

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session Monday, July 15, 2019

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held in the conference room of Congregation Beth Israel on Monday, July 15th from 6:59 to 9:13 pm. We had twelve attendees and heard seven great works. We were joined by Songsmith founder Mary Dawson, and Songsmith - Salado moderator Su Heflin and her main supporter, Bob. And we enjoyed some apples and veggies.

We started the meeting with a song title-generating exercise of using a portion of a favorite movie title, a noun, and, an adverb. The next optional assignment is to bring a badly-written song using this title to next month's meeting.

Mitch Lobrovitch started this critique session with his newest tune, entitled "Coyote", a lament to, the universe of the singer's late-night songwriting exploits. This very funny tune included some howling and some catchy repetition in the lyrics. Comments from the listeners were minor and included adding a few pauses for effect. Very cool, Mitch!

Stewart Moser played his guitar and sang, "Permafrost", a political song about perspective – especially as it relates to weather/climate/social change. No surprise, here - Stewart's chords were excellent and the group's suggestions included some very minor phrasing and melodic changes. Nice, Stewart - thanks!

Salado - Songsmith regular Sara Seven borrowed Stewart's guitar and sang "The Contractor Song", which wonderfully described the life of a war contractor communicating with loved ones back home. A lot of great images in this one and comments were very positive with only a few suggestions, such as changing the song title. Welcome to Austin, Sara – nice work!

John Stearle played a recording of his hilarious song "All Of The Great Band Names Are Taken", which described the singer's frustration with finding a truly unique band name. This song explored real-life outrageous band names and suggestions were few but included simplifying the lyrics just a bit to keep the song listenable. Great, John!

India Taylor played a recording of her song "Gift Of The Canon Ridge", which described the singer's assurances that there are good things waiting for us over the bridge. India's use of metaphor was excellent and the listeners enjoyed its spiritual message. Listener comments included some minor lyric suggestions and perhaps a different title. Super work, India!

Richard Paul Thomas played guitar and sang his song about immigration, entitled "The Cages Of Texas", which greatly described immigration difficulties. This song is currently being considered for an upcoming movie and was very heartfelt. Comments from the group included shortening the number of verses as well as chorus locations. Nice, Richard!

Joe Strouse brought a recording of his most recent tune, entitled "Better Than Before", which described the singer's appreciation for his significant other. The group suggested some small lyric changes in the bridge and re-considering the rhythm of the verses.

As always, the Songsmith - Austin monthly critique session meets on the third Monday of each month in the most excellent and spacious conference room at Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek Blvd, Austin, TX 78756. It's located on Shoal Creek Blvd, just north of 38th Street

(near Central Market, Seton Hospital, etc...), and just west of Lamar. Our next session is Monday, August 19th. We hope you can join us!