

TRANSCRIPT BULLETIN

Dedham author/illustrator helps get 'Peace Train' book on track

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DEDHAM -- Author and illustrator [Peter Reynolds](#) worked with singer-songwriter [Cat Stevens/Yusuf Islam](#) to bring his song “Peace Train” alive with illustrations.

More than 100 people celebrated the publication of the picture book version of the classic song, which just celebrated its 50th anniversary, via Zoom on Saturday, May 8. Working with Stevens, Reynolds brought to life the lyrics to this ode to peace through his captivating illustrations.

The virtual book launch was hosted by Peter and Janet Reynolds of [Blue Bunny Books & Toys](#). People from all across the globe joined the Zoom meeting to attend the book launch, including Barcelona, Canada, California and Virginia.

Reynolds hosted his book launch from the [Reynolds Center](#) in Dedham, a nonprofit organization (501.c3) that encourages creativity and innovation in teaching and learning. He opened the book launch by discussing his love for books and creativity.

“Picture books are still one of the best technologies for sharing inspiration, inspiration, and really important messages like peace,” Reynolds said. “We all need more peace in our lives, we all need to be more peaceful ourselves - there’s inner peace, and there’s the peace around us, and then there’s peace in the universe. We’re aiming big here, we want universal peace.”

Reynolds also explained how the book and its illustrations came to be. “I got a call during lockdown, around October. I got a call from my agent, and she told me that somebody wanted to work with me. She asked me if I knew Cat Stevens,” he explained. Reynolds is a big fan of Stevens’ music, and Stevens loves Reynolds artwork, so they collaborated for the 50th anniversary of Stevens’ song, “Peace Train.”

Reynolds discussed his creative process for illustrating the song. He closed his eyes and imagined what a “peace train” would look like. Reynolds decided that instead of running on coal, the train would be environmentally friendly and run on love, peace and optimism.

“It’s the people on board the peace train that fuel the train,” Reynolds said. “Instead of smoke coming out of the train stack, I imagined all these wonderful things coming out of it, like flowers, stars and planetary magic.”

Stevens dedicated the book to activist [Greta Thunberg](#) and “all the children of the beautiful world,” and Reynolds dedicated the book to [John Lennon](#), [Yoko Ono](#) and “all the creative peace cats.”

The lyrics to Cat Stevens’ “Peace Train” resonate with many people today, especially during COVID times -- “Now I’ve been happy lately/ Thinking about the good things to come/ And I believe it could be/ Something good has begun/ Oh, I’ve been smiling lately/ Dreaming about the world as one/ And I believe it could be/ Someday it’s going to come.

‘Cause I’m on the edge of darkness/ There ride the Peace Train/ Oh, Peace Train take this country/ Come take me home again/ Now I’ve been smiling lately/ Thinkin’ about the good things to come/ And I believe it could be, Something good has begun.”

The book launch was a special sneak preview of the “Peace Train,” since the book officially goes on sale next week.

Reynolds encouraged viewers to support local, independent bookstores.

To pre-order the “Peace Train”, visit <https://www.thedotcentral.com/peterhreynolds/pre-order-peace-train-by-cat-stevens-amp-art-by-peter-h-reynolds?fbclid=IwAR2ad-BJf37MVonqxjM72bJ993W-hJpWw5TU2kFMnTn8c4OHktpjhjwpn9U>.