

Locker Room Talk:

A Politically-Charged Story Told through Music and Analysis of Successful Songwriting

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A Creative Thesis Presented to the MTSU Honors College

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## Literature Review

The idea of a story being told through music isn't a new idea — this strategy has been presented in various forms for centuries. The first known implementation of this art form dates back to 1594 through Jacopo Peri's opera, *Dafne*, which told the story of Apollo — a deity in Greek mythology — falling in love with a nymph (*The New York Times*). The music to this opera has unfortunately been lost over the years. However, this style of work grew into a continuing legacy. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, for example, based a lot of his career on writing highly successful operas, including *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Die Zauberflöte* (Stanford University).

Opera continued as a primary form of entertainment in a variety of countries throughout the 17th and 18th centuries and beyond. In addition to classical opera, this notion of telling stories through musical compositions eventually branched into other forms, such as Vaudeville, Broadway musicals, and eventually, concept albums by modern musical artists. Vaudeville in the United States was born from a handful of producers who sought to establish a widely family friendly, every-day form of entertainment in the late 1800s. Vaudeville theaters held a variety shows, including circus acts, comedians, and, of course, short musical-type plays (University of Georgia). While Vaudeville mostly disappeared in the 1930s, it can be seen as a foundation for the growth of ever-popular Broadway musicals, and gave a career start to many Broadway stars (Mrockza).

Broadway's musical influence has bled into the modern pop music world. Artists from a variety of genres and eras of music have released albums with a complete story

line implemented into the song collection – these works are called “concept albums.” They are also often referred to as “operas” of that particular genre, as they are a story being told through music. For example, concept albums by rock bands are often called “rock operas.” One of the first bands to adopt this trend was The Who. *Tommy*, the group’s fourth studio album, is a rock opera that tells the story of a boy who becomes deaf, blind, and dumb upon witnessing his parents commit a murder (Sanders and Dalton). Their sixth album, *Quadrophenia*, is another rock opera about a young English man’s journey to find value in himself, with several political references to different aspects of British government and culture. *Quadrophenia* has since had a movie based on it (Rose).

There are many other examples of rock operas that were highly influential, but one that is worth noting is Green Day’s *American Idiot*. This album tells the story of a troubled adolescent who seems to be divided between conflicting “rage” and “love” personas. However, the story also contains a great amount of political symbolism with regards to events such as the Iraq War and appears to contain several jabs at the George W. Bush administration and conservatism in America (Payne). This album won the 2005 Grammy award for “Best Rock Album” (The Grammys). The album later inspired a Broadway musical of the same title (Music Theatre International). Other notable examples include David Bowie’s *Ziggy Stardust*, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and Pink Floyd’s *The Wall*. While this trend seemed to catch on as a gem of the rock scene, country music has acquired a handful of quite successful concept albums over the years as well, such as Willie Nelson’s *Red Headed Stranger*.

Concept albums, musicals, operas, and the like are all, in principle, just slightly different implementations of the same art form. Telling a story through song is an art form on its own that many would argue is different than just writing a song or a story.

### **List of Terms**

**Lyrics** - The words of a song (Merriam-Webster).

**Note** - Written symbols that represent a specific musical sound. (Merriam-Webster). In Western music, there are 12 unique notes.

**Melody** - A rhythmic sequence of notes organized as a whole musical component (Merriam-Webster). In a given song, the melody is the unique sequence and pattern of notes in which a vocalist sings the lyrics.

**Musical Accompaniment** - A musical section, instrumental or vocal, designed to support a melody (Merriam-Webster). In songwriting, musical accompaniment refers to the instrumental and background vocal components of a full musical composition.

**Timbre** - The quality of a sound, characterized by its tone (Merriam-Webster). This is a separate quality from its pitch and volume. Terms to describe different timbres include words like “sharp,” “piercing,” “flat,” “full,” “bright,” “dark,” “warm,” “airy,” “gentle,” etc.

**Song Form** - The format in which a song is written, based on its patterns of verses, choruses, bridges, and the like (Oxford Dictionaries).

