

Song Creation Project, Module 7, MUH6526, Michael Remy

Lyrics

'Tudd', words and music by Michael Remy

Verse 1

Sunburned arms and bleached blonde hair and vinyl seats burn thighs so bare
Crayola beds and BB guns and ham and cheese on hamburg buns

Chorus 1

You're a face lost in a crowd.
You'd have made your mama proud.
That'll never be us you vowed...

Verse 2

Clouds of smoke and towers of cans and the TV glows on an old box fan
Chick fuzz hair and bloodshot eyes, that oilman's pension keeps you alive

Chorus 2

You're a petal on the ground.
Judge Judy without sound.
You were lost, but now you're found...

Tudd was partially inspired by my first discussion post in this class. I wrote about an early experience with vernacular music that transports me back to childhood, specifically sitting in my mom's 1974 Oldsmobile Toronado on the way to swim in the lake. I distinctly remember how the black vinyl seats would burn my thighs when wearing shorts. This memory led me to consider the evolution of my relationship with my cousin, who was my best friend throughout most of childhood.

I was one of the first people in my family to go to college. My cousins barely made it out of high school, and several immediately entered the fracking industry. Fracking is a highly lucrative, but ethically tumultuous career path. The deeper I got into the teaching profession, the more my cousins mocked and rejected my life choices, claiming that I was "Mr. big fancy

degree” and bragging about how much more money they made without them. It was tough. Nevertheless, I still love them and wish that things could be like when we were kids.

My grandma died of COVID-19 just as I entered this program, likely contracting it through my pandemic-denying aunts and uncles. It was heartbreaking and nearly pushed me to drop out. Ironically, we waited until summer to celebrate her life out of fears around the pandemic. Summer in Ohio with family summons a flood of memories, many like the one I described earlier. I had hoped that if anything could reunite me with my cousins, it was the celebration of my grandma’s life, but my cousins skipped it. That night I drove by my closest cousin’s house and could see him in his recliner lit up by the blue glow of his television. Beside him were empty cans of beer and a thick smog of cigarette smoke settled over the room. This song is an attempt to capture the juxtaposition between these memories.

I did not have much of an issue writing *Tudd*. I actively write music in my free time and have enough experience to know that technical issues are a major part of the process. To write anything, I have got to spend time with pen, paper, and no distractions. There will often be large swaths of time that pass when nothing happens. This is when most people get frustrated and give up; however, it is in the moments of perceived boredom that we often find the greatest clarity. These moments are often the root of creative pursuits.

This recording features me performing on all instruments. It begins with a sample of spring peepers from behind my house, a welcome sign of spring in Maine. On this track, I sing, play acoustic guitar, drum set, saxophone, and upright bass. I multitrack recorded the song in Logic Pro in the studio behind my house.

Whether it be wind band, music technology, or music theory, songwriting has a place in the music classroom. It transcends our perceptions of traditional versus non-traditional

programming. Songwriting provides opportunities for choice and experimentation. It can serve as a lifelong emotional outlet, regardless of whether students pursue a career in music or even continue to play their instruments. It is one of the most intimate and personal connections one can have with music and to deny our students the experience is to rob them of a potential lifetime of musical enrichment.