

Songsmith – Austin
April 20, 2026 Critique Session

The Songsmith – Austin Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:08 to 9:50 pm on Monday, April 20, 2026, moderated by Christopher Meyer and Joe Strouse. We had 12 attendees and heard 11 excellent songs in various stages of creation.

Gerald Lucas began the session with his AI-assisted song “Hell Raiser On My Knees”, a country tune describing finding God after a life of misdeeds. The group gave quite a bit of feedback concerning the structure and lyrics, especially relating to backstory, Great start, Gerald!

Scott Joffe provided “Every 10 Steps”, a solemn tribute to repairing the world because of the everyone’s challenges (especially sorrow) in life. Listeners really liked this thought-provoking song and offered several possibilities for enhancing the title. Super work, Scott- thanks!

Phil Fielder sent his AI-assisted song “Over”, which described (very cleverly, in fact) how a relationship had ended. Comments included several lyrical possibilities as well as point of view clarification as to who had ended the relationship. Other comments included a possible title change. Nice start, Phil!

GrAmy emailed an AI-assisted (vocal portion) song, “Purr-fect Love”, as a continuing part of their play, describing the character Subra’s search for love. The song was very well performed and the group offered several suggestions for making it stronger, including the overall tempo. Excellent start!

Scott Badger sent in a recording of his ballad “A Wing And A Prayer”, using similes to describe a tenuous relationship. Scott’s guitar-vocal was compelling and everyone enjoyed the sincerity in this song. Suggestions included a few minor lyrical changes. Outstanding work, Scott - thanks!

Stewart Moser sent “To Bed”, a song about the singer’s antidote for life’s stresses. With great melody and chords, Stewart’s work gave a great sense of need for

sleep. Comments included some possible title clarification the chorus in order for listeners to not misinterpret the title. Cool work, Mr. Moser!

Mitch Lobrovich sent in a revised version of his AI-assisted song “Summer Rain”, describing the amorous connotations that summer rain could have in a repaired relationship. The vocals provided for this song sounded like Mitch’s singing (nice!) and the listeners liked the revision muchly. Great job, Mitch!

Unfortunately, Chris had to leave due to a family emergency (thankfully, it was later resolved), so Joe resumed moderating duties.

Bill Basinski provided “The Possum Kingdom Special Cup Of Scooter’s Coffee”, a lament about Bill’s recent experience with this particular establishment. Bill’s alternating spoken word and singing made this one particularly effective. Comments included some story background clarification. Thanks, Bill!

John Stearle sent in “Relax Your Anus”, an AI-assisted version of, well, you can guess. John wanted it to sound like an Elvis song but hadn’t quite adjusted AI to accommodate his vision for this ode to bodily function and stress. Comments from the group included several minor lyrical suggestions. So John-like, John!

Mary Dawson provided an AI-assisted version of her song “Blue Star”, which Mitch Lobrovich had helped on. The song was now a country version, very up-to-date sounding and the AI result was outstanding for this tune dedicated to families who have a loved one in the service. Great use of AI, for sure!

Joe Strouse send his ballad “Slow Hands”, describing how his dad could fix anything (mistake-free), given a bit of time. The listeners liked the descriptive song and the feeling imparted.

Joe then led a great discussion concerning how several well-known songwriters normally write the chorus first when creating a new song, whether it was musical first or lyrics first. As a result (yes, you *knew* this was coming), the optional songwriting challenge for May is to write a song by creating the chorus first.

Songsmith 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 year on Monday, May 18, 2026 or sooner!