**Verse** - One of the sections of a song that serves a story-telling function. Verses are typically looser in musical structure and are meant to set listener up for the chorus (Lazzerini). There are usually multiple different verses in a song, each usually describing details of the narrative being presented in the song. An example of a verse is following section from Journey's "Don't Stop Believing":

"Just a small town girl, living in a lonely world

She took a midnight train going anywhere

Just a city boy, born and raised in south Detroit

He took the midnight train going anywhere" (Cain, Et al.).

**Chorus** - The section of a song through which the main idea is presented. The chorus is typically repeated several times in a song and is often the most memorable part. In the words of Colin Lazzerini, "the chorus becomes the main course, the central core of the song, and the primary focus of the composer's creativity and inventiveness" (Lazzerini).

An example of a chorus is this section from The Beatles' "Let it Be":

"Oh let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be,

Whisper words of wisdom, let it be" (McCartney and Lennon).

**Bridge** - A contrasting section of the song that is not considered a verse or a chorus (Lazzerini). The bridge typically differs from the other sections of the song musically and

lyrically. It is intended to act as a break from the repetitive melodic and lyrical content of the verse and chorus.

**Hook** - A catchy and memorable idea within a song, usually during the chorus, that is used to keep the listener's attention. The hook can be either a lyrical phrase or melodic phrase, and, although there are exceptions, it is often identical to or contains the title (Lazzerini). An example of a popular music hook is the line "I wanna hold your hand" in The Beatles' song of the same title (McCartney and Lennon). Another example is "All my friends are heathens, take it slow" in Twenty One Pilots' "Heathens" (Joseph). Famous instrumental phrases such as the famous guitar riff in Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" can also be considered hooks (Osbourne, et. al).

**Chord** - Multiple notes (at least three) sounded simultaneously (Merriam-Webster).

**Harmony** - The relationship between the different combined notes of a chord (Merriam-Webster).

**Bar** - Refers to one measure of music. (Merriam-Webster).

## **The Formula of Commerciality**

### **I. Introduction**

It is simple fact that there is no magic trick nor is there a simple equation that can be used on a whim to create a song that achieves commercial success. It is a general consensus that songwriting is an art form that is truly without rules, and there is a wide variety of music on the charts, all with many different unique sounds and characteristics. However, while the many songs that have seen commercial success have several of their own unique qualities that make them special, there are also many patterns that have stayed fairly consistent, both across musical styles and over time. These patterns exist in a variety of musical qualities, including lyrical content, melody, song format, musical accompaniment, among other things.

### **II. Song Structure**

The amount of formats a song can be written in is almost endless, and many different ones are seen in commercial music — however, there is one song form that has become almost synonymous with commercial music: the “verse-chorus” form.

The chorus of a song is the repeated section that usually contains the hook. The chorus is typically the part of the song that listeners recognize the song by, and is typically very “big idea” based and general in lyrical content. Although there are exceptions, the verse typically comes before the chorus and is more detail-oriented; it lays out the story being told. There are usually multiple verses that tell different parts of the story. A typical verse-chorus form song will start with a verse or two, followed by a chorus, followed by another verse and chorus, sometimes a bridge, and a final chorus.



This song form has consistently shown to be the most commercially viable and most familiar. This method spoon-feeds the listener short sections of story details and quickly follows with a repeated, super catchy reinforcement of the main ideas — it is safe to assume that this concept is very satisfying to most listeners. Many of the most iconic songs in popular music use this form, including Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” and The Beatles’ “All You Need is Love.”

Going even further into the commercial success of the verse-chorus form, there appears to be a trend within this structure with regards to the chorus. Colin Lazzerini, a highly experienced Road House Records artist and jazz lyricist, notes that what he calls the “standard 32-bar chorus,” or an “AABA-form” chorus is utilized in an overwhelming majority of popular music. “The first eight bars (A) is a statement of melodic theme so catchy, so cool and lovely, that we want to hear it again. And so the second eight bars (A) repeats it. Then, before such repetition has a chance to become cloying or boring, the third eight bars introduces harmonic variation and another melody (B), which leads right back to a welcome return of the original melodic phrase (A) as the final eight bars of the chorus” (Lazzerini).

