

Songsmith – Austin February 16, 2026 Critique Session

The Songsmith-Austin critique session was held on Monday, March 16, 2026 from 7:07 until 9:10 pm, moderated by the awesome Christopher Meyer way up there in Chicagoland. We had 11 attendees and heard 10 excellent works-in-progress.

Mitch Lobrovich started the session with his AI-assisted song “Let You Fall”, a heartfelt tune about the singer/parent making the difficult decision to let their adult child fail without further help. The group enjoyed this poignant song and offered a few lyrical/structural comments to make the song stronger. Thanks, Mitch!

Joe Strouse sent in his song “11:57 ‘til Never”, a simple third person ballad about the inevitable end to a relationship. Suggestions included some phrasing and melodic changes to help with prosody.

John Stearle provided his AI-assisted 50s-style big band tune “Buttcracker” which described the singer’s disgust with a neighbor’s missing pants belt while working in the yard. The images were awesome and the song moved nicely. Comments were generally production and lyrically related but this was a very entertaining song - thanks, John!

Stewart Moser sent his love ballad “Bashert” (meaning it was meant to be) Beautifully played and sung, the original impression was of a human love, but later Stewart let us know it was love for a rescue dog. Very sweet, great images, and well crafted, the listeners did not have many comments for making this strong song even stronger. Great work, Stewart!

Bill Basinski sent in his multi-song-referencing ditty “I Shot The Sheriff”, an interesting stream of consciousness work created while he was driving his truck. This very humorous song led the listeners down several roads and alluded to a variety of classic song images. There were few comments but everyone enjoyed this one, nonetheless.

Long-absent Jorge Best provided his instrumental song “Opus 1682”, which had a wonderful melody and Jorge solicited lyrical assistance from anyone who might be interested in co-writing. A few comments were provided and at least one participant was interested in the opportunity. Nice work, Jorge - welcome back!

Grammy provided a re-write of their song, “Cut Deep”, describing the interaction between the scorpion queen, Torn and Astrea. This part of their play was very well done (great vocal pipes, Greg!) and discussion centered around lyrical changes in the re-write as to which versions(s) would be more effective and help prosody. Good work, y’all - thanks!

Phil Fielder sent in his AI-assisted country song “Tell The Devil Not Today”, describing the singer’s personal struggles with life and being more complicated from temptation. There were

several lyrical changes discussed to make this song even stronger which definitely gives Phil a lot to consider. Nice start, Phil - thanks!

Gerald Lucas sent his AI-assisted country song “This Town Ain’t Big Enough”, which described the singer’s meeting an old flame in public and regretting doing so. As with Phil’s song, there were several lyrical suggestions for making this song more cohesive for the listeners. Another classic start from Gerald - thanks!

Mary Dawson provided her co-write “Blue Star”, a tribute to families whose neighbors heliport when a loved one is deployed in the military. This song was well done and suggestions from the group were few but mostly centered on keeping the chorus but perhaps making the verses a bit shorter so that the choruses could stand out more. Beautiful work, Mary!

Joe briefly discussed the importance of melody and its integral relationship with sentence length in a song.

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 person to run the audio and visual portions for 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, April 20, 2026 or sooner!