SONG CREATION WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a brief summary of your lyric idea on the worksheet and add some detail around the that might suggest a scene or point-of-view.

2. Grab your thesaurus and look up a word in the back alphabetical portion that describes your idea. This example uses Roget’s International, a non-dictionary style.
   a. For example, if your lyric idea is about the pain of a decision and subsequent regret, you would look up “regret.”
   b. You would find the nouns: REMORSE (113.1), REGRETS (113.1), APOLOGY (658.2), and the verb DEPLORE (113.6).
   c. Choose one that fits with your lyric idea and go to the corresponding number indicated in the thesaurus.
   d. I chose REGRET – there you’ll find not only the word REMORSE, but another whole column of words. Start going through them and writing down any you think may work for your song. If you find one that might fit your song better, look it up in the back and go down a rabbit trail (not a hole – a trail).
   e. There are also interesting words near REGRET: like LAMENTATION, SADNESS, SOLEMNITY – and opposites like REJOICING. Depending on your lyric idea, these may have place in your song even if they weren’t part of your original idea. Would they make the song more interesting? This is a great path to explore new approaches and grow the idea of your song.

3. Write down all of the words you think might have merit, then start cutting it down. Refine the connections by choosing words that will work well together but have different vowel sounds in their stressed syllables. This will help create rhyming variety in your song, so you don’t end up with: “when it snows / I want to blow my nose.” Not a crowd pleaser.

4. Write down 8 to 12 words you want to keep into the top grey portion of the worksheet (blank lines numbered 1 – 12). Are these the best choices? If not, erase and put others in. When you’re satisfied, transfer the words in the grey box to the corresponding number below the box. For example, if APOLOGIZE is in position #1 in the grey box, move it next to the number one in the main body of the worksheet with blank lines under it.

5. Now, look up each word in your rhyming dictionary and select words that connect with your lyric idea. Do this for all 8 – 12 words on the worksheet.

Now start writing your song!!

While this process may seem tedious at first, it comes faster as you use it. And, you’ll find idea connections and rhymes you probably never would have thought of on your own. It’s a nice way to follow a process and up your variety quotient as well.

Next is an example using a real song I’ve been working on called “Shining Knight” followed by some blank templates for you to print and use as part of your songwriting process.

For reference, following is an excerpt from object writing notebook I keep got this song idea started: A couple going through life, an elderly man and his wife are walking down the sidewalk. It is cold and they’re wrapped in heavy coats. He’s holding her hand, as if they’re still in their twenties. They’re back in high school – him in varsity jacket, her in her blue dress. They could have dated other people, but that’s not what happened in those days. There were hard times, arguments, cheating, then the baby came and a young girl became a mother. He came back from the war a different man, not the man she had dreamed about as a little girl – her knight in shining armor – a fairytale life: the perfect man to a live a perfect life with . . . chorus – tie to fairytale (book)
SONG WORKSHEET

Working Title: Your Knight

SONG SUMMARY

Man realizes he’s disappointed his wife, and not been the man she imagined him to be “I probably spent too much time hanging out with the guys, drinking, forgetting you were sitting right next to me, or worse, at home alone, invisible. It’s not that I stopped loving you. I just don’t know how to show it. You give so much, and I give almost nothing back. I don’t know why you see in me, or why you even love me. I know I’m not the man you dreamed of as a girl – but I live my life knowing you’re part of my world. Maybe one day I can be the knight in shining armor for you – the one you see in me.”

THESAURUS WORD SELECTION

1. knight
2. amazed
3. mend
4. lost time
5. regret
6. worthy
7. hero
8. turn around
9. forgive
10. ideal
11. I am
12. perfect

WORD RHYME SELECTIONS

1. knight
   white
   night
   light
   fight
   midnight
   strike
   type
2. amazed
   raised
   change
3. mend
   bend
   defend
   pretend
   depend
   transcend
   end
   intend
   consent
4. lost time
   climb
   shine
   sign
   lifeline
   dime
5. regret
   met
   forget
   silhouette
   wreck
   footprint
   threat
6. worthy
   knee
   apology
   bravery
   plea
   chivalry
   agony
7. hero
   Romeo
   grow
   depot
8. turn around
   (sun) down
   wedding gown
   night gown
   ground
   found
   (spell) bound
   town
   drown
   breakdown
9. forgive
   outlive
   sensitive
   live
   alternative
   hid
10. ideal
   wheel
   conceal
   heal
   steel/steal
   feel
11. am
   began
   outran
   man
   span
12. perfect
   breath
   death
   connect
   reflect
   collect
   affect
   respect

Adapted from Writing Better Lyrics by Pat Pattison
SONG WORKSHEET

Working Title: _________________________________

SONG SUMMARY

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

THESAURUS WORD SELECTION

1. ___________________________ 7. ___________________________
2. ___________________________ 8. ___________________________
3. ___________________________ 9. ___________________________
4. ___________________________ 10. __________________________
5. ___________________________ 11. __________________________
6. ___________________________ 12. __________________________

WORD RHYME SELECTIONS

1. ___________ 2. ___________ 3. ___________ 4. ___________
   ___________  ___________  ___________  ___________
   ___________  ___________  ___________  ___________
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**SONG WORKSHEET**

**Working Title:** ________________________________

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