The Musical Life of Billy Cioffi

A Narrative Inquiry

by

Isaac Bickmore

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Sandra Stauffer, Chair
Roger Mantie
Margaret Schmidt
Jason Thompson
Evan Tobias

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to raise questions by exploring, writing, imagining, and telling the musical life stories of Billy Cioffi. Billy Cioffi is a professional musician, band leader, private teacher, professor of English, and, formerly, a musical director for acts such as Chuck Berry, Del Shannon, and others. In this document I explore the life of Billy Cioffi with the following questions in mind: 1. What might Billy's musical experiences, expertise, teaching, and learning teach us about music education? 2. What might the story of Billy's musical life cause us to question about institutional music education? 3. How might his story trouble beliefs and perceptions about music teaching and learning? Prior to Billy's story, which appears as a novella, I raise questions about popular music, its histories, and its place in music education contexts. Following the novella, I invite readers into four different "endings" to this document.

DEDICATION

To Lesley my love for the support and faith. To William my best dude for the best questions. To Van the man and the real boss for keeping me in line. To Dad, Dana, Mom and John for the help and support you have given me in many forms. To Joelle Lien for the inspiration. To Doug McLennan for saying I could do whatever I want. To Paul Ricks for never opening his basal readers. To Bryant Baird for teaching by example. To Grandma and Grandpa Orme for the scholarship. To Grandma and Grandpa Bickmore for the ukuleles. To Tamara Adams for making me try out for choir. To the 80 percent of kids not served by American music education in secondary schools.

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I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Stauffer for letting me talk it out, for letting me cry, for making me raise my right hand and promise to do things, for watching me type, for letting me try weird things with this document, for having my back, for letting my kids pick tangelos, for reading every single word of this dissertation multiple times, and for her very valuable time.

Finally, I would like to thank and acknowledge the one, the only, Billy Cioffi for welcoming me into your life. Thank you for sharing your stories with me. Thank you for your friendship.

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INTRODUCTION

The first time I met Billy was on the first day of a graduate-level introduction to ethnomusicology class. Ted Solis, the teacher of the course, had asked us to introduce ourselves. The way I remember it, we were sitting in a circle taking turns in counterclockwise order. I began to introduce myself in the usual way, "My name is Isaac Bickmore, I am getting my PhD in music education, I taught kindergarten through 8th grade general music, and I also ran a 7th and 8th-grade rock 'n' roll history choir." Almost before I could finish the sentence, Billy interrupted me, "Rock 'n' roll history? Music teachers talk about rock 'n' roll history. I am the history of rock 'n' roll."

Frankly, I was a little taken back. Who was this man with long grey hair, a goatee, and cowboy boots claiming to be the living embodiment of rock 'n' roll history? Couldn't he wait his turn? He wasn't even next in the counterclockwise order of the circle. I learned quickly that Billy didn't necessarily always wait his turn or adhere to many other conventions. I also began to learn that Billy Cioffi, in more ways than one, is a living embodiment of rock 'n' roll history, or at least one of many histories of rock 'n' roll, but more on that later. Throughout the class, Billy and I became friends. I learned that Billy teaches private guitar and songwriting lessons and facilitates student rock ensembles. I learned that he has had an extraordinary career as a guitarist, songwriter, session musician, musical director, and collaborator. He told me stories about touring with Chuck Berry in Brazil, opening for the Lovin' Spoonful, and returning Jimi Hendrix's guitar … to Jimi Hendrix.

In this study I explore the life of Billy Cioffi with the following questions in mind:

1. What might Billy's musical experience, expertise, teaching, and engagement teach us about music education?
2. What might the story of his musical life cause us to question about music education?
3. How might his story trouble beliefs and perceptions (mine and yours the reader) about music education?

These questions illustrate why this project might be useful to the music education profession. Music educators might benefit from questioning or troubling their long-held beliefs and assumptions about music education. Particularly, we might enter once again into the debate about popular music in public music education in the United States, this time through a different pathway or from a different perspective. The stories in this document about Billy provide an example of a person who has largely been musically educated and who musically educates outside of the boundaries of institutionalized school music education and who has had a successful musical career. Such an example might lead us to question what we spend our time doing in music classrooms and what types of musical futures (Price, 2005) we envision for those with whom we engage. My goal is to witness how American music education is always/already deconstructing or coming apart and thereby making space for the other (Derrida, 2016[1]). I welcome the

[1] Jacques Derrida developed the idea of deconstruction as a way of understanding texts. I describe deconstruction later in the introduction and how I intend to witness how the many texts associated with this study are deconstructing. The use of the term "always/already" is a nod to how Derrida describes the way in which texts begin to fall apart as soon as they are conceived. The use of the term "the other" refers to the

space created and those who might inhabit it. Billy, and others like him, might be those others and their voices might add, disrupt, irrupt, innovate, harmonize, dissonate, trouble, soothe, or transcend the text[2] that is music education.

The purpose of this narrative study is to raise questions about music education by examining, writing, imagining, and telling the musical life story of Billy Cioffi. I aim to encourage questions about music education, music learning and possible pathways to teaching music. I raise questions about popular music, its histories, and its place in music education contexts. I take a postmodern approach to both writing and researching Billy's life in that I do not seek to reduce uncertainties surrounding music education, nor do I seek to tell a one-and-only "true" story. I reject the role of the omniscient author or expert and take on the roles of writer, questioner, and critical storyteller (Barone, 2001).

I entered into this project guided by the following philosophical principles/assumptions:

1. Truth is relative to the sphere in which it is socially constructed, it is individually understood, and thereby not entirely knowable.
2. The Author is dead (Barthes, 1977) but the writer lives on, and we are all writers (readers and listeners included).
3. As a researcher I am attempting to be a witness to the deconstruction of texts (Derrida, 2016) that is always already occurring.

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way deconstruction creates space, how that space is filled, and how texts can be rewritten, re-understood, or reinterpreted.

[2] The use of the term "text" here refers to the idea that all things are text. Scholars have rightly attributed that idea to Derrida who famously wrote, "There is nothing outside the text" (Derrida, 1967). I describe my use of the term text later in this introduction.

4. If the only meaning that is made as a result of this work and its readings is more questions, it will have been worth the time invested.

Beatles, Baseball, and Puberty (Albany, New York 1964)

Billy Cioffi, 13 years old, is racing to his friend's house with a new 45. He knocks on the door and his friend's mother opens it to let Billy in. He thanks her and heads to the "party room" where the record player is. Two other kids from his baseball team are already there. One of the boys asks, "Whaddya got?"

"Under the Boardwalk," Billy answers. He walks over to the player, takes the record out of its sheath and lays it down carefully. He places the needle on the outside groove and they wait for the music. They all know the words and they sing, dance and laugh.

(Under the boardwalk) out of the sun

(Under the boardwalk) we'll be havin' some fun

(Under the boardwalk) people walking above

(Under the boardwalk) we'll be falling in love

Under the boardwalk, boardwalk!

After the Drifters' tune, one of the boys pulls out his new Beatles record "A Hard Day's Night." They listen intently. Some of them already know the lyrics.

It's been a hard day's night, and I've been working like a dog

It's been a hard day's night, I should be sleeping like a log

But when I get home to you I find the things that you do

Will make me feel alright.

Some of them have a vague idea of what "the things that you do" might mean, some of them are completely clueless, but they sing the words just as intently. They are boys on the verge, equally interested in baseball, rock 'n' roll, and girls. The three things get all mixed up with each other. They have baseball cards in the spokes of their bicycle wheels. They tease each other about girls that they like. They awkwardly bump into each other as they reenact baseball mishaps, and they are confused about their bodies, their feelings, their place in the world, and what the future might hold.

As the song ends and Billy's friend begins to turn the record over to listen to the B side, "I Should Have Known Better." Billy tells his friends he has to go to his first guitar lesson. He decided recently he would start learning the guitar. He saw his father's guitar lying around and he thought about the girls that he could impress if he could play and sing like John Lennon.

His guitar lessons are at an accordion center. The guy teaches him how to play one song and then Billy stops lessons. He doesn't stop learning though. He keeps playing and teaching himself. He sits in his grandfather's office and plays the opening to "Runaway" by Del Shannon over and over until he gets it just right.

The Social Construction of Truths and Stories

The word "story" is sometimes synonymous with the word "lie," as in, "Ah, you're just telling stories." In other words, a story could be seen as the opposite of truth, a yarn, a tale. Even so, societies to varying degrees value stories and what those stories mean and represent. For example, many elementary students in the United States have heard the story of George Washington chopping down his father's prized cherry tree and then confessing that he did the deed. Even though the story of George Washington

chopping down his father's prized cherry tree may not be 'True' with a capital T, it *rings* true. The story itself honors the characteristic honesty of our first president, which by all accounts (again … stories) is a '*truthful'* depiction of the man. The story embeds the value of honesty into our national folklore.

Stories, like tools, can be wielded in many ways depending on how the story or tool is constructed. Like truths, stories are socially constructed and therefore are wielded in accordance with how they are collected, edited, printed, heard, interpreted, situated, written, rewritten, told, or retold. For instance a writer can wield a story as an epic (Bakhtin, 1975/1981) with a grand moral. Conversely a reader, who in the spirit of postmodernism is now also a writer, can read the same story as a novel (Bakhtin, 1975/1981), finding and making new meaning unintended by the original writer. So it is with the stories in this project. The *'truth'* and meaning of the stories will be the result of our (you, me, Billy, his students, friends, and other voices) collective conversation.

I recognize my position as writer in this dissertation, and as such I realize that my voice guides the stories. Billy's voice is omnipresent, as we were in constant conversation about how his story should be told. But what of your voice? What about you the reader? Who are you? How can I know what meaning you will make of these stories? Will you make your own truth out of them? How will these stories interact with your reality? Was I able to tell the story of Billy's life in a way that promotes a dialogue between multiple readers/writers? Was I able to tell his story in a way that respects the many voices within that dialogue? Will you read this as a novel or as an epic (Bakhtin, 1975/1981)? Will the story ring *'true'* to you?

To summarize, I entered this narrative study under the assumption that truth is relative to the sphere in which it is constructed and that it is constructed socially. It is not my goal to find, uncover, reveal, teach, or even tell the truth. Nor do I seek to reduce uncertainty about music education or any other thing for that matter. The stories that you will read in this document are based on the life of Billy Cioffi and his work as a guitarist, musical director, and private music teacher. In other words the truthfulness of the stories is not the point. The purpose of this narrative study is to raise questions about music education, music learning, and possible pathways to teaching music by exploring, writing, imagining, and telling the musical life story of Billy Cioffi. So, as you read, don't ask yourself "Is this true?" Ask yourself, "What do these stories mean to me?" Or, "What do they mean for my practice as a music educator?"

Dead Authors, Writerly Texts, and Writerly Readers

Let me be clear: I am the writer of this text. I am the one who wrote the words you have read and the words that you are about to read, and I am alive … I hope. That being said, I accept that I have only some clues about how you will read these words. Based on his reading of both Barthes (1973) and Bahktin (1981), Barone (2001) distinguishes between author and writer, and says an "author" suspects that a reader will not be able to read a text "properly."

