

Wordcloud Exercise

Getting the mind out of its natural patterns sometimes requires tricks. Also, the narcissist in us likes to see things that essentially are extensions of our own selves, like poems, children and even waves created by stones we throw into the lake. The Wordcloud software at: <https://www.wordclouds.com/> can be used to create interesting poems from our own work, or text we get from anywhere, including essays, newspapers or magazine articles. This particular software can also create wordclouds in various shapes.

I got a poem from a New York Times article about Hassan Ibn Ali, a Philadelphia Jazz legend and Coltrane contemporary. A recording presumed lost in a fire was found 56 years after the studio session that produced it and released on CD. I loved that Hassan had the temerity to knock a piano player off the bandstand when he felt that musician was not worthy of playing with John Coltrane. The poem:

29-mayo-2021

He may've been a vice
roy (royalty of vice)
& tobacco & the junk &
the work ethic & Steve Kuhn
get the fuck off Coltrane's
bandstand!

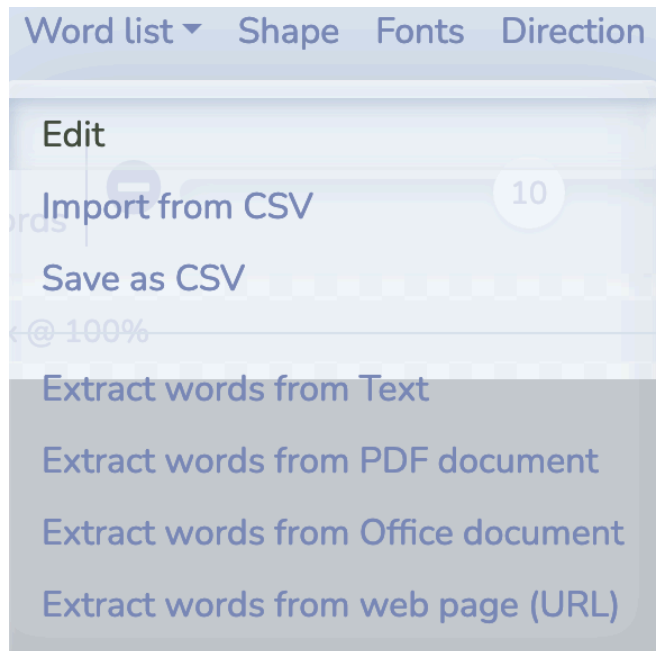
Here we are Hassan 56
yrs to wait for yr
Metaphysics & worth
ev'ry last trill.

Paul E Nelson "Hassan's
Metaphysics" Collage, paint, print
& stickers on postcard, 4x6" 2021
9030 Seward Park Av S, #213
Seattle, WA 98118 USA
splabman@icloud.com



I felt the shape of the African continent was the best option for this Wordcloud, given Hassan's background.

To create your own wordcloud, go to <https://www.wordclouds.com/> and click the drop down at "Word List." See:



If you click "Extract words from Text" you can paste in words from a document of yours (a manuscript or perhaps a week's worth of journal entries) or try the other options. Paste in, click "apply" and alter the shape, the size of the font and even word frequency if there are words you do not want in your wordcloud, or certain words you want to amplify more than others. The more times a word appears in the text you feed into it, the larger those words will appear in the wordcloud.

EXERCISE: Make a Wordcloud from text of your own or a newspaper article on a topic that you find interesting. Keep playing with options until you find one that works. Then, use words from that wordcloud to create a poem using connections that seem to make sense from those to which your eyes and mind is directed.



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7:56pm
23-JAN-2022