's suicide and Chester's own. Even if I were still looking for my one great Linkin Park song to memorialize the man, this would not be it, if only because I think the band has better songs, all things considered. No, what keeps me coming back to this performance is what happens at the end.

During the whole song, Chester stays seated at center stage, near-motionless apart from his mouth and head. During the camera's many close-ups of his face, you can see his expression twist into something pained during many of the lines; despite the shades obscuring Chester's eyes, you can tell he's holding back tears. He and his bandmates wrote the song to comfort the grieving, and now they find themselves mourners, too. And the audience, for their part, seems to be respecting Chester and giving

him his moment; there are no raised cellphones, no cameras, no screams or sing-alongs. It's just Chester, the band, the mic, and a silent crowd, all being there for each other for four and a half minutes.

The chorus before the bridge ends with the line, "Who cares when someone's time runs out? Well, I do." Then we get to the bridge, a wordless instrumental riff—all mournful keyboard and guitar strums—while the lights twinkle on the dark backdrop, the band's own personal firmament. Throughout all this, Chester's face is visibly contorting; he's leaned back, working his mouth silently without saying anything. Then at the very end of the bridge, Chester belts out, "I do," screaming the notes with pitch-perfect precision and holding them flawlessly; this is the voice that's carried most of Linkin Park's vocals for years, and even choked by sorrow, it's a thing of awe.

Then the final chorus begins. Chester makes it through the first half without skipping a beat. But then he sings "Who cares when someone's—" and his voice breaks. The next three words—"time runs out"—go unsaid. In their place, Chester visibly swallows, holding something back, but the silence is brief, and he regains his voice in time for the next line.

"Who cares when someone's— / If a moment is all we are / We're quicker, quicker."

The beauty of that moment is this: the camera is at this point not actually focused on Chester, but on Brad the guitarist, seated to Chester's right. Throughout the entire performance, Brad has been playing with his head down, focused purely on the music and the song. But right after Chester goes quiet, Brad looks up and glances his way for a split-second—plucking his strings all the while—before looking back down at his guitar.

This, perhaps, is what Chester Bennington means to me—not a slogan, not a song, but an image: the image of a man in pain asking "Who cares when someone's time runs out?" but unable to form the words, and the image of his friend checking on him wordlessly, just as the man himself sings, in reply, in grief, in triumph, in his own voice, accompanied by guitar and piano and a crowd waving their arms and a sky of a million electronic stars, "Well, I do."