

# Songwriting series

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*Part 2 (of 4)  
Storytelling  
through song*





## Storytelling

- Last time we covered the basic rules of songwriting and the common structures of songs.
- I asked you to start thinking about the stories you might want to tell in a song.
- Great songwriting is also great storytelling, because if we're not connecting to the story, then it's just background noise.

Country artist, Eric Church, wrote a song about this. He sings:

*"Funny how a melody sounds like a memory"*

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/l2gGXlW6wSY?t=26>

Now let's make our songs come to life.

## Step 1: The idea

*Take that idea that you want to write about and try to fill up about 2 sides of A4 with words, sentences, phrases, even sketches, anything related to that initial idea.*

A few ways to do this which might be helpful are:

- Free write for 5 minutes - anything and everything that comes to mind when you think about your song idea.
- Word association
  - Ask a family member or friend to play it with you, or challenge yourself to get to five words without stopping
- Music
  - Find some music related to your topic and use it as inspiration
- Look to other art forms for inspiration
  - Photos, paintings, films

Make notes about the type of song you want it to be: slow, fast, happy, sad etc. You might also want to add the genre you intend to write in, or the instruments you'd like to hear.

*Take as long as you need with the research part. It will be worth it to come back to your songwriting with a good mix of ideas and perspectives.*

Being at home for the summer.

Picnics in the garden.  
Sunshine.

Long walks in the countryside.

Missing birthdays and family meals.

Busy. All doing our own thing.

Appreciating/noticing the views

Time. Day rolls into day.

Nowhere to be but here. Nowhere I'd rather be.

Kids playing out. Riding bikes.

Changing times. We've been through worse, we can get through this.

Time ~~stop~~ stands still.

Not rushing around, always having to be somewhere.

Relaxed. Never felt so alive.

The fear won't get the best of us.

Sharing happiness with you.

Time together as a family

Going to was on my goals.

Reminds us what's really important

Cause we'd never get this time back.

The sun will keep on shining & the moon will keep on glowing in the beautiful night sky, but we'll never have this day again.

Images of fields & flowers. The views, the walks.

Closer than ever.

Time on our hands and love in our hearts

Watching you grow up instead of from far away. (after)

Getting to do what we want. Our choices.

Happy but thoughtful. Reflective. Upbeat but calm.

What was really important.

Where has all this time gone.

We don't notice the days flying by.

We don't stop to watch the daffodils grow.

Summer

Seaside

Sand

Outdoors

Sunshine

Sky

Time

Days

Short

Long

Far

Close

Fear

Heartbeat

Skill

~~Down~~ Stand

Down

Wait

Flowers

Grow

Water

Rain

Clouds

Sky

Belle & Sebastian

'Another sunny day'.

Fast drums. In the garden. 'I took a photograph of you'.

Albion window. ~~Singing~~ 'on a Sunday evening bells ring out in the dusk. 'Pick 11 for football'.

'Dress up in you' - Sarcastic. 'beautiful face that would take you places'. Humour - Slow beat. Keyboard. 'I wish you were here, we would have had a lot to talk about'. Trumpet.

High vocals + harmonies.

When we go back to normal / our lives - who were we then?

Were we happy? Were we awake?

Did we forget who we were? What was important.

Did any of that ~~was~~ really matter anyway?

Shimmering notes. River. Waterfall. Stream.

Wind blowing away the...

Having no idea we were going way too fast

Wishing our lives away.

So we slow down.

Slow down and just be us.

Sunlight on the water.

Shadows through the trees.

Peace.

We'll find it / us

← Word  
association

← Ideas from  
listening to  
music



Next, go through and highlight your favourite words/sentences/ideas

## Step 2: Review

Being at home for the summer.

Picnics in the garden.

Sunshine.

Long walks in the countryside.

Missing birthdays and family meals.

Busy. All doing our own thing.

Appreciating/noticing the views.

Time. Day rolls into day.

Nowhere to be but here. Nowhere I'd rather be.

Kids playing out. Riding bikes.

Changing times. We've been through worse, we can get through this.

Time stops. Stands still.