While it may be true that songs written in verse-chorus form have seen, by far, the most commercial success over the years, verse-chorus form is definitely not a requirement for successful music. There is a generous selection of iconic songs that do not use verse chorus form. For example, Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind” is composed of three verses. However, each verse of this song still contains the hook phrase: “The answer is blowin’ in the wind” (Dylan). This goes to show that, although a song doesn’t

have to be written in verse-chorus form to be commercial, the principle of having both a detailed story and a memorable hook phrase is a key, and arguably necessary, component of a commercial song written in any form.

### **III. Lyrics**

The first thing most people likely think of when they hear the term “songwriting” is lyrical content — the words of the song. Lyrics are the heart of the song; the part that listeners relate to most. Without meaningful lyrics, there isn’t much hope for a hit song. The goal of a lyricist should be to find clever and memorable ways to present relatable ideas. “Heartbreak Hotel,” as performed and co-written by Elvis Presley, is a song about loneliness and heartbreak, which is not a unique topic by any means. However, it is a highly relatable emotion, and it is presented in the form of staying at a “Heartbreak Hotel,” located “at the end of Lonely Street” (Paxton, Et al.). The presentation of the idea of loneliness in this song is done in a way that makes it unique, even though the topic itself is not.

The Craft of Business and Songwriting, written by John Braheny, a music industry consultant and mentor for songwriters, describes many different aspects of popular songs that make them so successful. Pertaining to lyrical content, one point that Braheny states is that imagination works its best when imagining simple images, meaning that when writing songs, a writer should be careful not to make their imagery too complex, as it can lose its effect, and the human brain tends to abandon an image if it is too extensive and complicated (Braheny, 55). An example of this technique being incorporated in commercially successful music is in the chorus of the number-two hit

song, *Boulevard of Broken Dreams* by Green Day: “My shadow’s the only one that walks beside me, my shallow heart’s the only thing that’s beating” (Armstrong). This song is about loneliness, and this emotion is spectacularly captured within this line. The imagery is very simplistic and requires little thought to understand, but accomplishes a lot; the image of seeing no one by your side but your own shadow and hearing nothing but your own heartbeat embodies the emotion of loneliness almost perfectly.

Braheny also names one of the most important factors in lyrical content as focusing on one emotion throughout the song (Braheny, 57-58). For example, the top 100 hit by Simple Plan, “Welcome to my Life” describes a feeling of alienation throughout the whole song and while it mentions bouts of anger and sadness, it uses this to connect it all to one feeling of alienation. It also says what needs to be said in some of the simplest terms possible. For example, see the first and arguably most memorable line of the song: “Do you ever feel like breaking down? Do you ever feel out of place, like somehow you just don’t belong and no one understands you?” (Bouvier, Comeau). This line does not contain any articulate imagery or sophisticated language, but it is very effective, because it effectively captures the frustration that comes with alienation in very simplistic and memorable terms. In other words, while it is important for a song to present a topic in a creative manner, it is also important to get to the point; convey what needs to be said without getting too complex. While a hit song is never guaranteed, if a songwriter can come up with a unique way to express an idea and effectively utilizes these few simple tools when writing lyrics, the chance of disappointment is significantly decreased.

#### IV. Musical Accompaniment

A writer might have a great set of lyrics, but the effectiveness of the music driving those lyrics can have a deciding influence on the overall quality of the song. The musical accompaniment must embody the emotions of the song through both the instrumentation choice and chord changes, and do so in a way that is pleasing to the ear. It is no question that music is highly subjective; the emotions portrayed by a particular music composition can be different for each listener. However, just like anything else, there are certain patterns that can be observed in commercial music — as a general consensus, certain chords and chord changes feel a certain way to most listeners.

It is important to utilize a blend of different chord types and use each one intelligently. Rikky Rooksby, a successful composer, author, and musical instructor, wrote the book, How to Write Songs on Guitar, which digs into the details of this very concept. For example, minor chords can be used to add melancholic or sad notes to the song, and major chords can be used to create a more happy, positive sound (Rooksby, 15-16). A good way to go about this is to use a combination of these as well as more complex-sounding chords, such as seventh chords, to give each song its own unique combination of emotions. Major seventh chords are said to evoke gentle and romantic emotions, while minor seventh chords bring a melancholic note to the song that doesn't sound quite as sad as a minor chord (Rooksby, 19-21). There are virtually endless possibilities of chord combinations, and they all have the potential to evoke completely different feelings; even slightly altering one chord out of a six-chord progression can make the entire song convey an emotion that is entirely different.