> Perhaps he [the author] fears that the reader will remain in a state of restrained consciousness, incapable of deciphering a message subtly embedded within a literary form. So the author may decide to declare (rather than express) that message, thereby shifting genres from novel to epic, and his status from writer to author. A *writer,* however, holding the reader in high regard, is pleased to think that she will dismantle what has been constructed and reconstructed." (Barone, 2001, p. 179)

As a student, throughout my life, I have had many opportunities to receive critique of my writing. Most of the critique I have received seems geared towards turning me into an author, a creator of epics. For example, *Clearly state the problem,* or*, Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and finally tell them what you told them.* Such statements helped me graduate from college, pass the GRE, and probably get into a doctoral program that now requires a dissertation, so I do not discount the advice. Instead I see the advice for what it is. Much of academic authoring "suspects" that readers will not be able to "get *it*" without explicit help. A postmodern approach, or what Barone would call the approach of a writer, does not necessarily presume that there is an "*it*" the reader must "*get.*" Writing itself is discovery. Writing is inquiry (Richardson, 2000). The reader then is engaged in discovery as well, not of the right interpretation or of a single truth, but of their own process of making meaning, or writing.

Barthes makes a distinction between authors and scriptors. A scriptor is different than Barone's conception of a writer.

> … the modern writer (scriptor) is born simultaneously with his text; he is in no way supplied with a being which precedes or transcends his writing, he is in no way the subject of which his book is the predicate; there is no other time than that of the utterance, and every text is eternally written here and now. (Barthes, 1977, p.4)

A scriptor, according to Barthes, puts text elements together. All text is made of other text. That includes the text or meaning the reader makes as she reads in the present. A text that suspects that a reader will not be able to understand the one true meaning dictated by the 'author' without explicit help is what Barthes (S/Z, 1973) considers a readerly text. A text that seeks to engage with the reader as a meaning-maker, writer, and co-conspirator Barthes considers a writerly text. I aim for a writerly text.

Barthes claims that "the goal of literary work (of literature as work) is to make the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" (Barthes, 1973, p. 4). Is this document a literary work? Is the novella that you will read in this document literature? Is there a place in music education research for literary inquiry or critical storytelling (Barone, 1992, Barrett & Stauffer, 2009)? Why not write this document as a more traditional biography of Billy Cioffi?

One reason I chose to write a novella instead of a biography is because I didn't want to just put the dates and facts of Billy's life on paper. Instead, I wanted to tell his story in a way that raises questions about music education. I also didn't want those questions to just show up in a list at the end of the document, in a subsection entitled "Implications for the Field." Instead, I wanted questions interspersed and contextualized throughout the writing (yours, mine and Billy's) of this document. Contextualized by me and by you. Your context, my context, Billy's context, the context of his students. Billy *with* his *text*, me *with* mine, you *with* yours, his students *with* theirs, todos nosotros *con* nuestro *texto*.

In other words, I trust you the reader, and I attempted to write in a way that acknowledges the meanings that you might make as you read/write and the meanings made by Billy and his students. I don't presume that there is only one way to read what I write. I don't prescribe answers to the questions raised. My hope is that you will write questions as you read, indeed that the meaning you make might be questions about your practice as a music educator--meaning-laden questions that only you can find answers to or that lead you to more questions. In this way, when I say "raise questions" I don't

necessarily mean that all of the questions raised will be printed upon the page, or even printed by anyone.

Surely something like this has happened to you, that is, that a question has arisen in your mind as you have read a novel, article, poem, listened to a song, or watched a movie. The question may have been deeply personal, it may have been a question whose origin you can trace directly to the text (loosely defined) with which you were engaged, or it may have been more tangential and not as directly linked to the text. This happens to me all of the time. One example occurred as I was reading an article by Barone (I do read articles by other people) entitled "Ways of Being at Risk: The Case of Billy Charles Barnett" (1989). In this story, Tom Barone meets with a student who has been nominated by his vice principal as the student least likely to return to middle school the next academic year. We learn, seemingly with Barone, that Billy Charles Barnett knows all kinds of things and some of the most valuable bits of knowledge to him are things he learned outside of school. Billy Charles Barnett is an outdoorsman and understands a way of life that his interviewer, Barone, knows little to nothing about. By the end of the story a question arose in my mind, "Who is really at risk?" Specifically, because I am a music teacher, I asked myself if I was at risk of misunderstanding the students with whom I work. Was I devaluing the musical lives of students who know musical things that I do not?

Barone did not write the story to raise that exact question. He didn't know I was going to make that particular meaning of it. He did, however, write the story in a way that leads people, educators, writerly readers, to question their own beliefs and practices. He does this by questioning himself. He is a character in the story. He draws you into a

scene. You can see a man sitting with the boy at a McDonalds and picture the surrounding rural town. The case of Billy Charles is not just a story about the boy who is at risk, instead it is a story about a boy teaching a professor of education something about learning and schools. At least that is the meaning that *I* make of the story. That is how *I* write the story of Billy Charles and Tom Barone.

How will you write the story of Billy Cioffi? What meaning will you make of it? What context will you bring to it? Will the novella in chapter 4 draw you in? Will my (our) storytelling allow important questions to arise in your mind? I aimed to write a compelling story about the musical life of a man who claims to be the embodied history of rock 'n' roll and is now a private music teacher. I hope you find the text more writerly than readerly, that it is more open than closed, and that you are able to make valuable meaning of it. I hope that it allows you to write a portion as well.

Beginning, Middle, …

One of my fundamental philosophical assumptions is that stories, like truths, are socially constructed and individually understood. What about how those stories are structurally experienced? As I wrote this document, I thought about structure. Would I merely conform to a prescribed set of sections? How would my critical stories (Barone, 1992) fit into an institutionally-imposed structure? What about Billy's story itself? Should I tell it from beginning to end? (What is the beginning? What is the end?) What do I decide to include and not include in the middle? Earlier I said that I aimed to write a compelling story to raise questions about music education, but how exactly do I use stories to do this? I have so many damn questions.

We learn in early composition lessons that stories have beginnings, middles, and ends. We learn this heuristic to help us become “better writers” (authors?). Then, over time, we read books, watch movies, and experience other texts that disrupt that idea. Sometimes we see the ending first followed by middle material. Sometimes the middle is not chronological. Sometimes the ending is abrupt and irritates the hell out of us, or delights us. Sometimes events or scenes are juxtaposed against each other to highlight themes, thicken plots, spotlight characters, or create tension. The way that writers use literary devices described above irrupt into and disrupt the idea of a beginning, middle, and end (Derrida, 2016).

Derrida wrote this often quoted and controversial phrase: “There is nothing outside of the text [there is no outside-text; *il n’y a pas de hors-texte*]” (Derrida, 2016, p.159). I have put three versions of this statement here because this is how I found it in Spivak’s English translation of Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*. Spivak includes two translated versions of the phrase in English and the original French version of the phrase. The first version is the most quoted and has been at the heart of many critiques of Derrida’s work. In an interview with Smith (1998) Derrida clarifies what he might mean.

> "It is impossible to respond," Mr. Derrida said. "I can only do something which will leave me unsatisfied." But after some prodding, he gave it a try anyway. "I often describe deconstruction as something which happens. It's not purely linguistic, involving text or books. You can deconstruct gestures, choreography. That's why I enlarged the concept of text." Mr. Derrida did not seem angry at having to define his philosophy at all; he was even smiling. "Everything is a text; this is a text," he said, waving his arm at the diners around him in the bland suburbanlike restaurant, blithely picking at their lunches. (Smith, 1998, p. 30)

If we are going to be thinking with Derrida, or more specifically, thinking with deconstruction (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), then everything is text, and everything is in a

constant state of becoming or flux. Diners in a restaurant are part of the text or a text in and of themselves. Institutions, people, objects, songs, food, nature, life, stories … all texts. Every text has within itself its own undoing. Further, all text has missing pieces, or what Derrida calls the absent/present. Absent because something is not there and present because its absence leaves a space for it. The thing is there because it isn't. Think of a text, loosely defined, as a piece of woven textile; an absent/present or absence/presence is like a snag or imperfection. Deconstruction is what happens when those snags are pulled, or when those imperfections are poked, although the pulling or poking is not always done purposefully and many times goes unnoticed. Deconstruction is "what happens" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012).

I have considered deconstruction as it pertains to my religious practice and the institution in which I practice my religion. If my religious institution is like a piece of textile that is socially constructed, there is within it the means of its own deconstruction. Imperfections, snags, loose threads, and missing threads that would otherwise give the textile strength or change it. But because my religious institution is not a fixed text but a living text, those elements work against the form or dominant narrative of the text and by doing so cause its deconstruction. The text that is created by my being a graduate student who is drawn to the ideas of postmodern thinkers catches the snags and loose threads of the text of my religious practice, and as a result deconstruction happens.

Deconstruction is not destruction; unlike destruction, deconstruction leaves space for new meaning within the thing that is being deconstructed. As a postmodern religious practitioner (for lack of a better description), I have made an effort to take note of the deconstruction that is always already in play. Likewise, a researcher does not use

deconstruction as a tool, instead she feels around for it (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). She looks for the absence/presence, the things that are there because they are not, the traces of threads that are untying, the snags that get caught on other texts. A researcher tries to witness and describe the deconstruction of texts. Deconstruction is not a methodology, it is what happens to texts.

In and around this document there will be and are many texts that are always already in the process of deconstruction: the many stories of Billy's life; the text that is the institution of music education; the text that is your reading of these texts; the stories involving Billy's students, friends, family members. The snags, imperfections, absence/presences already exist within all of those texts, and all of these texts interacting with each other will create more tension which causes more deconstruction. Let me clarify.

Because this dissertation is done in partial fulfillment of a terminal degree in the discipline of music education, the text that is the discipline of music education comes into play. Billy is a private music instructor and, as such, lives on the borders of formal school-based music education, which creates yet another text. Because the purpose of this study is to raise questions about music education, its boundaries, and pathways to music teaching through critical storytelling, yet another text is created.

Billy is an absence/presence in the text that is the discipline of formal music education. He is there because he is not there. Because I notice this happening I am a witness to deconstruction. I cannot apply the method of deconstruction because, according to Derrida, "Deconstruction is not a method or some tool that you apply to something from the outside. Deconstruction is something which happens and which

happens inside" (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 9). In other words, deconstruction is just happening (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). The stories in this document have snags; they have already begun to deconstruct. Because this work is made of many texts--all with different snags, loose threads, and missing threads--and because those texts rub up against each other, the snags catch each other. Loose threads from different texts may intertwine. Some loose threads may fill in gaps in other texts. As a writer and witness of the deconstruction, I pull on some of those snags and as I do the text changes and new things happen. I have already intimated what I hope will happen because of my snag pulling. I hope questions will arise. Some of the snags will go unnoticed by me, but perhaps you will find and pull on them, and you too can be witness to the deconstruction of the text we create together and the newness created by that deconstruction.

