

Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session
Monday, September 21, 2020

The Songsmith – Austin Monthly Critique Session was held via Zoom (moderated by soon-to-be Florida's most-excellent Tara Heflin) from 7:02 pm to 9:33 pm. We had 11 Zoom attendees and heard nine excellent works in progress.

Debra Redmond started the session with her song “Jesus In The Dark”, which (via spoken word) described the singer's difficulties in life and plea for help. This was a great first draft and the attendees offered several potential lyrical possibilities which included A-A-B-A and A-A-A-A song structures. Great start, Debra!

Greg Livingston sent his song “Bluer Than Sky” (great title!) which described his multi-song heroine receiving positive encouragement during a time of self-doubt. This cool blues song had great prosody and a few comments opened possibilities for changing the verse order. Excellent guitar work, as well – keep up the great work, Greg!

Stewart Moser sent his song “Biorhythms”, which wonderfully described the singer's changing heartbeat in relation to external forces that he can't control. Great chords, lyrics (which included the word Jeremiad – a session first!), and melody (especially the chorus). Very few change suggestions – super work, Stewart!

Joe Strouse sent his song “Grace Ann”, describing his memories as a boy and a 9-year old neighbor. Comments included some minor musical and lyric changes to let the listener know sooner that the POV was from an 8-year old.

David Stewart sent his song (co-written with Vancouver, Oregon's Steve Leader) “My Half-Ton”, a country tune which described the love for a pick up. And more. David and Steve had very descriptive lyrics and a great payoff in the last verse. There were a few lyrical suggestions as well - this was an outstanding effort – and welcome, Steve!

Scott Joffe sent his song “Water And Light” which described the singer's appreciation for a songwriter/performer who had really touched the singer's soul. Haunting and well crafted (as usual), this 6/8 tune had outstanding prosody, which the group appreciated and offered a few lyrical and melodic possibilities. You've done it again, Scott – thanks!

Mary Dawson sent her song “Unsolicited People” (a co-write with Bruce Greer) – a very 80s sounding tune which described how life's intrusions tend to affect our thinking and actions – especially when we're the intrusion. Comments were few but included some small areas of clarification. Nice, nice work!

John Stearle veered the session's direction (again) with his song and video of “Lady Lindsey”, a commentary about Lindsey Graham's changes in sides of issues. John's video was eye-catching (as usual) and did a great job of not bombarding the viewer with too many images. Suggestions were minor - thanks for another ride, John!

Brenda Merz sent her song “I Just Want To Praise You, Lord”, a Christian praise song which was very singable and easy to follow. Oh yes, a great chorus melody, too! Brenda said that she’ll play this in her church. The group’s comments were very minor and involved the lyrics. Thank you, Brenda – super work!

And as always, the Songsmith - Austin monthly critique session meets on the third Monday of each month. We’ll do this again by Zoom conference on Monday, October 19, 2020. If you’d like to be included next month, 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 on Monday October 19th.

See you on Monday, October 19th!