However, the catch is that the chord combination must still be pleasing to the ear, and the progression must have the potential to have a pleasing melody placed on top of it. So while it might be tempting, and often times helpful, for songwriters to get very adventurous with trying new chord schemes, commercial music trends have shown that keeping the progressions relatively simple goes a long way. In fact, there is one chord progression in particular that has been almost a given component of top-10 hits for decades: the “I-V-vi-IV” progression. This progression is thought by many to be highly overused, and while that claim definitely has a degree of validity, the simple fact remains that it has never ceased to work. This progression has shown to be highly versatile across genres, moods, topics, and tempos — and has resulted in one hit after another. Jason Mraz’s “I’m Yours,” Green Day’s “When I Come Around,” Journey’s “Don’t Stop Believing,” OneRepublic’s “Apologize,” The Beatles’ “Let it Be,” Maroon Five’s “She Will Be Loved,” a-ha’s “Take On Me,” Avril Lavigne’s “Complicated,” The Red Hot Chili Peppers’ “Snow,” Lady Gaga’s “Poker Face,” Five For Fighting’s “Superman,” Adele’s “Someone Like You,” MGMT’s “Kids,” among a slew of other massive hit songs all use this same chord progression. One way to take this is that repetitiveness is becoming a rampant problem in modern popular music. However, another way to look at it is that these songwriters are clearly onto something. After all, they have seen success with this method time and time again.

A more obscure, however, still important aspect of musical accompaniment is timbre. Timbre is the quality of music that distinguishes different sounds with an identical pitch and volume. Timbre can be described as the “color” of a sound. Some sounds are

sharp, some thin, some thick, some brassy, among a world of others. The concept of timbre boils down, mostly to choice of instrumentation. The timbre of an instrument can help to convey the underlying mood of a song to a listener. Alan Moore, a musicologist and author of Song Means, Analysing and Interpreting Popular Song, cites Frank Sinatra's "A Foggy Day" as an example of a song that effectively incorporates timbre as a means of creating a certain tone. The instruments used in this song in particular support the conversational and relaxed mood conveyed in Sinatra's vocals (Moore, 44-45). To have a song that truly resonates with a listener, the color of the instrumentation must reflect the overall message and emotion of the song, in addition to the chord scheme, of course.

## **V. Melody**

The melody is arguably the most important part of the song. Many songs have well thought out and highly effective lyrics, but without a solid melodic interpretation of these lyrics, it is extremely difficult to create a memorable song. The melody is the part of the song that really works to attach the listener; and the way in which the melody is constructed can make a huge difference in what emotions are conveyed. Rooksby's book describes several techniques to incorporate when writing melodies, including singing different notes over the chords played in the instrumental accompaniment to create different feels.

There are many directions one can take when finding the right note to place over a certain chord; for example, when the melody note matches the 1, 3, or 5 note of a chord,

it creates a very resolved, content sound, as it blends perfectly, being a note included in the chord. Singing a note that doesn't appear in the chord being played, or even a note that is not in the same scale at all, creates a more tense, dissonant sound (Rooksby, 83-84). There will be certain songs, and certain lines within those songs that need a more tense, less satisfying sound to compliment the emotions being conveyed through those particular lyrics. On the other hand, there are times where it only makes sense to have a relaxed, perfect-fit sound. These techniques can be used within songs in different combinations and phrases to convey an endless variety of emotions.

Also, Braheny claims that for a song to be commercial, the melody must show enough repetition to make the song easily recognizable; however, it must have enough variety to be played repeatedly without losing power (Braheny, 104). In other words, a melody must have some degree of simplicity to ensure that the listener can process and remember it. For example, vocal performers on televised talent shows, such as NBC's The Voice, often sing a much more complex melody on the song they are singing than the original. They do this to showcase their vocal talent; so many large, frequent jumps and curves in the melody accomplish that quite well, as it is very impressive to most people. However, it is highly unlikely that the audience is going to remember this complex melody, and it almost surely won't be stuck in their heads. However, when someone hears a song with a simple and catchy melody on the radio, even if it isn't particularly vocally impressive, it is often replaying in their mind for the rest of the day, and they will likely come back to hear that melody again. Furthermore, according to a 2011 study using fMRI scans of music listeners' brains, just having familiarity with a song causes the

listener to have an emotional engagement with the song as a reflex, regardless of whether they really liked the song or not (Seabrook, 303). In that case, simply striving to write a melody that a listener can remember later would seem to be the most important factor in melody writing.