Surely some of the texts already in the process of deconstructing are the text that is the structure of stories and the text that is the structure of academic writing. I see the snags already. I mess with those snags a great deal. As we write/read, let us keep our eyes open for the ways that the many texts we wield, imagine, and otherwise engage with are already coming undone. As we do this, we may be a part of making new meaning.

The Merits of a Good Question

My sons, William age 7 and Van age 5, are forever full of questions. As I drive them to school, as we walk in the store, as we eat dinner, wherever we are, there are questions. Sometimes their questions are inspired by the immediate context and sometimes their questions seem to come from left field, as it were. Questions about God, questions about space, questions about *Star Wars*, questions about family, questions about sex, questions about animals, questions about video games, questions about

preference. Let me assure you that I am the object of a never ending inquisition. To be honest, I have as many questions as they do. The difference may be that as I have grown I have learned to internalize my questions, for better or worse. Questions guide us. They are in many ways a beginning to learning, but can they also be the result of learning?

I have been told many times in conversations with experienced music education researchers that a research project must begin with a question. In my limited experience this has not always been the case. Sometimes a research project begins with an interest, and I have many questions about my various interests. For instance, I have many questions about Billy Cioffi. Some of my questions are easily answered and some are not. While I have not explicitly stated a research question for this study, I have stated my purpose more than once. I have written a novella about the life of Billy Cioffi in hopes that by doing so we (Billy, Billy's students, me, you,) can raise questions about music education, music teaching and learning, and pathways to music teaching.

My goal is to raise questions.

If I had to state my research question it would be: What questions might be raised through the process of hearing, writing, imagining, retelling, juxtaposing, analyzing, and reading the stories of the musical life of Billy Cioffi? But isn't that question inherent in the statement of my purpose? "*The purpose of this narrative study is to raise questions about music education by examining, writing, imagining, and telling the musical life story of Billy Cioffi."* It seems to me that the idea of research starting with a question stems from a positivist paradigm of inquiry. In other words, a researcher must zero in on a question that can be answered by a clearly defined methodology. She must hypothesize about what the answer will be and declare what it might mean for the field of practice in

which she is working. A section at the end of such a research document is sometimes labeled “Questions for Further Research.” A section similarly labeled can be found in my master's thesis.

What if the goal of the document is to raise questions from the start? A possible title for this dissertation might be: *The Musical Life of Billy Cioffi: Questions for Further Research.* The questions raised may or may not be written in this document--indeed I hope that a good portion of the questions will not be. I am not trying to reduce uncertainty, I am trying to trouble certainty (Barret & Stauffer, 2009). I hope the novella troubles certainty surrounding music education, music learning, and pathways to music teaching. When certainty is troubled, questions arise. Some of those questions may be points of departure, and some of the questions may be points of arrival. Those points of arrival may turn into new points of departure, possibly creating a never-ending cycle of inquiry. Will such a result meet the demands of my institution, will it meet the demands of qualitative and music education research?

Here comes a personal belief statement. Are you ready? I believe that questions constitute an appropriate response to a narrative study and that it would be appropriate to close this document without any answers or truth proclamations. My purpose is, like Barone, to “entice the reader into wondering about what has been previously taken for granted” (Barone, 2001, p. 179) in music education. My hope is that such wonderings may take the form of questions.

~~Definition of Terms~~: Under Erasure

What do we mean when we say “music teacher”? What do I mean when I write “pathways to music teaching?” What are the terms at play in this inquiry? As soon as I

define a term I differentiate it from other possible meanings. If I were to write a definition of a term such as music educator, I would essentially be saying what it is not. No matter how comprehensive my definition might be, defining it closes its meaning. This creates a tension (Derrida, 2016) between how I define the term and what I close outside the boundaries of definition by defining it. Definition creates a différence (Derrida, 2016) between the accepted and the othered.

As an exercise in the complications of defining terms, I will attempt to define a term and then discuss how this definition creates a tension: a différence between what we say it is and what that means it is not. I will analyze a definition of the term "music education" to illustrate this point and I will carry out this analysis using the ideas of tension and différence attributed to Derrida (1968, p. 13) as described by Jackson and Mazzei (2012, p. 18).

> Because there is no one-to-one correspondence between the words we use and the meanings they intend, Derrida's concept of différence refers to the continual deferral of meaning in the play of language. Meaning is always deferred, incomplete, and lacking origin. Derrida sees the sign as a *structure* of difference, marking both absence and presence: "It is because of *différence* that the movement of signification is possible… keeping within itself the mark of the past element…and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not" (Derrida, 1968, p. 13, in Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p. 18).

A continual deferral of meaning in the play of language? Meaning is always deferred, incomplete, and lacking origin? How does this work? Derrida sees meaning as fluid, in flux, not static, not closed. We use words to convey intended meaning, but that meaning is not universal. The word (term, story, thing, etc..) is the sign or signifier, which is only a marker in a fluid field of ever changing, socially constructed and individually understood meaning.

The sign or signifier in our example is "music education." We use the term, and by using it, we intend meaning; however, the meaning we intend is dependent upon context and not always clear. "Music education" can never only mean one closed thing. The meaning is always/already in flux and can never be certain. Jackson and Mazzei describe the practice of using words *sous rature* or under erasure:

> To put a signifier under erasure is to expose the uncertainty of what that signifier might be or could become, and to open up the traces present (the always-already absent presence). Putting signifiers (such as data, truth, narrative) under erasure is to engage in the process of using them and troubling them simultaneously, rendering them inaccurate yet necessary (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p.18).

By using a term under erasure, we place a marker in the fluid field of its meaning as if to say "~~music education~~ means this, at least for now … but we understand that it might have meant something else in the past and might mean something else in the future. We also understand that even right now in this present time and conversation the term might have multiple meanings to the people involved and to others it may mean something completely different. Even still, we mark this spot with our term because we have to say something and there is at least some shared meaning here."

In accordance with my goal (or is it our goal now?) to trouble certainty regarding ~~music education~~, the practice of using words under erasure may help to remind us of the uncertainty of what ~~music education~~ might be or could become.

Gaytarri Spivak, the translator of Derrida's *Of Grammatology,* writes that to put something under erasure is "to write a word, cross it out, and then print both the word and deletion. (Since the word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. Since it is necessary, it remains legible)" (Spivak, 1976, p. xiv). You may have noticed that I put the heading for this section under erasure. I used the term "Definition of Terms" because I am writing a

dissertation and a section with that title is somewhat of a necessity, but I have also troubled the term. There will be many terms at play in this narrative study. Rather than define them, close them in, cordon them off, I sometimes place them under erasure. I do so because I want to show that I am uncertain about what the terms may mean in the future and about what they mean now.

For example, a term I can use and trouble simultaneously is ~~music education~~. How have we historically defined ~~music education~~ as ~~music education~~ researchers, practitioners, and students? When we say ~~music education~~, what types of musical learning or engagement have been included historically in the socially constructed boundaries of the discipline? I propose that the operational definition of ~~music education~~ that the majority of ~~music education researchers~~ use includes in-school teacher directed ensembles and classes. If we operate using a definition that only includes music in schools and only musical engagement that leads to in-school musical engagement, experience, and learning, then (by definition) we have marginalized many people and many types of musical engagement, experience, and learning. Specifically the use of such a definition of music education marginalizes the musical engagement, experience, and learning of native peoples, slaves, free African Americans, other immigrant populations, and women, who throughout our history have been excluded or marginalized from public school, and (by definition) their musical engagement, experience, and learning negated, erased, marginalized, and othered.

The descendants of these groups, both racially and musically, have felt the result of such a definition of ~~music education~~ as the musical practices that have grown from the musical engagements of their ancestors have been marginalized. For instance, Lowell

Mason is celebrated as the father of ~~American music education~~. Why is that? Did nobody learn music before him? Maybe Mason being assigned the role of father has something to do with what we mean when we say education. What is the relationship between learning and education? Is learning always a product of education? Certainly native people before Lowell Mason devised systems to instruct musically, to pass on musical traditions or traditions through music. What also is America and what makes music American? At certain points in the history of ~~America~~ much of the west was Mexico. But what is ~~Mexico~~?

We could go on forever.

Welcome, Make Yourself at Home

Consider yourself introduced to this dissertation. Like any relationship that is just beginning you have some ideas about what is to come, you have some hopes, and I have tried to make my hopes known. Hopefully you have some ideas about how I feel about truth and its relativity and social construction. You probably have some ideas about the kind of writer I am (and the kind of writer/reader I hope you might be). I have also explained deconstruction to the best of my ability and some of the ideas associated with it (Honestly, it is not an easy thing, but I really enjoy exploring it). I hope that it is clear that I do not mean to clarify much. Is it clear to you that I hope to trouble certainty? Is it clear that I have no desire or plans to reduce uncertainty? Is it clear that I am fine with the idea that the only meaning that might be made as a result of this work and its readings is more questions?

After reading this introduction you may have a vague idea of who Billy Cioffi is. I hope that after reading this introduction you want to know more. Do you have questions?

Do you want to know more? This introduction is the welcome, handshake, an embrace at the threshold of the structure. Come on in. Make yourself at home. I have been here for a while watching as things have been coming apart as I write them. I used to write things thinking that they were fixed. Now I write and I see things grow, evolve, breakdown, sluff off old ideas, and make room for new. Now that you are here, will you welcome the coming of new ideas with me? My guess is that we might see the new ideas come through in the spaces created by the tension between what we have long believed and what we might believe. If I have seen such spaces in this text and the texts associated with it. I have made sure to notice those spaces, and I will try to point you toward them. You may see spaces that I missed. I hope you will. And, I hope that you and I will welcome the new ideas that might fit in those spaces.

TWO ESSAYS IN REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The following essays can be read as attempts to write as a witness of the deconstruction that is always/already occurring in various texts. The ideas I engage with as texts include "histories of rock 'n' roll," "popular music in music education," and texts associated with those ideas as texts. Derrida has often written in this way. He engages with a text, often a text of classical philosophy, to witness the deconstruction of that text and to welcome the newness that the deconstruction creates. Consider the following statement in which Derrida describes how he reads Plato and Aristotle. He gives this statement in response to those who have misrepresented the idea of deconstruction in academia and in the media at large. Derrida's statement helps set the stage for how I engaged with the texts involved in the two essays found in this chapter.

> So I think we have to read them again and again and I feel that, however old I am, I am on the threshold of reading Plato and Aristotle. I love them and I feel I have to start again and again and again. It is a task which is in front of me, before me. Now, nevertheless, the way I tried to read Plato, Aristotle, and others is not a way of commanding, repeating, or conserving this heritage. It is an analysis which tries to find out how their thinking works or does not work, to find the tensions, the contradictions, the heterogeneity within their own corpus. What is the law of this self-deconstruction, this "auto-deconstruction"? Deconstruction is not a method or some tool that you apply to something from the outside. Deconstruction is something which happens and which happens inside; there is a deconstruction at work within Plato's work, for instance. (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 9)

I wrote these essays in this chapter filled with a love of music education, popular music, and the musical lives of people. It is with that same love that I introduce them to you. Keep in mind, however, that I also approach music education, popular music, and the musical lives of people trying "to find the tensions, the contradictions, the heterogeneity" within them (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 9) or to witness the

deconstruction that happens inside them as texts and inside the texts associated with those ideas.