Not rushing around, always having to be somewhere.

Relaxed. Never felt so alive.

The fear won't get the best of us.

Sharing happiness with you.

Time together as a family.

Going to wars on my goals.

Reminds us what's really important.

Cause we'll never get this time back.

The sun will keep on shining & the moon will keep on glowing in the

beautiful night sky, but we'll never have this day again.

Images of fields & flowers. The views, the walks.

Closer than ever.

Time on our hands and love in our hearts.

Watching you grow up instead of from far away. (afar)

Getting to do what we want. Our choices.

Happy but thoughtful. Reflective. Upbeat but calm.

What was really important.

Where has all this time gone.

We don't notice the days flying by.

We don't stop to watch the daisies grow.

Summer

Seaside

Sand

Outdoors

Sunshine

Sky

Time

Days

Short

Long

Far

Close

Fear

Heartbeat

Skill

Stand

Down

Wait

Flowers

Grow

Water

Rain

Clouds

Sky

Billy Brash

'Another sunny day'.

Fast drums. In the garden. 'I took a photograph of you'.

Albino window. 'On a Sunday evening bells ring out in the dusk. 'Pick it for football'.

'Dress up in you' - Sarcastic. 'beautiful face that would take you places'.

Bum - Slow beat. Keyboard. 'I wish you were here, we would have had a lot to talk about'.

Trumpet.

High vocals + harmonics.

When we go back to normal/our lives - who were we then?

Were we happy? Were we awake?

Did we forget who we were? What was important?

Did any of that ~~was~~ really matter anyway?

Shimmering necks. River. Waterfall. Stream.

Wind blowing away the...

Having no idea we were going way too fast

Wishing our lives away.

So we slow down.

Slow down and just be us.

Sunlight on the water.

Shadows through the trees.

Peace.

We'll find it/us

## Step 3: The story

What story are you telling?

What is the beginning, middle and end of that story?

Write a brief outline of what's going to happen in your story in each section.

For now let's start with a simple structure:

***Verse 1 – Chorus - Verse 2***

With optional sections added in if you feel you want to and have enough content.

***Pre-chorus – Bridge***

My example: A song about being at home for the summer and realising we had been going through life so fast we had been missing some of the important things.

**Verse 1** – We're at home. We're happy, we're healthy. We're enjoying a slower pace of life.

**Pre-chorus** – this time has opened our eyes

**Chorus** – Why couldn't we see this before? We've been wishing our lives away.

**Verse 2** – Regret – the things we've missed.

**Bridge** – some of the things we've noticed during this time are...

## Step 4: Build

Go back to your notes and starting with the bits you've highlighted, copy them over into what you now know to be the relevant section, i.e. verse, chorus...

Decide on tense and POV

- Past/present/future
- I/you/they

Does anything jump out at you as a title?

*For any of your notes that you've copied across that are already in full or part sentences, take the last word in that line and brainstorm a list of words that rhyme with it.*

(Tip: rather than just hard rhymes, like 'cat' and 'hat', try to think of some soft rhymes, like 'time' and 'sight'.)

My example:

- First person (I/we)
- Present tense but reflecting on the past
- Working title: We'll never have this day again

Notes/ideas sorted into verse/chorus etc.

A song about being at home for the summer and realising we had been going through life so fast we had been missing some of the important things.

**Verse 1 – We're at home. We're happy, we're healthy. We're enjoying a slower pace of life.**

Being at home for the summer  
Sun is shining  
Picnics in the garden  
Long walks in the countryside  
Noticing the views, noticing the sky

Sky - why, might, sight, light,  
light, mine



**Pre-chorus – this time has opened our eyes**

These are changing times  
Never felt so alive  
Closer than ever

alive, times

**Chorus – Why couldn't we see this before? We've been wishing our lives away.**

Day rolls into day  
Time stands still  
We'll never get this time back  
The sun will keep on shining, and the moon will keep on glowing in the beautiful night sky, but we'll never have this day again.

←Rhyming words



# Research

Enjoy researching and working on your idea  
– take your time

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**Next time: Rhyme schemes & Rhythm**