## **VI. The Big Picture**

In addition to the above mentioned, there are many other aspects of a song that can affect the impact on a particular listener and the listener market as a whole, such as dynamics, mode, and key, to name a few. While some song qualities, such as melody and lyrics, may be more pronounced and evident than others, none of these qualities can be ignored in a truly great song. While music is subjective, and in reality, there truly isn't any such thing as the "perfect" song, there are definitely many important tools that songwriters can utilize to produce quality, commercially successful songs.



## Project Analysis

### I. Introduction and Character Analysis

The thesis project is a short acoustic pop concept album with punk and alternative influences. The story of a teenage boy named West who is in love with his best friend, a girl named Liberty is described. The story, similarly to what appears in other concept albums, is a tragic love story with strong social and political overtones. Specifically, issues such as rape culture, mental health, and suicide are referenced in this project — in addition to references to the current presidential administration. Each song is written to be viable on a commercial level, but with artistic purpose.

The male character in this story, West, is a stereotypical, misunderstood American young adult. He has the best interest at heart and good intentions for those he loves. His love life has a rather unsuccessful history, and it seems that he is never able to find a girl who returns the same love that he gives.

The female character in this story, Liberty, is the long-time best friend of West. She is a beautiful girl who comes off to most as happy and carefree, but has quite a rough past and, in reality, deals with a lot of depression as a result. Specifically, she has dealt with sexual harassment her entire life. She is very reserved about this subject and doesn't reveal her past to many people.

## **II. Story Explanation by Song**

### **1. Save Your Heart**

The story begins in the perspective of West. In this song, West admits his love for Liberty after years of failed relationships. West, in particular, says that he is tired of seeing Liberty being treated poorly by the men she dates, proclaiming that he can do better than them. At this point, however, West is unaware of the extent of Liberty's past — he only knows that her boyfriends have been unfaithful. He and Liberty alike have always turned to each other for help during hard times, and they begin to realize that, although they have always seen each other as friends, they have something more.

### **2. Say It Anyway**

West and Liberty were able to sustain a healthy and happy relationship for quite a long time without any issues. Things seemed to be looking up for the both of them; it was the first time either of them were truly happy in a relationship. It would seem that Liberty had been suffering much less depression and the like from her past during this time. However, one day, Liberty started acting in a strange manner and it continued that way. She seems much less affectionate now than she used to and is acting very distant towards West. One night in the midst of all of this, West tries to talk to Liberty about the problem, and she breaks down crying. Despite multiple attempts by West to figure out why she is crying, she cannot seem to utter the answer, but insists that it isn't his fault. Naturally, West concludes that she is cheating on him, or at the very least, no longer loves him. In

this song, West is begging Liberty to just tell him the truth so they can work through it and move on in a happy relationship. However, Liberty is very unresponsive and seems simply unable to do so. After trying for a long time, it seems rather hopeless, and West decides that it is time for him to move on.

Unknown to West, she did not cheat on him, rather her past has done serious psychological damage to her and caused her great anxiety, especially as it pertains to love and relationships. She was simply too afraid to move forward in another relationship, even though it was seemingly perfect.

### **3. Locker Room Talk**

The story now shifts from West's point of view to that of Liberty. In this song, she is now reminiscing about her past more than ever, as it has now interfered with what seemed to be the best thing that ever happened to her. She remembers a specific time, at the age of sixteen, when a stranger offered her a ride while she was walking home on a cold night, knocked her unconscious, and raped her. The police dismissed the case as being her own fault, which has happened to her several times before. This repeated pattern causes severe damage to her mental health over time, and she has become unable to function in a normal relationship as her fears are too great.