I. The Embodied History of Rock 'n' Roll

... the history of a concept is not wholly and entirely that of its progressive refinement, its continuously increasing rationality, its abstraction gradient, but that of its various fields of constitution and validity, that of its successive rules of use, that of the many theoretical contexts in which it developed and matured. (Michel Foucault, 1972, p. 4)

We absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies.
(Simon Frith, 1996, p. 273)

The first time I met Billy Cioffi he told me that he *was* the history of rock 'n' roll. It was such a bold claim, with so much wrapped up in it, that I could hardly decide where to start unpacking it: the matter of a person being the embodiment of the history of an idea or concept, the question of the definition of rock 'n' roll, the matter of how a person could justify such a claim, the matter of deciding what we mean when we say history. If Billy *is* the history of rock 'n' roll, is he *the* history of rock 'n' roll, or is he *one of many* histories? If Billy embodies *a* history of rock 'n' roll, does that mean that others can/do as well? Do I embody a history of rock 'n' roll? Do you? Do we all?

What does Billy's claim mean for the college-level rock 'n' roll history course so many people have attended and continue to sign up for? My guess is they won't hear about Billy. I didn't hear about Billy when I took the class at the University of Utah. Billy wasn't in the book (Stuessy & Lipscomb, 2013). If Billy isn't in the books and the professors who teach the classes don't know about him, what does that say about Billy's claim? Maybe we are looking at the problem the wrong way.

In the quote at the beginning of this essay Foucault summarizes important ideas from the work of his mentor Georges Canguilhem. Two fascinating ideas about history found within this statement are worth noting.

1. The history of a concept is not just its progressive refinement or continuously increasing rationality.
2. A history can be comprised of various fields of constitution and validity, successive rules of use, and many theoretical contexts.

Using these two ideas to examine Billy's claim and other forms of rock 'n' roll history may give us a better understanding of how Billy is indeed an embodied history of rock 'n' roll and how each of us may be as well. We may also understand what we might mean when we use words such as "history" and "rock 'n' roll."

The first idea from Canguilhem and Foucault above describes a limited view of what history could be. The qualifying "just" in the description allows for the possibility of a history not only comprised of "its progressive refinement or continuously increasing rationality," but also for a history that is described in the second idea. The first idea describes a teleological view of history. The second idea posits multiple, simultaneous histories as opposed to the limited view of history found in the first idea. Teleology (from Greek *telos*, meaning end or purpose) is the philosophical study of nature by attempting to describe things in terms of their apparent purpose, directive principle, or goal (Wikipedia, 2017). The second idea describes a view of history that is more open and less purpose driven.

Teleological Rock

The way we write, read, research, and wield history depends on our relative positions theoretically, temporally, socio-economically, and otherwise. In other words, history, like truth and stories, is socially constructed and individually understood by its readers. Writers of history write with intentions. Some of those intentions include connecting events with other events, understanding the present, understanding the past, and explaining the past, present, and possible futures. Writers of history may also intend to find proof of progress or to link events and people in a chain of progress towards a culminating end or purpose; in other words they intend to provide a teleological view of history.

A teleological view of the history of rock 'n' roll describes events, people, and objects that fulfilled their respective, intrinsic purposes towards a larger goal. Such a view of history subscribes to a grand narrative that may marginalize people and events. Take for example, a book entitled *Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development* (Stuessy & Lipscomb, 2013). The title itself gives us a hint of the teleological approach we might find inside its pages: its (rock 'n' roll's) history and stylistic development. The book is designed to be used in college level courses and is currently (in 2017) in its seventh edition. In the introduction the authors lay out four guiding principles, one of which is *"Don't let the trees get in the way of the forest"* (Stuessy & Lipscomb, 2013, p. 2). The authors describe what they mean:

> Many books on rock and roll make the admirable attempt to discuss virtually every rock and roll performer who ever plugged in a guitar or stepped up to a microphone. That is not the purpose of this study. Rather, we have attempted to determine major trends and influential performers, thus painting the history of rock and roll in broad brushstrokes. The result is that many performers in the

> history of rock are only briefly mentioned in these pages or not mentioned at all …We hope, then, that this study will provide the reader with a feeling for the evolution of rock and roll since the mid-1950s, not through a recitation of each and every detail along the way, but by means of a broader representation of the general flow of styles, people, and ideas. (p. 2)

I suppose it is wise for writers to set the boundaries of any text and to limit the scope of what it is they are trying to accomplish. I have certainly done that in my own way with this dissertation. Stuessy and Lipscomb have essentially described the kind of history they are choosing to compile--a history that speaks of evolution and development by using "broad brushstrokes," and they have constructed a well-thought-out teleological version of the history of rock 'n' roll. The question is, then, what are the affordances and constraints of such a history.

The third chapter illustrates their teleology as they describe "the king" and the events that led to his coronation, as it were. Elvis Presley is the telos, ultimate object or aim, of the people and events that led to his arrival, at least as written by Stuessy and Lipscomb. Bill Haley and the Comets are featured in the chapter as preceding the advent of the king. Certainly Presley and Haley are figures (trees) who cannot be glossed over, but are they the entire forest? The section devoted to "the king" and his predecessors puts the names of the black artists Elvis adored in parentheses.

> After changing his group's name to The Comets, Haley made a serious attempt to achieve national attention with his unique combination of R&B and C&W. In 1952, he released "Crazy, Man, Crazy," followed in 1954 by "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" (an original R&B hit by Joe Turner).

Is Joe Turner a tree that has gotten in the way of the forest? What about Big Momma Thornton, who was the first to shout, "You ain't nothing but a hound dog"

(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvbSXVc451Q). Is she a tree in the way of the forest, or is she the tree that bore the fruit Elvis exploited? Big Momma Thornton makes an appearance in a section entitled "Voice" in a different chapter that describes elements of rock 'n' roll, but in the chapter about Elvis she is captured in parentheses.

If the history of rock 'n' roll is written as a history of royalty, doesn't that mean that there will be servants? Doesn't that mean people who are crowned are destined to rule and that those who are not are merely relegated to the margins of the court because of fate or the will of the gods of rock? Later in the book a section about Little Richard opens with this statement:

> The purest prototype of hard, mainstream rock was Little Richard. Elvis's multifaceted musical style included not only mainstream rock but also rockabilly and soft rock. Little Richard, in contrast, was, in one self-contained package, the embodiment of the type of mainstream rock that led to the Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Alice Cooper, James Brown, David Bowie, and Prince, among others. (p. 46)

So, obviously, Little Richard is a tree that is not a distraction from the forest, and yet in the second sentence the authors compare him to the tree of all trees, Elvis, who somehow could never "get in the way of the forest." On the one hand, Little Richard is the reason for the list of impressive performers; their collective body of songs, personae, and performances make up the reason for his existence in the history of rock 'n' roll. On the other hand, he is not "led up to," like the crowning of a king. Little Richard is compared to and measured by the standard of Elvis, who covered Little Richard's songs endlessly and tried to be like him. But the coming of Little Richard is not celebrated like the coming of Elvis, because, of course, "Elvis's multifaceted musical style included not only mainstream rock but also rockabilly and soft rock" (Stuessy & Lipscomb, 2013, p. 46).

Later in the section about Little Richard, the authors say, “Perhaps Little Richard was not the king of rock and roll he claimed to be, but he was one of the most influential figures in rock history” (p. 48). Decidedly a tree. Decidedly not the tree he said he was. Interesting to say the least. There is no sentence in the book linking Elvis to a list of famous performers who were inspired by him or who have obviously crafted their personae after him. One could add Elvis to the list of performers who were influenced by Little Richard, however, so who is the king?

There are, of course, performers who have been influenced by Elvis, but maybe his influence is not the point. Maybe the point is, if we approach the history of rock ‘n’ roll from a teleological perspective, we will seek out events, people, and objects that seem to fulfill a purpose in a story that leads to a goal. The goal might be the stylistic development of rock ‘n’ roll or the crowning of royalty and the thinning of the forest to make room for them. Has the history of rock ‘n’ roll been written as a history of whiteness supported by blackness? Are there other ways to write that history? Do we erase the blackness, bracket off black artists, place them in parentheses, because the songs they wrote and performed were not as commercially successful as the covers of those same songs by white artists? *Don’t let the trees get in the way of the forest.* Which trees? Which forest? A forest is as much a network as it is a collection of trees.

I have focused in this section on only a small part of rock ‘n’ roll history. I understand that Steussy and Lipscomb are trying to cover a long period of time and that they, like all historians, have had to make decisions about what to cover and what not to cover. Stuessy and Lipscomb’s history subscribes to a grand narrative version of rock ‘n’

roll history that values the forest and purposefully glosses over some of the trees. No history captures everything.

Various Fields of Constitution and Validity

Others write the history of rock 'n' roll from different perspectives and focus on different areas. Rockers, songwriters, roadies, and critics have written autobiographies and biographers have written the life stories of many of the same people (See for example the lists at http://www.newsday.com/entertainment/books/15-must-read-rock-star-biographies-1.4792830#28, http://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-25-greatest-rock-memoirs-of-all-time-20120813). I have been unable to determine how many books have been written about Bob Dylan. Many of the books about Dylan cover similar territory but others only focus on certain events or periods (http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/21599.Books_about_Bob_Dylan). Are these books about Dylan histories of rock 'n' roll? What about the documentary or narrative films about him? If a history of rock 'n' roll is comprised of many "fields of constitution and validity," of "successive rules of use," and "of the many theoretical contexts in which it developed and matured," then all of those books and films about Dylan are indeed part of a history of rock 'n' roll. Dylan himself embodies a history of rock 'n' roll. His songs embody histories of rock 'n' roll. Stuessy and Lipscomb worked information about Dylan and his work and influence onto 36 of the 393 pages of their book. To use their metaphor, Dylan, for them, is a tree that does not distract from the forest.

Dylan is one person. For decades, people have written books and made films about groups (the Beatles), periods (the sixties), geographical areas (Laurel Canyon), and in many ways these books and films can be seen as opposites of the Stuessy and

Lipscomb text. Whereas Stuessy and Lipscomb provide an overview and recognize "the highlights," others focus on specifics and in doing so they don't just recognize the big trees of the forest. They have forgotten the forest and examine the bark, inhabitants, rings, leaves, needles, seeds, and roots of single trees. Both are valid fields of constitution, the general overview and the detailed profile.

