

Songsmith – Austin  
July Critique Session  
July 17, 2023

The Songsmith – Austin June Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:04 to 8:35 pm on July 17, 2023. We had 8 Zoom attendees and heard seven great songs in various stages of creation.

Kevin Mallory sent his song “Cat Food”, a cool metal-inspired tune about what cats might think of society in general (as if they really cared). Kevin’s chorus were killer and the group really enjoyed this tune. Suggestions included a little more perspective but overall, another winner - thanks, Kevin!

Michael Wesley Stinson provided his song “Am I Who” describing the singer’s thoughts about being the person they want to be. Reminiscent of a Don Henley ballad, this tune was nicely written and engaging. Suggestions included some potential rhythmic and minor lyric possibilities (including the chorus). Good work, Michael!

Stewart Moser emailed his song “Zoom App”, which app-tly described the singer’s frustration with using Zoom for meetings. Great verses (repeating the first line) and great choruses in this one and definitely relatable for everyone. Suggestions were few and true to form for the last (and this) session. Good work, Stewart!

John Stearle re-appeared (after a brief vacation) and sent his song “Death March For A Slopper”, describing a decadent restaurant meal in Pueblo, CO. Six patties? Six patties?? The listeners groaned with (and enjoyed) this one. As usual. Several comments were noted and there was a sense of awe with John’s accompanying photo. Thanks!

Greg Livingston and Amy Guentzel (GrAmy) provided an continuation of their rock opera with a song entitled “High Winds”. This absolutely beautiful ballad about Estrella and Tristan could be the centerpiece that attains single status. Comments were very positive and included adding some more title repetition. Outstanding progress, y’all!

Mary Dawson emailed her song “Living Out The Vows” a co-written (with Bruce Greer) Toto-sounding upbeat tune about challenges faced in marriages and how they change over the years. Beautifully done, suggestions included recording it with a slower tempo and possibly stretching out the title in order to provide emphasis. Very nice - thanks!

Joe Strouse played his song “Tour De Force” describing the singer’s desire to someday ride a flat leg of the Tour de France (over several days). Comments included providing a little bit of clarification.

Finally, Joe briefly discussed how motion can impel a song forward, described in Pat Pattison’s five elements of lyric structure (Writing Better Lyrics, pp 180 - 188): (1) the number of lines, (2) the length of lines, (3) the rhythm of lines, (4) rhythm scheme, and (4) rhythm type. Joe also detailed some of these in his Tour De Force song. Finally, Joe’s optional challenge for August is to create a song using at least three (3) of these elements. Looking forward to who’ll participate!

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

As always, we’re looking for Zoom-knowledgeable volunteer 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](mailto:Mary@MaryDawson.com).

We hope to see you on Monday, August 21st or sooner!