

Songsmith – Austin February Critique Session
(Monday, March 1, 2021)

The Songsmith – Austin February Critique Session was held via Zoom (briefly moderated by the under-the-weather Tara Heflin) from 7:09 pm to 9:06 pm on March 1, 2021 due to the arctic monsoon which pre-empted our February 15th session. We had 12 Zoom attendees and heard nine excellent works in progress.

Newbie Kevin Mallory (living in the DC area) started the session by playing guitar on his poignant song, “Dilemma”, which described a police officer’s perspective during a confrontation. Kevin’s Nirvana-inspired song did a great job of considering “what is right and what is easy”. Comments were only a few minor lyric changes. Thanks, Kevin!

Mary Dawson brought a co-write with Laurie Hanson Roberts, entitled “O Bountiful Provider”, a wonderful spiritual song which described giving thanks to God for life’s gifts. This song was beautifully produced and sung by Laurie. Comments were few and the group really liked this song. Super work, Mary and Laurie!

Stewart Moser provided his song “A Shot In The Arm” which described a very real necessity for resuming “normal” life this year. This song was very well written and performed and as always, had cool chords. The group really liked this song and comments were very minor. Great song, Stewart!

Scott Joffee played guitar and sang his song “I Can’t Say It’s Over”, which described difficulties in a relationship. This well-written song had an interesting musical transition between the verses and the choruses, which was discussed. Suggestions included some minor lyric changes as well as tag/title line options. Nice, Scott – thanks!

David Stewart brought a co-write with Larry Vail and Becky Fleisher, entitled “Do The Don’ts”. This well-crafted song described celebrating the upside of an unpredictable relationship. Great images and great movement – input from the group included a few small lyric changes. Great co-write, y’all!

John Stearle brought his FAWM song #14 (and video) “Pooting Sphincter Polka”, a spoof of the “Pennsylvania Polka”. As one might assume, the video images supported the lyrics well and totally engaged the listeners. Positive reaction exploded swiftly for this latest from John’s imagination.

Michael Wesley Stinson played “Afraid”, co-written with his wife, which described relationship paths and commitment. This song was well performed and while the lyrics were not available, the group generally liked the performance. Thanks, Michael!

Greg Livingston played his song “Sailing” (also including his girlfriend Amy on backing vocals) which described how relationships sometimes move and sometimes do not. This Bon Jovi-styled ballad included some great metaphor elements which the group enjoyed. A few lyrical and musical suggestions were offered. Thanks, Greg and Amy!

Joe Strouse played his FAWN song #11, “You Knew Me When”, a description of a broken relationship with an odd twist. Comments included a few lyrical/story suggestions to make the result clearer before the last verse.

Finally, Joe described a possible group writing exercises (via Zoom) using Pat Pattison’s book “Songwriting Without Boundaries”, as suggested by Chris Meyers. Purchase of the book is not necessary but is very helpful. These free exercises include 10-minute writing exercises in a group setting and are designed to spur descriptive writing. If you’re interested, please contact Joe at strousongs@gmail.com Date(s) will be announced.

If you’d like to be included in March, please contact Tara Heflin (tara.incognito@gmail.com) and send her your lyrics (Word format, please) and if you’d prefer that we hear a recording, please also send an mp3 of your song before 4 pm (Central time) on Monday, March 15th.

See you on Monday, March 15, 2021!