Greil Marcus, a rock critic and writer, offers yet another perspective in *The History of Rock 'n' Roll in Ten Songs* (2014). Marcus writes a mind-altering nugget of wisdom in his introduction:

> The official, standard history of rock 'n' roll is true, but it's not the whole truth. It's not the truth at all. It's a constructed story that has been disseminated so comprehensively that people believe it, but it's not true to their experience, and it may even deform or suppress their experience. (p. 13 or location 177 of 3691 in the Kindle version)

Once again we are confronted with the relativity of truth. Greil speaks of a comprehensively disseminated, constructed story that is at once partially true and not true at all. The constructed story is a myth that "may even deform or suppress" the experience of its believers. To illustrate that point, Marcus captures a story told by filmmaker David Lynch about the night Elvis appeared on the Ed Sullivan show:

> "It was not quite dark, so it must have been, like, maybe nine o'clock at night, I'm not sure. That nice twilight, a beautiful night. Deep shadows were occurring. And it was sort of warm. And Willard Burns came running towards me from about three houses down the street, and he said, 'You missed it!' and I said, 'What?' and he said, 'Elvis on Ed Sullivan!' And it just, like, set a fire in my head. How could I have missed that? And this was the night, you know. But I'm kind of glad I didn't see it; it was a bigger event in my head because I missed it." (p. 13 or location 177 of 3691 in the Kindle version)

It was bigger in his head. I have seen Van Morrison perform live. It was good. I have also heard stories about Van Morrison performing live that seem better than my experience.

Billy Cioffi told me a story about seeing Van Morrison live in Boston before the release of Van Morrison's *Astral Weeks*:

> *A friend of mine called me up and said "You wanna go see Van Morrison tonight?" and I said "Sure, where is he playing?" And he said, "He's playing at this place called The Catacombs on Boylston Street in Boston." So I go to see him and we get into this club and there is nobody there, literally, there is nobody there except me and the guy and the bartender. And Van Morrison walks in with two other musicians and it's like a coffee house bar. And he gets on stage and looks around, and he stares at us for like 10 or 15 minutes before he does anything. Just stares at us. It made us really nervous. It was really weird. Really crazy, and then he sat down and he played for two-and-a-half hours. And he played everything that he became famous for. He was playing "Madame George" and "Moondance." They were all things he was writing, and particularly the Astral Weeks album. It was just before he recorded the Astral Weeks album. I mean literally, it was phenomenal. I mean, he was phenomenal. (Billy sings a line from "Madame George") "Down on Cyprus avenue with the childlike visions come into view, wave goodbye to Madame George." I can envision it today.*

How could this gig, one that I never saw be better in my mind than the concert I have seen? It is the way that it plays out in my head. The mysterious Van Morrison, brooding, Irish stream of consciousness lyrical poetry, ala James Joyce, tumbling around in his head, the epic songs not yet fully formed, a small intimate setting with a small combo. He is quirky and off-putting, he is the man, the myth, the legend … in my head. When I saw Van Morrison live all of those things were in my head, but it was different somehow. I loved the concert, but when I heard Billy's story I knew I had missed something. Did I really though?

Billy told me that he tells this Van Morrison story on stage. Maybe he tells it before he covers one of Morrison's songs. You can imagine the effect telling the story might have. For me, the story plays into the mythic idea I have of Van Morrison as a long-time uber fan. It is rock 'n' roll history--to me. To you, the reader, the story might mean next to nothing, and that is perfectly fine. But to me, Billy's story is a moment to be

memorialized. To see Van Morrison in a setting like that playing those songs would be, for me, like seeing Van Gogh paint his sunflowers. In the Stuessy and Lipscomb text, Van Morrison is less than an afterthought. He is mentioned in a section where Jim Morrison, the lead singer of the Doors, does a duet version of "Gloria" by Van Morrison with Van Morrison. I don't offer this information as a critique. I completely understand why Van Morrison is not mentioned much in Steussy and Lipscomb's book. If I were writing my own personal history of rock 'n' roll, however, there might be a whole chapter about Billy's Van Morrison story.

That is the spirit of Greil Marcus's *The History of Rock 'n' Roll in Ten Songs* (2014). Rather than organize a chronological history of rock 'n' roll as a lineup of important people, Marcus organizes it by songs. He writes essays about songs that he feels are important. The essays or chapters are not detailed descriptions of how songs were recorded and who was there, although you can find some of that information in them. The essays are stories mixed with prose and ruminations about the meaning of the songs to him and to others.

For instance Marcus writes a chapter about the soundtrack for a video called *Guitar Drag* by Christian Marclay. In *Guitar Drag*, Marclay ties a brand new fender stratocaster by the neck to the back of a truck, plugs the guitar in, turns the amp on, and drags it through the street. He films as the driver drags the guitar over dirt roads and railroad tracks, and swings the instrument into cement curbs and gravel. Marclay decided to make the film after reading a news account of the brutal lynching of James Byrd, Jr. on June 7th, 1998 in Jasper, Texas.

> Byrd was forty-nine and black. He was walking home from a party. Three white men in a Ford pickup, John King, Russell Brewer, and Shawn Berry, offered him a ride; he climbed in. They drove behind a store, pulled him out, beat him with a baseball bat, chained him by his ankles to the truck, and dragged him to death. When they finally dumped the body at the gate of a local black cemetery, there was no head and no right arm. Investigators determined that Byrd had tried to keep his head off the ground until the driver swerved and smashed him into a culvert. King and Brewer were both white supremacists— King had a tattoo of a black man hanging from a tree. Berry was sentenced to life; Brewer and King were sentenced to death. Brewer was executed in 2011. (p. 223 of 307)

Marcus makes of this lynching the "unsinging" of the song "John Henry" and every version of the song "John Henry" "a symbolic unsinging of any and every lynching of a black person" (p. 224). He considers "Guitar Drag*"* a version of a version of "John Henry*"* or at least directly tied to the story. He flows from decade to decade, even in the same paragraph, connecting songs and artists to each other, to ideas, to films, folktales, and actual events. Marcus ties "Guitar Drag" to the long history of destroying guitars in performance and to speeches by Martin Luther King. In many ways Marcus is writing a networked history, wherein "Guitar Drag" connects back to Jimi Hendrix and across to more contemporary versions of the John Henry story. Marcus starts to see John Henry everywhere:

> Guitar Drag is a scratch in the record— the historical record. If you put the soundtrack record back on with all of this in the front of your mind, other music begins to rise out of it. There is most of all Jimi Hendrix's Woodstock transformation of "The Star-Spangled Banner," the greatest and most unstable protest song there is: every time you hear it, it says something else. In the twisting abstractions of that performance, in the music of Guitar Drag— you can't call it chance music; you could call it forced music— you can begin to hear the droning abstractions in the blues. The gonging in Blind Lemon Jefferson's 1928 "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean." (p. 231)

Each chapter in Marcus's book focuses on one idea or concept, and those concepts begin to feel like a table of the elements of rock 'n' roll. (I almost just wrote that

he makes mountains out of mole hills, but that is not quite right. He is writing about mole hills from the perspective of an ant.) Marcus places songs and ideas in deep sprawling context. The way John Lennon sings on the Beatles' cover of "Money (That's What I Want)" isn't just unique vocal styling, it is emblematic of the whole nihilistic nature of American popular music. Marcus contextualizes Lennon's performance within the story of how Berry Gordy and Janie Bradford wrote the song. While Marcus writes about the idea of money in popular music both before and after this song, the song works as a nodule in a network. Many things in popular music connect to it going forward and backward in time and across genres. Much like Foucault's conception of history with various fields of validity and many theoretical contexts, money and its power are factors in various fields and theoretical contexts of popular music. The way Marcus writes it, the song "Money (That's What I Want)" embodies many of those fields of validity and is a theoretical context for understanding much of rock 'n' roll.

The History of Rock 'n' Roll in Ten Songs is a different kind of history than that of the Stuessy and Lipscomb book or other similar grand narrative texts. Rather than trying to cover everything, Marcus limits the text to ten ideas and creates ten different narratives that illustrate different histories of rock 'n' roll. Narrative scholars Clandinin and Connelly (2006) describe narrative inquiry in dimensions and directions. They describe "a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along a third dimension" (p. 479). They also encourage narrative researchers to inquire directionally, specifically inward, outward, forward, and backward. Marcus may not have read the suggestions of Clandinin and Connelley but he surely seems to have followed

them. He examines ideas in his chapter along all three dimensions and in all four directions; Stuessy and Lipscomb seem to address only temporality and the social half of the personal and social dimension, and the direction of their text seems to only go forward. Both are valid views of rock 'n' roll history, but they are different from each other.

My narrative inquiry of Billy Cioffi is intended to raise questions about music education, music learning, and pathways to music teaching. While this dissertation is not a traditional history, I examine Billy's claim that he *is* the history of rock 'n' roll. I also examine Billy's life in the three dimensions and four directions described by Clandinin & Connelly: his timeline both backwards and forwards; his social and personal life both inward and outward; and how place has played a part in his life, in the present, and possibly in the imagined future. In the same way that Marcus explores specific songs in his chapters to illustrate characteristics, concepts, and ideas of rock 'n' roll, I examine one specific person in detail, using stories about him as tools for raising questions.

I Am the History of Rock 'n' Roll

How serious is Billy about his claim? Is it bravado, a way to take the air out of a room, or is it an expression of how he feels about his life? While I believe it is the later, I wonder about how Billy's claim might be applied to any of us. Am I the history of rock 'n' roll? Are you? I think about my own experience with American popular music. I grew up listening to my parents' music: Elton John, The Beatles, The Temptations, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Joni Mitchell, Aretha Franklin, James Brown, James Taylor, Van Morrison, the Rolling Stones, and the Talking Heads. I remember music as a constant presence. We listened to a lot of music as we cleaned on Saturday mornings, a tradition

that lives on in my home now. I have a memory of scrubbing the bathtub and finding out that there was not an actual cleaner called “elbow grease” while the Rolling Stones’ “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” played in the background. In my adolescence I became enamored with the Spin Doctors, Boys II Men, Aerosmith, Blues Travelers, Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder, and Lauryn Hill. I listened to most of this music on compact discs. Although I grew up listening to music, I also played and engaged with music in different contexts. I had one year of piano lessons, and I started writing songs using a ukulele that my grandfather gave me when I was 16.

All of this is part of me. I experienced it. The music wraps itself around my memories. When I hear the songs now they mark time somehow. Some of them help me look inward, some of them help me look outward, forward and backward. Like the adolescents Frith (1987) describes, I have managed my personal and social life with help from those songs. I feel a sense of ownership and belonging when I hear some of the songs. In these ways, I have embodied *a* history of rock ‘n’ roll. I have lived a life that has been affected deeply by what some might call rock ‘n’ roll.

Yet my personal history of rock ‘n’ roll will of course be different than yours. It will be tied to my family traditions and my mother’s stories of listening to Joni Mitchell albums for the first time. In my history James Brown comes after the Brand New Heavies, Laurynn Hill comes before De La Soul, not in order of chronology or importance, but because that is the order in which I found them and because one led me to the other. An embodied history is by necessity a personal history. What I am calling an embodied history focuses on the personal experience of the person writing the history or telling the story.

