

Songsmith – Austin
August 17, 2026 Critique Session

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:07 to 8:21 pm on Monday, August 17, 2026, moderated by Joe Strouse. We had eight attendees and heard six cool (and diverse) songs in various stages of creation.

This month's *optional* songwriting challenge was to write a song in the third-person (she, he, they, them), such as The Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby", The Doobie Brother's "What A Fool Believes", or even Shawn Colvin's "Sunny Came Home".

Stewart Moser started the session with his song "ETA", which lamented on how airline travel schedules aren't necessarily on time - especially for a loved one who travels often. The group enjoyed this song and offered several lyrical possibilities, including moving the third verse to the first. Super work, Stewart!

Bill Basinski sent his stream-of-consciousness song "What Is Dish And What Is Dash?", which had super images concerning different events going on in life, using really excellent/clever rhymes. There were a few very minor lyrical suggestions to help make this song stronger. Nice work, Bill - thanks!

Kevin Mallory sent in his wonderful song "Stretch", which described staying in the moment and hoping to make it last even longer. This refrain-type song nicely embodied the s-t-r-e-t-c-h feel he was hoping to achieve. A few lyrical suggestions were offered, as well. Cool work, Kevin - good to have you with us!

Scott Joffe provided "Not Coming Back Again", a ballad with a slightly deceptive start and great story about a relationship. Scott's use of A-A-B-C-C-B style rhyming in his verses worked nicely. Comments included a few very minor lyrical suggestions, but regardless, another winner from Mr. Joffe - thanks!

Our semi-guy on the road (!), Gerald Lucas, provided an AI draft of "Don't Drink The Water" - a male-female duet created from a travel brochure he'd seen many years ago. Nicely done in English and Spanish, this country song was well done. Suggestions included some slight lyric/format changes, but good work, Gerald!

Joe Strouse provided his third-person song “Cupp” about a cantankerous and truly odd pest exterminator who may (or may not) have been licensed. The group liked the bittersweet story and offered a few minor lyric changes.

Kevin mentioned the “untrustworthy narrator” type of songs and a great discussion ensued over songs we might know that would fit this description - such as a number of Randy Newman songs, including “Political Science” and “Sail Away”.

Finally, Songsmith-Austin will not meet in September but will resume on Monday, October 19th at 7 pm.

Songsmith generally meets three out of the four Monday nights each month. As always, Songsmith has a Salado meeting (2nd Monday of each month), the 3rd Monday for the Austin meeting, and a DFW meeting (4th Monday of each month) where your songs can be heard and you can get feedback - always free – no dues, spam, or other obligations.

As always, we’re looking for Zoom-knowledgeable persons to moderate the DFW and Salado meetings. If you’re interested, please contact Mary Dawson at Mary@MaryDawson.com.

We hope to see you next on Monday, October 19, 2026 or sooner!