### **4. Meant to Be**

Liberty has been in constant heartbreak ever since the breakup, and is at a loss of what to do. West has already moved on at this point, and Liberty feels she has lost

something very special. Not only has she lost the best relationship she's ever had, she has lost her best friend, and is in worse psychological turmoil than ever before — but now has nowhere to go. She ultimately turns to suicide, and this song is her last pleading cry to the world to convince her that she had a purpose at one point, hence the chorus line: “Please let me believe that I was meant to be.”

### **III. Political and Social statements**

#### **1. Locker Room Talk**

This particular song makes several political references — most notably, the title. “Locker Room Talk” is a reference to a quote by President Donald Trump. Trump was caught on a tape recording several years ago discussing how being rich and famous entitles him to being able to grab women's genitals without consent. His defense of this sentiment was that it was “locker room banter” and shouldn't be taken literally (Fahrenthold). The purpose of this title and its place in the song is not to take cheap shots at the president. Rather it is to reinforce the idea that there is a serious problem in American culture in how it responds to sexual assault. What the president described in the tape, by legal definition, is sexual assault. Yet, it was dismissed as “locker room talk,” and it didn't seem to hurt him in the election; the point being that if even the leader of the free world doesn't take sexual assault seriously, who should?

In addition to this, there are also references to the ongoing claims by many that rape is not treated as a serious crime by the criminal justice system in many cases.

Furthermore, there seems to be a pattern of rape victims being blamed due to details such as being intoxicated or dressing too suggestively. There are references to specific rape cases as well, including Brock Turner having his sentence cut short after raping a Stanford Student, as well as the Columbia University rape victim who carried her mattress around campus in protest after the school failed to discipline the perpetrator. The character is named “Liberty” to symbolize the American dream being tainted by this ongoing problem.

## **2. Meant to Be**

While the majority of the song focuses on one person’s suicide, the last chorus of this song takes on more of a “big picture” point of view, and is designed to spread a social message about suicide — that no matter what is going on in someone’s life and how horrible it may be, we all have value and a purpose. On another note, this song is also meant to add a finishing touch to the political and social statements of “Locker Room Talk,” in that sexual assault is something that should be treated as a much more serious problem, as in reality, aside from physical damage it can cause, it often causes a slew of mental health issues in the victims, including PTSD, Depression, and severe distrust in others (Gluck). Ultimately, it can lead to suicide. According to statistics from Suicide.org, 13% of rape victims will attempt suicide at some point in their lifetime (Caruso).

#### **IV. Commerciality**

Many of the techniques and patterns outlined in the above sections were applied in the writing of these songs. For example, the ever popular I-V-vi-IV chord progression is used in both “Save Your Heart,” and “Locker Room Talk.” Moreover, the songs were written to meet a specific “checklist,” compiled from these patterns. These were thought to be the most important things to keep in mind when writing a song. This “list” includes the following:

1. A relatable topic, presented in an interesting and unique manner
2. A consistent emotional focus throughout the song
3. A melody that is pleasing to the ear, memorable, and simple
4. A chord progression that is not overly complex, but utilizes different chord types effectively to convey the emotions of a song and compliment the melody
5. Concise and simplified lyrics that get to the point
6. Instrumental timbre and dynamics that embody the emotion of the song
7. A memorable “hook” phrase
8. A “verse-chorus” or similar song format

## Save Your Heart

### V1

It's a crazy world for you and I, Watch these crazy days keep going by

Sometimes I see you walk outside and stare into the sky

You wonder why you waste your time with these good-for-nothing-guys

You're so broken hearted all the time, They leave all night, they cheat and lie, they can't get nothing right

I've been where you are so many times before, you give it all just to end up walking out the door

### CHORUS

Oh how long can we hide, we know it's too strong to fight

Come to me, you'll be alright, we can light a fire tonight

So save your heart, you can only hurt so much

So save your heart for me

Just save your heart for me (x2)

### V2

Two best friends, we've always had each others' backs

Seems like we're the only ones who don't make each other mad

I don't want to see you cry no more, 'Cause you deserve so much more than what you settle for

### CHORUS

Oh how long can we hide, we know it's too strong to fight

Come to me, you'll be alright, we can light a fire tonight

So save your heart, you can only hurt so much

So save your heart for me

Just save your heart for me (x2)