In *A People's History of The United States of America,* Zinn (2016) tells the story of the arrival of Columbus from the point of view of the native peoples who were massacred. It makes a difference. If you tell the story from Columbus' point of view then you understand the Americas as new. If you tell the story from the native people's point of view then you see the Americas as ancient and part of a long history of civilization. Zinn's text allows readers to flip the story and to think of the history of the United States in a way that they might not have before, a history from a different perspective, a different field of constitution and validity. Although Zinn's history flips the perspective on historical events and retells the familiar stories in a different way, it is still a chronological history. What if we took it one step further?

What if, somewhat like Marcus, we decided to write a people's history of rock 'n' roll or popular music that wasn't necessarily chronological but instead embodied? Where would we start? I might start at the Urban Lounge in Salt Lake City, June 16th 2016. I went to a concert there and saw my little brother's best friend's band *Soft Limbs.* My brother had been telling me about his friend Alex and his band for awhile, and since we were all in town and they were playing I went. I was thoroughly impressed. The band entered the stage wearing different masks. The drummer wore a *Planet of the Apes* mask, the bass player wore a bug-eyed alien mask with antennae, the rhythm guitarist wore a mask that might best be described as a Tuscan raider mask from *Star Wars.* Alex, the lead singer, lead guitar, and songwriter for the group entered the stage last holding his guitar, and wearing white-rimmed wing-tipped sunglasses and a shimmering knee-length black dress and no mask.

The band was tight. They played eleven songs and they knocked my socks off. I wanted to hear the third song again immediately after they played it. Alex had stage presence and amazing guitar chops. The songs were all original, but as new and fresh as the band sounded, they embodied a long history of rock 'n' roll. They touched back to the Stooges (they might not know who this band was, but I do, and the masks they wore reminded me of the antics that the Stooges were known for on stage, at one point the drumming monkey tried to drink through his mask in between songs). Alex harkened back to Kurt Cobain with his dress and white-rimmed sunglasses (but also to Prince, David Bowie, Little Richard, Boy George, and many many more). The band had a fake skeleton on stage wearing a mask and black wings on its back (ala Alice Cooper, Oingo Boingo, Black Sabbath, etc).

The songs were very well crafted and great for dancing. As Alex led the band through two sets of his original material, a projector displayed a giant Roman numeral I behind them for the first set and a giant roman numeral II during the second set. There was little to no downtime between songs and the crowd seemed in love with the sound and the show. At the end of the last song, Alex was soloing on guitar and jumping around the stage. He stood up on top of the bass drum and while the band was wailing away he jumped off and then purposefully fell into the set knocking over two or three drums. The drummer and everyone else continued to play while Alex knocked over keyboards and threw his guitar at the skeleton still ringing out of the amp at full blast. (I bet you could name a few other people who have mistreated guitars in the name of rock). The sound kept going as the crowd went crazy and didn't stop until Alex turned off the amp on his way off the stage. The crowd cheered and clapped and chanted "one more time, one more

time." But Alex knew an important rule of show business, "Always leave them wanting more."

That is the history of rock 'n' roll, or should I say *a* history of rock 'n' roll. A no-name band (*Soft Limbs,* look them up) in Salt Lake City giving a great show that is at once completely new and fresh and also a reference back to a thousand shows and performers before them. Another embodied history of rock 'n' roll might be told from the point of view of a 13-year-old girl with whom I recently did a research project. I gave her an iPod and asked her to make movies about her musical life. She made videos with her baby brother dancing to her favorite songs. She made videos of herself and her friends dancing to "Watch Me Whip" and "Hit The Kwan."

You might wonder what her musical engagement has to do with the history of rock 'n' roll. I might point you towards hundreds of songs whose sole purpose seems to be to introduce, or reintroduce, a type of dance: "The Twist," "Let's Twist Again," "The Locomotion," "The Electric Slide," "The Boot Scootin' Boogie," "The Hustle," "The Macarena," "The Cha Cha Slide," "Teach Me How to Jerk," "Teach Me How to Dougie," "The Call of the Jitterbug," "Land of a Thousand Dances," and many many more. Many of the more recent songs in that list have music videos that show how the dances (and many interesting variations of the dance) are done. For example, the video "Teach Me How to Jerk" by Audio Push is set in a school. The opening scene features a teacher who is obviously boring some students, and the students are acting as bored students do. The teacher gives up and says, "Alright, you guys don't want to listen to this stuff. Octane, why don't you come and teach the class?" At that point Octane, one half of the group Audio Push, comes to the front of the room and the music starts. "Won't you teach me

how to jerk?" The rest of the video features students dancing all over the school, demonstrating different versions of a dance move known as The Jerk. The video is as much a tutorial as it is a piece of entertainment.

In our research project, the 13-year-old girl, used the iPod to make her own version of videos like this. She is not the only teenager to have done so. When I searched YouTube using the term "Watch Me Whip fan videos" it yielded 702,000 results, many of them are made by teenagers. In the same way that Zinn has written a people's history of the United States, one could write a teenager's history of rock 'n' roll, or perhaps a teenage girl's history of rock 'n' roll. In many ways the idea of "teenager" as a classification coincides with the rise of rock 'n' roll. If there were no adolescents with time and money to spend on records, would we know about Elvis Presley? Would there be a top 40? Are teenagers only consumers of popular music or are they also creators and curators?

How have music educators and researchers seen the relationship teenagers and children have with popular music? Have music educators considered that relationship as fertile ground for musical learning or as a hindrance to it? Have researchers of music education examined that relationship? What might such a study look like? How might current music educators help students examine their own personal embodiment of the history of rock 'n' roll? What if researchers asked students to think about the ways in which they come to love the songs that they love and how they interact with those songs, and then asked students to figure out ways to visually or sonically display their findings. Would they be able to trace their love of Coldplay back to someone else's love of the Beatles? What if students were asked to write narrative depictions of their favorite

artists? What connections might be made with young adult fiction that features popular music as a theme (Bickmore & Bickmore, 2016)?

In the same way that Stuessy and Lipscomb caution us to not "let the trees get in the way of the forest," have music educators classified popular music as a tree that gets in the way of the forest of music education? Could it be that three giant redwoods of the music education forest (choir, band, and orchestra) (Mantie, 2012) have crowded out the tree of engagement with popular music? Or is there still fertile ground for popular music cleared by the work of Lucy Greene (2002, 2006, 2009), Patricia Shehan Campbell (1995, 2010), Sonia Nieto (1992), Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995), Evan Tobias (2010, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2015), and practitioners who engage young people in popular music study and expression daily?

That brings me back to Billy. Where does he "fit?" He sits just outside the boundaries of formal in-school music education. His work looks different than the work of classroom music teachers yet maybe not that different at the same time. Billy helps groups of adolescents form bands. He coaches them through covering songs and writing original material. Is that so different than what might happen in a classroom informed by the work of Lucy Greene? Worlds of music education exist outside of classrooms. I am convinced that there are worlds of music education outside the walls of private studios and all other formal efforts to educate young people musically. In other words, people are learning musically with or without the help of music educators. In my mind that raises questions about what types of musical engagement music educators of all stripes might

include in their classrooms. What types of marginalized musical engagement might we value and leverage in our classrooms. What trees growing in the forest need nourishment?

II. Popular Music and Music Education
Tension, Community, and Hostil/pitality

The Music Educators National Conference through its Tanglewood Declaration not only accepts rock and other present-day music as legitimate, but sanctions its use in education.
Wiley L. Housewright, President Music Educators National Conference, 1969
"Youth Music: A Special Report"
(Housewright, Sarig, MacCluskey, 1969, p. 46)

There appear to be three main arguments against the inclusion of rock and other forms of youth music in the public school music curriculum:
1. Rock is aesthetically inferior, if it is music at all.
2. Rock music is damaging to youth, both physically and morally.
3. School time should not be expended teaching what is easily acquired in the vernacular.
Charles B. Fowler
"The Case Against Rock: A Reply,"
(Music Educators Journal 57, no. 1 1970, p. 38)

The Beatles dropped by the states, for the first time, to play on the Ed Sullivan show in February 1964. The Beatles had been playing nonstop on the radio for two years before their arrival and doing really well trying to sound like Buddy Holly (Marcus, 2014, p. 12). Of course popular music, rock music, or "teen-age music," as music educators referred to it in 1969 (Housewright, Sarig, MacCluskey, 1969) had been around for years before the Beatles invaded and occupied the country and the world of popular music, but their arrival meant something. Ask anybody who was alive when it happened. There were the assassinations, the moon landing, and the night the Beatles played on the Ed Sullivan show. People remember it. Hell, I feel like *I* remember it and I wasn't even alive. The Beatles on Ed Sullivan is one of those moments that has become part of our collective musical memory. How have music educators responded to the gigantic, complicated, world of musical engagement the Beatles seemed to represent?

Let's forget for a moment that the story I am telling right now about the Beatles and America is a retelling of one version of a history that dismisses thousands of people, mostly African Americans, whose creative work serves as a foundation for what the Beatles and others were and are able to achieve. Let's forget, for a moment, that popular music is a catchall phrase that over time has included many different genres and that some of those genres are or were not technically very popular (Gracyk, 2004, p. 51). Forget, for a moment, that for many people there is not much of a difference between Ozzy Osborne, Joni Mitchell, and James Brown. Forget for a moment that eight years before the Beatles' appearance, Elvis Presley appeared on Ed Sullivan singing a Big Momma Thornton tune. Elvis Presley's appearance on the Ed Sullivan show has also become a moment of national memory. So why start with the Beatles? For the purpose of this essay, I am starting with the appearance of the Beatles on Ed Sullivan and asking you to forget all of the other things because for music education, the Beatles on Ed Sullivan represents a beginning. In other words, music educators came late to the party, or did they?

Of course I can't lump all music educators into one monolithic group, and of course some music educators came early to the party of "popular music." The idea I am trying to convey with all of the forgetting I am asking you to do (which, coupled with the fact that I am mentioning the forgetting again, obviously means I don't want you to forget any of it) is that music education in the U.S. had a moment with popular music in the late sixties manifested by The Tanglewood Declaration (Choate,1967, p. 51), the Youth Music Institute at the University of Wisconsin in July of 1969, and a nearly 40-page

section of the November 1969 *Music Educators Journal* dedicated to that Institute and the conversation it created about popular music.

> The Youth Music Institute
>
> was an experimental attempt to open communication between teachers and students by bringing educators into contact with youth music and its creators. Sponsored by the Music Educators National Conference, the U.S. Office of Education, and the Extension Music Department of the University of Wisconsin, the Institute attempted to retrain thirty-one music educators in the music of youth. (p. 4)

Woodstock happened in between the Youth Music Institute and the publishing of the *Music Educators Journal* piece about it. In the late sixties youth music (popular music, rock music, funk, etc.,) and youth culture coincided with political upheaval: the civil rights movement, the antiwar movement, changing attitudes towards what young people were supposed to do and not do with their bodies, as well as growing critique against capitalism and institutions in general or an anti-establishment movement (Humphreys, 2004, p. 98). All of those changes and movements were mixed in with "popular music." Perhaps music educators were beginning to get mixed in as well.

