

Songsmith – Austin
May Critique Session
May 17, 2021

The Songsmith – Austin May Critique Session was held via Zoom (moderated by Tampa’s Zoom maven, Queen Tara Heflin) from 7:11 pm to 9:16 pm on May 17, 2021. We had 13 Zoom attendees and heard 11 diverse works in progress.

There was a double and triple-dog dare for the optional writing assignment from last month for a letter song but it had to exclude the salutation in the first verse. Five writers took on the challenge – hooray!

DFW’s very own Dori Weaver started the session with her Christian song “Fall On Him”, a very well written song about depending on God. Everyone really liked Dori’s melodies (wow - especially for the title in the chorus). There were some questions (and a few suggestions), but overall, really wonderful work, Dori - thanks!

Michael Wesley Stinson sent in his song “Blow Me Away”, a super response to this month’s optional challenge. This song was about lost love and repentance, which the listeners really enjoyed. Michael’s images and metaphors were effective and offered a few lyric possibilities which were noted. Congrats, Michael!

Joe Strouse sent his letter song “Little Brother”. This song was based on Joe’s volunteer work in the Big Brother/Big Sister program while in college. The group liked this remorseful song and several lyric options for the second verse were offered.

Kevin Mallory sent in his letter song “Ferryman”, which described the price we pay to travel. This (again) Nirvana-inspired tune was well done and the listeners offered a few lyric and production suggestions. Leora Salo also enlightened us about mythological and contemporary use of the term Ferryman. Great job, Kevin and thanks, Lia!

Stewart Moser sent his song “Teenage Crush”, an upbeat song (with the truly well-placed D7 chord) describing the singer’s lost crush returning after many years. Comments were offered to improve this song. This could be a Stewart classic - and could easily be played (and enjoyed) in public. Thanks, Stewart!

John Stearle successfully journeyed for new songwriting boundaries with “My Car Smells Like Your Bunghole”, sung by Greg Livingston and Amy Guentzel. This ode described a carpooling hazard and even offered how to remedy it. There were a few lyrical and structural suggestions to this attention-getting ditty. Great, John!

Greg Livingston sent his song “I Go Blind” (again with great help from Amy Guentzel) concerning separation of an intense love relationship. This cool song was well constructed (killer chorus!). Comments included a few lyric and timing suggestions - and everyone was relieved that it had nothing to do with a carpool. Super, y’all!

Scott Badger sent his song “Dear John”, a very well-written and sincere letter song concerning the singer’s apology for a past misdeed. Everyone appreciated Scott’s nicely written twist on the clichéd image of a Dear John letter. There were also a few minor lyric changes suggested by the group. Great work, Scott!

Eulalia King sent in her wonderfully written (and produced) song “Even Now (I’m Praying For You)”. This heartfelt song described the singer’s support of a person with spiritual and physical needs. Eulalia requested (and the listeners offered) feedback concerning what else could make this song stronger. Beautiful work, Eulalia – thanks!

Brenda Merz sent in her letter song “The Note”, which nicely described the frustration in having to write an apology and not getting it worded quite right. Attendees enjoyed this song and offered several suggestions for making it stronger (or funnier, perhaps). Nice, Brenda – thanks!

Mary Dawson sent in her upbeat co-write entitled “Happy, Joyous, and Free”, a very well produced song describing an optimistic outlook from Al-Anon members, along with several Al-Anon catch-phrases. Comments included reconsidering the rhymes in the chorus and emphasizing the song title a bit more. Very cool, Mary – thanks!

Songsmith meets three out of four Monday nights each month. As always, Songsmith has a Salado meeting (2nd Monday of each month) and a DFW meeting (fourth Monday of each month) where your songs can be heard and you can get feedback for free. Please send your lyrics (Word format, please) and your mp3 to Tara Heflin (tara.incognito@gmail.com) before 4 pm (Central time) of that Monday’s Salado or Austin meeting. You can send lyrics and your mp3 to Martha Gak at Marthagak@hotmail.com before 4 pm (Central time) for the DFW meeting

As always, the Songsmith-Austin meeting is always the third Monday. If you’d like to be included in the June Songsmith-Austin critique session, please send your lyrics (Word format, please) and your mp3 to Tara Heflin (tara.incognito@gmail.com) before 4 pm (Central time) on Monday, June 21st.

See you on Monday, June 21st or sooner!