

Fern Duffy Capstone Bibliography

Appleby, Amy. *You Can Write a Song*. Amsco Publications, 1995. Accessed 12 February 2026.

This source is a shorter pdf titled “You can write a song”. It goes through the components of a good song first, which is important to me because I am a beginner songwriter with little experience to build on. Then, it gets into what a good song should have. It starts with “Tell a story. The story should be simple and believable, and should be about a situation, event, or feeling almost everyone can relate to. It doesn't have to be unique, just expressed in a unique way.” I like this, but I think that I may take this advice with a grain of salt because I want my music to be a unique experience. I don't want to make music that everyone knows already. I will be referencing experiences that most people have gone through, but the main message of the story will be unique to the SLA experience.

“The Beatles – Yesterday Lyrics.” *Genius*, <https://genius.com/The-beatles-yesterday-lyrics>.

Accessed 12 February 2026.

This is another song's lyrics that I want to dissect, to get inspiration for my own music. As mentioned earlier, many people thought this song was about McCartney's girlfriend. In reality, it was about his late mother. In an interview, he revealed that he was still upset about a conversation that they had together, not long before she passed away. He said things that he regrets, which come out in the lyrics “I said something wrong, Now I long for yesterday”. Although the lyrics aren't super complex and don't reference a ton of different things or have a bunch of meanings, they're still very impactful. I want to keep this in mind to remember that lyrics don't need to be super complex.

Impossible. “The Paul McCartney secrets of songwriting.” *Medium*, 4 August 2016,

<https://medium.com/@impossible/the-paul-mccartney-secrets-of-songwriting-1fcb33903d51>.

Along the same lines, here is an interview with another prolific songwriter, Paul McCartney. I am a huge fan of his work, and I'm sure that I'll be taking some inspiration from his music, as well as The Beatles in general. His main opinion in this interview is that the best starting place, is just to start writing. He says, “That is my advice for when kids say to me, “what would you do?” I just say, write a lot!” Don't just write three songs and say, “I've written three songs”, because it's not enough. Write four and then continue with that.” Breaking this down, I think that hes really trying to say that what you create doesn't have to be perfect. He finds it important to just create

whatever you can think of and work from there. Evidently, my music teacher has the same philosophy as him. Great minds think alike! He also thinks it's good to put whatever emotions you're feeling into your music, because it becomes more authentic that way. He says, "The other thing is, sometimes you don't know you're putting certain meanings in. I wrote 'Yesterday', the lyrics, and I now think it was about the death of my mum. I didn't then. It was a kind of psychological thing." All in all, this advice will be helpful to inspire me to continue being creative, without automatically criticizing the work that I make.

Kate. "Morning Pages: An Excerpt from *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron."

<https://creativerevolution.io/morning-pages-an-excerpt-from-the-artists-way-by-julia-cameron/>.

This source is an excerpt from *The Artist's Way* by Julia Cameron. It gets into the idea of "Morning Pages," an idea she created that I can use to open up creative pathways in my head. The premise is to write a few pages of script every morning, without worrying if they're good or well written. A quote from the book that I will keep in mind is "Anyone who faithfully writes morning pages will be led to a connection with a source of wisdom within. When I am stuck with a painful solution or problem that I don't think I know how to handle, I will go to the pages and ask for guidance." I like how Cameron understands creativity, in a way that really resonates with me. She doesn't see it as a rigid thing, but instead a power to tap into.

Lenker, Adrienne. "Incomprehensible - Big Thief." <https://genius.com/34323429?>

Here is lyrics to a Big Thief song, with explanations of the meanings hidden inside these lyrics. The main meaning behind this song is about society's fear of aging, and how it's demonized for women to look physically older. The lyrics, "The message spirals, 'Don't get saggy, don't get grey', But the soft and lovely silvers are now falling on my shoulder". These lyrics are so beautiful and moving because they show someone being proud of aging, and seeing it for what it truly is, a privilege. Beneath the song, there is a short message from Lenker about how she wrote this song while her partner was sleeping in their car. She originally thought that it would be a big rock and roll song, but later realized that it was more sweet and sentimental. The music in the song itself is calm, but still holds a bit of power. I think that I want to take inspiration from how the song holds a deep meaning and emotion, but isn't scared to make a song that's gentle.