In this essay I intend to witness the deconstruction (Derrida, 1976) of "popular music in music education" as a text. I will only focus on selected passages of, moments with, attitudes towards, and relationships through "popular music in music education" as a text. It is not my goal to define "popular music in music education" as a text, but, rather to highlight elements of "popular music in music education" as a text that will help me tell critical stories about the musical life of Billy Cioffi.

Humphreys (2004) describes a "host of 'utilitarian' reasons" (p. 92) music educators and others have used popular music in North America:

> (1) Its usefulness in church; (2) its perceived role as a "hook" to bring students into music programs where they could study "serious" or "legitimate" music, or simply as a bridge toward "something better" (typically Western European and North American art music); and (3) its power to enhance school-community (public) relations. (p. 92)

For the purposes of this essay I am particularly interested in the second usage listed by Humphreys. He uses two terms, "hook" and "bridge," that I intend to use as rhetorical devices to organize this essay into three sections: the Hook, the Bridge, and the Wreck/Break/Drop. The Hook, the Bridge, and the Wreck/Break/Drop are interrelated ideas and common features of popular music. I will use them here to describe the relationship between "popular music" and music education or the text that is "popular music in music education." At the beginning of each section I will describe each term and how I intend to use it as a tool through which I view the deconstruction of the text that is "popular music in music education." I will also use the themes of community and hospitality as a way to understand "popular music in music education" as a text in the Hook, the Bridge, and the Wreck/Break/Drop sections. The themes of community and hospitality are directly related to the Derridean idea of deconstruction and I will draw on the work of Derrida and other scholars who have examined the ideas of community and hospitality.

Community and Hospitality or Hostil/pitality

As noted above, Humphreys states that one of the ways music educators have used popular music has to do with its potential power to enhance school-community relations. But what are "communities" and how does the idea of "community" interact with "popular music in music education" as a text. Derrida has spoken and written about the idea of community:

> I don't much like the word community, I am not even sure I like the thing. If by community one implies, as is often the case, a harmonious group, consensus, and fundamental agreement beneath the phenomena of discord or war, then I don't believe in it very much and I sense in it as much threat as promise. There is doubtless this irrepressible desire for a "community" to form but also for it to know its limit—and for its limit to be its opening. (Derrida, 1995, p. 355)

Is music education "a harmonious group?" Is there consensus? What does music education gain because of the "irrepressible desire for a community" and what does it lose? John D. Caputo (1997, p. 107), a Derridean scholar who transcribed a roundtable discussion with Jacques Derrida, provides many descriptions of deconstruction. The title of his book, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell,* is as much a joke as it is a way for Caputo to describe deconstruction in as many "nutshells" as he can. It is a joke because of how difficult scholars have found the task of describing deconstruction (see for example Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, and Chapters 1 and 2 of this document). Caputo draws on Derrida's published works, various interviews with Derrida, and a transcribed roundtable discussion. In a chapter entitled "Community Without Community" Caputo describes the problematic nature of community.

> After all, *communio* is a word for a military formation and a kissing cousin of the word "munitions," to have a *communio* is to be fortified on all sides, to build a "common" (com) "defense" (munis), as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner out. The self-protective closure of "community," then, would be just about the opposite of what deconstruction is, since deconstruction is the preparation for the incoming of the other, "open" and "porous" to the other, which would of course make one poor excuse for a defense system. A "universal community" excluding no one is a contradiction in terms; communities always have to have an inside and an outside. (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 107-108)

How porous is the wall that surrounds music education? Who is kept out and who is kept in by the walls that define communities of music education? What about popular music? Are there communities of popular music? Whom do they include/exclude? How do the

boundaries of music education communities and popular music communities interact when they rub up against or crash into each other? Which communities are more fortified? Which communities are more open? Here is a conundrum. If a community is open and accepting of people outside its boundaries, does it cease to be a community or does the community change fundamentally? Maybe communities that are more porous and open are communities that change faster.

People don't often challenge the idea of community. It would be easy to attack Derrida for his critique of a cherished ideal. Caputo addresses this issue of the critique of the idea of community by describing another equally cherished idea/ideal and how it pertains to deconstruction:

> If you were intent on making deconstruction look respectable, it would not be a distortion to say that deconstruction is to be understood as a form of hospitality, that deconstruction *is* hospitality, which means the welcoming of the other. Deconstruction would thus mean—again in a nutshell— "Let the other come!" "Welcome to the other." (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 109-110)

In true Derridean fashion, Caputo does not leave hospitality untroubled:

> Derrida's interest is drawn to the fact that, by virtue of its etymology, the word "hospitality" carries its opposite within itself. The word "hospitality" derives from the Latin *hospes*, which is formed from *hostis*, which originally meant a "stranger" and came to take on the meaning of the enemy or "hostile" stranger (*hostilis*), + *pets (potis, potes, potentia)*, to have power. "Hospitality," the welcome extended to the guest, is a function of the power of the host to remain master of the premises …There is an essential "self limitation" built right into the idea of hospitality, which preserves the distance between one's own and the stranger, between owning one's own property and inviting the other into one's home. So, there is always a little hostility in all hosting and hospitality, constituting a certain "hostil/pitality." (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 110)

The tension between community and hospitality is one of the things that Caputo considers deconstruction to be (in a nutshell). Tension is one of the reasons texts are always/already falling apart. "Popular music in music education" as a text is affected by

issues regarding the ideas of community and hospitality and the tension between the two. Specifically, I propose that music educators have built and continue to build communities and that those communities have been and are at times porous and open enough to allow popular music, its fans, its styles, and its practitioners in, sometimes through acts of hospitality but more often through acts of "hostil/pitality." In fact, the tension between the desire to create community and the ability of that community to enact hospitality or hostil/pitality causes the deconstruction of "popular music in music education" as a text. We should not despair. The deconstruction of this text does not mean an end to the relationship between popular music and music education; instead it means that new space has been created. In that space we welcome the coming of the other. What will that space be? What shape will it take? How will the text be rewritten?

The Hook

And it don't matter who you are.
If I'm doing my job then it's your resolve that breaks,
Because the Hook brings you back.
I ain't tellin' you no lie.
The Hook brings you back,
On that you can rely.
-Blues Traveler, "The Hook"

The Merriam Webster definition of the word 'hook' includes 10 entries, and I have listed them below. Humphreys (2004) uses the word "hook" to describe how he thinks music educators have used popular music. "(2) its perceived role as a "hook" to bring students into music programs where they could study "serious" or "legitimate" music" (Humphreys, 2004, p. 92). I wonder which definition of "hook" is most apt to describe how music educators have used popular music:

Hook: (Merriam Webster's Dictionary Online)

- **1a:** a curved or bent device for catching, holding, or pulling; **b:** something intended to attract and ensnare; **c:** anchor
- **2:** something curved or bent like a hook; *especially plural***:** fingers
- **3:** a flight or course of a ball that deviates from straight in a direction opposite to the dominant hand of the player propelling it; *also***:** a ball following such a course—compare slice
- **4:** a short blow delivered with a circular motion by a boxer while the elbow remains bent and rigid
- **5:** hook shot
- **6:** buttonhook
- **7:** quick or summary removal—used with *get* or *give* <the pitcher got the *hook* after giving up three runs>
- **8:** a device especially in music or writing that catches the attention
- **9:** a selling point or marketing scheme
- **10:** cradle

Most of the definitions above include an element of betrayal or guile. Let's examine 1a and 1b. The hooks in these examples are trap-like; there is death at the end of those hooks or at least death is implied. If we use these definitions for the term "hook," popular music is used as bait. The student, in theory, accepts the bait and then is "ensnared." What does this say about the relationship between teacher and student? The teacher in this metaphor is a trickster, perhaps benevolent, but essentially a trickster. The student may or may not accept the trick. After having been hooked by the "selling point" or "scheme" (definition 9), the student may enjoy what they were lured there for (most likely western classical music but more on that later), perhaps they may benefit from being ensnared and dragged into the "boat" (perhaps a traditional ensemble) and the "device" (definitions 8 and 1) will have succeeded in its goal.

But what about the prey, for that is what the students have become in this metaphor? What about those who see the hook beneath the bait? What of the popular musician who knows her discipline deeply and can see the counterfeit for what it is,

popular music arrangements that are mere shells of the original, like flies made by fly fishermen to imitate insects? Such a student will not be "ensnared" by this kind of trick. She may even be offended by the idea. She will see that the teacher is not genuinely interested in her music and that her music has been transformed to be used against her, to take her where she does not want to go.

Why might music educators use popular music as a hook? Why might they, why have they, attempted to ensnare young people? Humphreys (2004) declares that it is "time to attempt to answer the question of why popular music, especially rock and its various offshoots and derivatives, does not occupy a more formal place in the American school curriculum" (p. 97). In answer to his own question, he sets forth eight reasons, contextualized historically: "Desire to Reform Tastes, Cultural Bias, Association with Youth Culture, Bias toward Cognitive Training, Local Control, Lack of Demand, Social-Class Associations, and Structure of School Music" (pp. 97-99).

Humphreys questions why popular music doesn't occupy a more formal place in the American school curriculum. I pose the question "Why might music educators try and ensnare young people with the hook of popular music?" Humphreys' eight reasons answer my question in part. Reason 1, the desire to reform tastes, gets at the heart of why some music educators might want to ensnare young people with the bait and hook of popular music The act of ensnaring young people with the hook of popular music is an act of hostil/pitality that attempts to invite them into communities of music education but also asks them not to bring their music with them.

Humphreys critiques the profession of music education, particularly those who have made it their goal to refine the taste of students towards "Western European and

North American art music" (p. 97). He states that the desire to refine taste "can be traced to the reformist practices of some Calvinist church leaders in colonial America" (p. 97) and in more recent times can be traced to university music departments:

> After the nation's university music departments and schools assumed responsibility for music teacher education, teachers in training developed similar attitudes due to the music philosophies and practices encountered in those institutions. Specifically these institutions fostered a belief in the superiority of Western European and North American art music. Like their predecessors, the early singing masters, future music educators became indoctrinated into the belief that they must assume the mantle of carrying the message about "something better" to American society. Tens of thousands of music students became convinced that their most important task was to improve their students' musical tastes, which in turn would improve the tastes of the general public. (p. 97)

During my undergraduate education at a school of music, professors tried to convince me of the superiority of western classical music, but western classical music just didn't speak to me like Marvin Gaye, Sufjan Stevens, Joni Mitchell, and Lauryn Hill. Most of the discussions of popular music that occurred in the school of music happened in the hallways with my peers, some of whom had already been convinced that popular music was not as good as western classical music and began to relegate the use of popular music to hook status. In other words, some of my peers drank the Koolaid.

The power of the institution of a school of music, or a conservatory is amazing to behold. "Tens of thousands" (Humphreys, p. 97) of music educators convinced that their duty is to lead the rabble to something better. To save them from their noise and bring them to Beethoven, Bach, and Brahms (I happen to enjoy their music as well).

