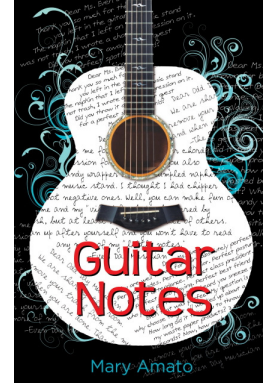


Mary Amato's Study in Song Revision

Did you revise the songs in *Guitar Notes*?

Yes! I always try to write the best possible song on the first try, but it's extremely rare to nail it. I usually try out my songs by singing them to friends or other songwriters. I also record a rough version and listen to it over and over. Usually I find something about the song that needs to be improved. Sometimes it's the whole song that needs to be improved. I'll show you an example.



After Tripp and Lyla have a fun night stealing a colorful rug from his mom's store and delivering it to a little kid who really wanted it (and whose mom bought a boring, brown rug), they write a song about their adventure. What they do could be seen as a crime, but also as a good deed, depending on your point of view. Here are my first and second drafts:

Stealing DRAFT 1

Steal the snow outta the sky
Steal the frost outta the bite
Steal a joke and let it fly
Go on a magic carpet ride
Oh ride, Oh ride
Go on a magic carpet ride.

Steal the search from the light
Steal the private from the eye
Steal the Bonnie from the Clyde
Go on a magic carpet ride
Oh ride, Oh ride
Go on a magic carpet ride.

Steal the troll off of your lawn
Steal the tired from your yawn
Steal the going from your gone

Steal the lulla from the bye
Steal the longing from your sigh
Steal the wrong and make it right
Go on a magic carpet ride
Oh ride, Oh ride
Go on a magic carpet ride.

Stealing DRAFT 2

Steal the snow out of the sky
You be Bonnie; I'll be Clyde
Steal a joke and let it fly
Hijack a magic carpet ride

Oh ride, Oh ride
hijack a magic carpet ride.

Steal the show with your disguise
Hide away from prying eyes
Steal the fun and say surprise
Hijack a magic carpet ride
Oh ride, Oh ride
hijack a magic carpet ride.

Steal the troll out of your lawn
Steal the tired out of your yawn
Steal the going from your gone, gone, gone

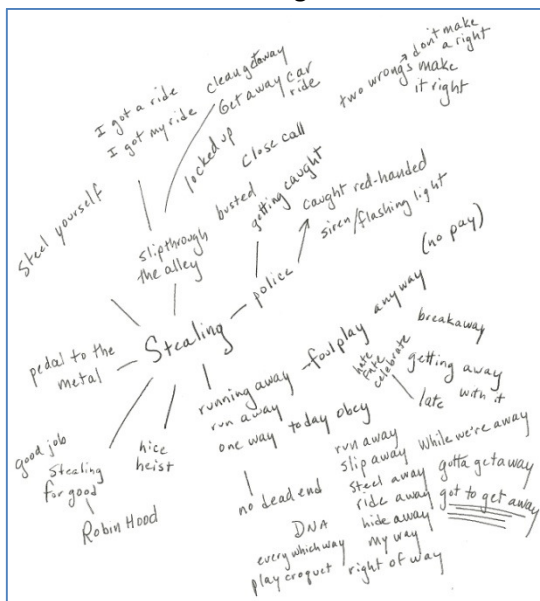
Steal the lulla from your bye
No more longing in your sigh
Steal the wrong and make it right
Hijack a magic carpet ride
Oh ride, Oh ride
hijack a magic carpet ride.

<http://thrumssociety.com/>

Why didn't this song work?

One friend said that the music wasn't fun enough and that perhaps the key (it was in a minor key) was a problem; another said that it sounded too bluesy. Although neither had a problem with the lyrics, I took a good hard look at the song and noticed something was off. Look at the title and the chorus. Notice how they don't really connect to each other. Is the song about stealing or is it about a magic carpet ride? It's not clear. An important thing to ask yourself is: What is the song really about? I realized that I didn't want the song to be about stealing or a carpet ride; I wanted the song to be about the fun that Lyla and Tripp have when they're doing this crime/good deed.

So, I went to my music partner's house and we brainstormed all the stuff we could think of when we thought about the scene from the book and about stealing. We kept playing with some



of the concepts and trying to notice what jumped out.

Both of us agreed that the phrase "Got to Get Away" was fun to say (see it underlined in the bottom right corner of the brainstorm). The rhythm and alliteration really made this phrase pop.

Words or phrases that pop often make a great chorus.

Often, the best thing you can do as a songwriter is the simplest: repeat a fun phrase. We sang the phrase a number of different ways until we discovered the version we liked the best. We both agreed that the song should be fun and Bill chose a major key.

After this, we went back and re-shaped the original verses to better fit the new song. I kept hearing something musical in my head and described it by singing, "Doom ba-dah dah-dah. Doom Doom ba-da dah-dah" to Bill.

Immediately, Bill played a little riff that sounded just right.

We both liked this and wanted to play with it. Next, we used an online rhyming dictionary to stimulate some rhymes. We jotted these down, too, thinking they might come in useful. They inspired the bridge.

Finally, we came up with what we thought was the finished version. But then we decided to add a modulation up (a key change) to subliminally symbolize that the singers of the song are, in fact, getting away.

Here's the finished song. You can hear it on <http://thrumsociety.com/>

Get Away

VERSE

 D A
I'll be Bonnie; you be Clyde
 D A
Steal the snow out of the sky
 D Bm
Steal a joke and let it fly

 G A
Let it fly
 D A
Steal the show with your disguise
 D A
Hide away from prying eyes
 D Bm
Steal the fun and say surprise
 G
Say surprise

PRE-CHORUS

Em G/A
I got to get away somehow
Em G/A
I got to get away right now

CHORUS

D A Em
Got to get away Got to get away Got to get away
G A
Come on, baby, we can't be late
G A
Got a little something to celebrate
D A Em
Got to get away Got to get away Got to get away
G A D
Got to get away

VERSE

 D A
Keep on running til the dawn
 D A
No more tired in your yawn
 D Bm
Grab the going from your gone
 G A
Til it's gone, gone, gone
 D A
Steal the lulla from your bye
 D A
No more longing in your sigh

D Bm
Steal the wrong and make it right
 G
Make it right

Repeat PRE-CHORUS

Repeat CHORUS

BRIDGE

Em G/A
--
Em G/A B
I got to get away right now, right now
E B
Run away, ride away (Got to get away)
E B
Steal away in style away (Got to get away)
E B
Me away a mile away (Got to get away)
E B
Do it all my a-way (Got to get away)
A B
We got to fly today
A B
Skid on the sky today
Repeat PRECHORUS in new key (E/B/A)
Repeat CHORUS in new key