Mills, Clay. "Top 8 Essential Songwriting Skills (Pro Tips) - Songtown." *SongTown*, 19

September 2023, <https://songtown.com/on-songwriting/essential-songwriting-skills/>.

Accessed 12 February 2026.

This source has a bunch of different tips that will be very helpful when writing these songs! One tip that I want to use from this source is to memorize songs. I think that this will be helpful because you can build off of other artists' work. I'm working on music that's leaning towards a rock feeling, so I've been learning a lot of rock music. I will also be utilizing the tip that says "write about what you care about". This tip is especially useful because I need to remember that this song should be based on issues that matter to me, because it will be the most authentic that way.

Opipari, Ben. "Adrienne Lenker, Big Thief — Songwriters on Process." *Songwriters on Process*,

19 August 2017,

<https://www.songwritersonprocess.com/blog/2017/8/8/adrienne-lenker-big-thief>.

Accessed 12 February 2026.

Here is another interview with my personal favorite songwriter of all time. Her work has been my biggest inspiration for even beginning with guitar, and her music is so beautiful and moving. One important thing from this interview is that she talks about personal rituals while songwriting, and one of hers was, "But I do need my guitar when I write lyrics. I enjoy coffee too. A lot of things that I consume just get in the way when I write. I find that if I eat when I write, it starves the seed of inspiration." The way that I interpreted this was that I don't need to exactly follow her path, because everyone's experience is different. I think that I need to do the work to see what my own rituals could be for songwriting. I usually practice my guitar in my room, on my bed. I do this because I'm self-conscious about my music, and I hate the feeling of being judged by my family in my house, even if they actually do like the music I'm playing. Whenever I would sit down to play guitar in the living room, my mom would come over and just sit there, either on her phone or looking at me. It would make me really self-critical and worried about every mistake that I would make. Later in her interview, she also mentioned things that she hears have an impact on her writing. I love this because I'm pretty nosy and love listening to other people's conversations. It would be awesome to make a song based on a random person's conversation!

Pressfield, Steven. *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative*

Battles. Warner Books, 2003. Accessed 12 February 2026.

This source is a pdf of *The War of Art* by Robert Pressfield. This book is aimed to help people overcome creative blocks. Although I don't think my creativity is lacking, this book can be helpful for me to tap into all of the ways that I can increase my creativity, to create the best

music I can. One quote that stood out to me was “There’s a secret that real writers know that wannabe writers don’t, and the secret is this: It’s not the writing part that’s hard. What’s hard is sitting down to write.” I love this quote because it helps me remember that the actual task itself is as hard as I make it. The idea is what’s holding me back. The more that I remember, writing music is no different from other physical types of art that I find easy to create and spend energy on.

Slate, Jeff. “Bob Dylan Q&A about “The Philosophy of Modern Song.”” 20 December 2022.

This source is an interview with one of the most renowned songwriters in history, Bob Dylan. He gets into a bunch of different topics, but I am most interested in his opinions on creativity and how writing and creating music are different now than they used to be, with the development of technology. He says, “Creative ability is about pulling old elements together and making something new, and I don’t believe silicon chips and passwords know anything about those elements, or where they are. You have to have a vivid imagination.” This quote stuck with me, because I completely agree with it. Any “new” song probably has elements that come from a different song that the creator heard. There is no new melody, no new ideas, or lyrics. It’s more about what you decide to do with them.

Stolpe, Andrea. “3 Principles of Songwriting — Andrea Stolpe.” *Andrea Stolpe*, 28 February

2024, <https://www.andreastolpe.com/articles/3-principles-of-songwriting>. Accessed 12

February 2026.

This source also has some more songwriting tips. It says that there are 3 principles to songwriting, and they all work together to make a great song. The first is prosody, which is the connection between the song itself and the message that you are trying to convey. For me, this is important because I want the lyrics and meaning to work together with the chords that are being played. Secondly, it gets into momentum, or how the song moves forward. This is also very important because for my song, I want it to keep developing and to not be stagnant and boring. Third, it gets into restraint. This tip is important to my project because I don’t want to make this song too complicated. It should stay simple, and the good parts of the song should come from the simplicity. Overall, this source will be helpful to remind me that my song doesn’t need to be super complicated. It can be simple, but still meaningful to me, and the rest of the SLA community.