## Say It Anyway

### V1

I'd like to know we have the best intentions, Every other night has felt that way  
Papers on your bedroom floor, Songs I wrote for you when I got bored  
I know nobody's perfect, though we try, But don't call yourself mine if you're not mine  
'Cause times are getting harder now, I don't know it all but I've been around  
Enough to know that look inside your eyes

### CHORUS

Even if you know it breaks my heart, Say it anyway  
Even if you blame it on the stars, Say it anyway  
Even if tears run down the strings of my guitar, Say it anyway

### V2

I won't hate you even if your heart runs cold, If my hand's not the only one you hold  
When love grows old, one day it's gone, We pour the shots and move along  
Sometimes there's no use in holding on

### CHORUS

Even if you know it breaks my heart, Say it anyway  
Even if you blame it on the stars, Say it anyway  
Even if tears run down the strings of my guitar, Say it anyway

### BRIDGE

You were halfway gone when I felt you slip away  
We're hanging by those words that you can't say

### CHORUS

Even if you know it breaks my heart, say it anyway  
Even if you blame it on the stars, say it anyway  
Even if tears run down the strings of my guitar, Say it anyway



## Locker Room Talk

### V1

Through midnight snow, she walked alone, she was only sixteen years old

A man drove up, said you look so cold, let me drive you home, but she didn't know

She woke up on the bathroom floor of some strange place she's never seen before

Her face was bruised and her skirt was torn, she cried all the way as she ran to the door

### CHORUS

Broke out in a cold sweat, she's up all night, she lives it over and over again in her mind

Wiping tears off the phone, 'cause the cops didn't show

They hang up every time she calls, they said a girl your age should know it's all locker room talk

### V2

Scarred for life, with two black eyes, it's the first time she's seen her father cry

Everyone asks, did you drink too much? What were you wearing and was it enough?

### CHORUS

Broke out in a cold sweat, she's up all night, she lives it over and over again in her mind

Wiping tears off the phone, 'cause the cops didn't show

They hang up every time she calls, they said a girl your age should know it's all locker room talk

### BRIDGE

It's hard to have hope when it's always the same, the guilty set free while the victims are blamed

Won't somebody stand up and show us the way, carry the mattress and sing for a change

### CHORUS

Broke out in a cold sweat, she's up all night, she lives it over and over again in her mind

Wiping tears off the phone 'cause the cops didn't show

They let it go 'cause after all

That's what the leader of the free world calls locker room talk

## Meant to Be

### V1

Lost for words, I cannot speak, and I can't explain, any given day, what the hell is wrong with me  
Am I too far gone? Am I just too weak? Everyone around me saying I'm nothing  
I've always tried so hard to prove them wrong, living life as someone that I'm not  
Maybe if I walked away, I'd finally be okay

### CHORUS

I'll breathe this one last breath of air and then I'll leave  
Take me by the hand into the breeze  
Remember what it means to me and please, let me believe that I was meant to be

### V2

Every day feels the same, and you know I've made every last mistake, said everything I had to say  
Tell me why do I even try? I'm looking for something more than a shot to get me by  
Just to make me feel alive for just one night, when there's no friends around to say goodbye

### CHORUS

I'll breathe this one last breath of air and then I'll leave  
Take me by the hand into the breeze  
Remember what it means to me and please, let me believe that I was meant to be

### BRIDGE

Sometimes it's so hard not to go insane, Everyone's got their problems and they don't seem to go away  
So even if today is not your day, There's nothing in the world that can't be changed

### CHORUS

So breathe, sometimes things aren't always what they seem  
Sometimes there's a storm before the breeze  
So remember when you feel like you want to leave, just please believe  
You were meant to be

## Conclusion

Though these songs were all carefully written to be as commercially viable as possible, based on specific patterns, this project is not excluded in the notion that not everybody who hears it is going to like it. Music is subjective, as is art in general. “One man’s trash is another man’s treasure” will always hold truth. However, an important note to that concept is that certain things, like gold, will be considered treasure by most people. Writing music can encompass a similar concept; it isn’t always possible to know exactly what people want to hear, but if something has been working for decades, it probably has inherent value.

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