> Sadly, the abject failure of music teachers to lead the American public to develop a deep appreciation for art music has been paralleled by an equally dismal failure to satisfy students in the realm of popular music instruction. The profession's ambivalence over goals and expectations, both popular and artistic, has led to myriad problems for music teachers, including burnout due to constant striving to

> achieve unachievable goals and worry that their work is not being valued by society. (Humphreys, 2004, p. 97-98)

Is a fish satisfied when it eats the worm only to find there is now a hook in its mouth? Is the music student satisfied to play a watered down version of "Eye of the Tiger" in wind ensemble once a year, when what she wants to do is blast electric bass out of a Marshall amp? Or what of the student, like the wise fish, who is not even tempted by the hook or bait of the music teacher? She has learned to play Nirvana from her mother. She has turned to YouTube to learn to play the ukulele. She is making music on her phone. She is making beats on her computer or iPad. She is a musical being. Is there a place for her in music education? Does she need to be hooked in, or are there other ways to welcome her?

Will ~~communities~~ of music education accept her? Is the boundary defined by schools of music and by the desire (mandate?) to reform her taste porous enough to invite her in without having her abandon her musical life and knowledge. Are communities of music education willing to change to allow her to teach the teachers as was done at the Youth Music Institute at the University of Wisconsin in 1969? Are communities of music education worried about losing their identities, or can those communities perform true acts of hospitality without hostility? Can they truly say to her, "Please come in, we welcome you. What's mine is yours." The home of the music teacher has been the lectern, the conducting stand, the front of the classroom. Can ~~communities~~ of music education welcome her there? Can we give her that space or must we make new places? Can the teachers lay down their hooks? Can they beat them into ploughshares (midi controllers)?

Maybe not ploughshares, maybe solder. What if music educators melted down the hooks they have made of popular music and turned them into solder for connecting patches on the motherboard of music education. In this metaphor popular music could create musical connections within networks of communication that carry information back and forth from teacher to student, from student to teacher, and student to student. Popular music could become necessary for the motherboard to perform its functions and for new applications to develop. Much of the musical engagement that might happen on the motherboard of music education might be made possible by the solder of popular music.

Distinction: A Riff

Maybe the distinction between popular and western classical or art music is the problem. What is the nature of that distinction? The term "popular music" is inadequate to describe so much of the music that I love, and the term "classical music" does not quite describe the music I love either. Take, for example, one of my favorites, Van Morrison. He has enjoyed some "popularity" with tunes such as "Brown Eyed Girl" but he never has reached the level of popularity that other popular musicians have. It is not his popularity that draws me to his music, however, it is his poetry and the way that his music connects with other music, the way that his performance is a constant reference to the blues musicians he adored as a young man, the way that his lyrics are more than just words to sing but rather sound experiments and different every time he performs them. It is the way his music taps into a distinctly Irish literary stream of consciousness exemplified by James Joyce. Van Morrison works within and around rhythm and blues,

country, soul, folk music, jazz, spoken word, rock 'n' roll, and the blues. Many would consider those idioms "popular."

Martha Bayles (2004) describes the work of Henry Pleasants, a "maverick critic" who was writing about "twentieth century musical modernism" and who "began to wonder, in the 1950s, why such modern music attracted such a minuscule audience, even among people eager to embrace highly intellectual art" (p. 71). Pleasants believed that the vast majority of twentieth century modernist music including "serialism after Webern was a sterile, hyper-mathematical exercise better suited to the burgeoning science of electronics than to the human ear" (p. 71-72). Pleasants suggested that jazz had been relegated to second-class status when it might be an alternative to twentieth century modernist music. Pleasants writes:

> We regard the distinction between Serious and Popular as qualitative when it is, I believe, idiomatic. We are dealing, in my view, not with two grades, the one substantial and the other trivial, but with two separate musical idioms, the one European, the other, Afro-American. (Pleasants, 1969, p. 43)

Pleasants' argument is that the distinction between popular and classical is not a distinction of quality (high vs. low, bad vs. good, complex vs. simple) but a distinction of idiom. Pleasants argues that the foundation of American popular music, widely defined, comes from the musical experience of African Americans and that western classical art music comes from the musical experience of white western Europeans. It is an interesting argument because it changes the standard for measurement. Rather than judging Bruno Mars by the standard of Mozart (which is akin to measuring the circumference of a basketball with a straight ruler), judge Bruno Mars by the standard of James Brown or Parliament Funkadelic (measuring the circumference of a basketball with a tailor's tape).

Of course there is crossover between the two idioms (and I am actually not at all comfortable with the idea of only two idioms), but the idea of the distinction being idiomatic in nature makes more sense to me than a distinction of quality. It makes me feel better. I have always felt that the music that I love is important, whether it was Gustav Holst or Lauryn Hill. I like them both for different reasons.

What if music teachers viewed the distinction between musics as more idiomatic and less qualitative? Might they lose the desire to hook with one to feed the other? They might spend their time preparing musically engaging activities that help people think, engage, and play with all types of music. What if professors of music education worked to break down the structures of distinction, prevalent in schools of music, that lift one idiom above another or above many others? How might they do this? What might music education professors do to help future music educators think about multiple musical idioms? Or is it too late for professors? What might undergraduate music students do to help professors think differently about distinctions between musics? Is it too late for them as well? Are we all just caught on hooks on a long line dragging us to "something better?"

The Bridge

(Don't trouble the water)
I won't (leave it alone)
(Why don't you, why don't you, let it be?)
(Still water run deep… yes it do)
I know that
(Whoa-o-o-yeah)
If you only believe
-Aretha Franklin, Like a Bridge Over Troubled Waters.

Bridge: (Merriam Webster's Online Dictionary)

- **1: a:** a structure carrying a pathway or roadway over a depression or obstacle **b:** a time, place, or means of connection or transition.

- **2:** something resembling a bridge in form or function: as **a:** the upper bony part of the nose; *also***:** the part of a pair of glasses that rests upon it **b:** a piece raising the strings of a musical instrument **c:** the forward part of a ship's superstructure from which the ship is navigated **d:** gantry 2b **e:** the hand as a rest for a billiards or pool cue; *also***:** a device used as a cue rest.
- **3a:** a musical passage linking two sections of a composition **b:** a partial denture anchored to adjacent teeth **c:** a connection (as an atom or group of atoms) that joins two different parts of a molecule (as opposite sides of a ring).
- **4:** an electrical instrument or network for measuring or comparing resistances, inductances, capacitances, or impedances by comparing the ratio of two opposing voltages to a known ratio.

If a bridge is a structure carrying a pathway or roadway over a depression or obstacle (1a), what type of depression or obstacle exists between the communities of music education and popular music? Have music educators separated themselves with troubled waters, a small stream, a wide rolling river, a lake, a bay, a pond? What does it say about the state of music education that a bridge would be needed to travel from popular music to any other type of music? Aren't different musical idioms already compatriots in the land of music? Or is it that popular music is being used *as* a bridge to carry the bodies of youth from outside communities of music education to inside? In that scenario popular music may never enter communities of music education. It is only useful as a transition (1b) to "something better" (Humphreys, 2004). It is beside the subject, parergon (Derrida, 1979), not worthy of study, forever on the fringes, cemented just outside the community.

The idea of popular music *as* bridge ignores the idea that we embody music or that music is embodied by people. If music educators use popular music as a bridge to western European classical or art music, what happens to the people who carry popular music in their hearts? Must they leave it on the bridge? Must they be stripped of themselves as they enter ~~communities of music education~~? Are ~~communities of music~~

~~education~~ saying, "You are welcome here, but you must change your identity. Surely you wouldn't ask us to change our community standards to accommodate you?" What kind of welcome is that, and why would we ask anyone to accept it? Such a welcome is an act of hostil/pitality.

Despite the hostile reception that popular music and musicians have received at times, ~~popular music~~ is in the schools and even in the hearts of music teachers. Music education scholars have been looking into the use of ~~popular music~~ in schools for decades. I list only some of them here chronologically: Thompson, 1979, Cutietta, 1985, Scholten, 1988, Cuttieta & Brennan, 1991, Wagner & Brick, 1993, Bloespflug, 1999, Hebert & Campbell, 2000. Yet, ~~popular music~~ is still not at home in communities of music education. In "Youth Music: A Special Report" (Housewright, Sarig, MacCluskey, 1969), the editors published the comments of several students and teachers who attended the Youth Music Institute in July of 1969. I include some of them here as examples of how the relationships between students and teachers in music education contexts create tension in "popular music in music education" as a text. This first example comes from a music teacher from Philadelphia:

> Some of the young rock musicians come from schools where the students have run every music teacher out of town. They call them every filthy name under the sun. In those schools, you no more can teach jazz today, than you can teach Bach or Beethoven. The only thing they want at this juncture is what they hear eight or more hours a day on their transistor radios, and that is rock. As you know, I'm very strong for jazz, also; but jazz *per se* is too high-brow for this group of kids at the present time. It seems clear that rock is the only way that we're going to reach some of these kids. Louis G. Wersen, Director of Music, Philadelphia Public Schools, Pennsylvania. (Housewright, Sarig, MacCluskey, 1969, p. 61)

In the example above, Wersen comes to the conclusion that jazz is too "high-brow" for the students in his district who, he claims, are running teachers out of school buildings

like angry name-calling mobs. The tension, which is obvious, is found at the socially constructed borders of ~~communities of music education~~. Mr. Wersen seems reluctantly resigned to the teaching of popular music in his district. Perhaps he laments the fact that communities of music education must use popular music as a bridge into "high-brow" neighborhoods of Bach, Beethoven, and Bird. Maybe he feels like the bridge will lower property values. How can a teacher teach popular music if every time they do they feel like they are "slumming it"? How might such an attitude affect the students? And, what is the cost of entry into ~~communities of music education~~ for these children and adolescents? Must they simply grow up? Must they leave their youth on the bridge of ~~popular music~~ to gain entry into ~~communities of music education~~? (Can they sneak out at night or on the weekends to go out to the bridge to pick it back up again)?

The perspective of one of the students from the Youth Music Institute describes how students in 1969 were learning music and how teachers might help:

> A kid picks out a solo on the record he likes best, and learns that solo by rote. He plays it over and over until the record is demolished, but he learns the style exactly. Take a piano player who admires Herbie Hancock. He learns every note on Herbie's record. He can play just like Herbie Hancock, and he knows what Herbie Hancock is doing. Now couple of years later, he won't sound much like Herbie Hancock anymore. He will be doing his own thing, but he had to start by learning from someone else. The teacher can guide this type of thing. But the trouble is, most of the teachers don't understand this type of music. The teacher has to keep ahead of the students, go back to school, and learn what's happening. -A student, Wisconsin Youth Music Institute. (Housewright, Sarig, MacCluskey, 1969, p. 57)

In this example the student highlights another point of tension in "popular music in music education" as a text. The tension is created by the lack that the student sees in the pedagogy of the teacher. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), Paulo Freire raises questions about the systems in which we participate, what we consider to be fundamental

about education, and whether or not our work as educators has been dehumanizing. Two central themes from Freire's book apply to the issues surrounding teacher and student roles, and Freire poses these themes as contradictions. One of Freire's enduring themes is the contradiction between oppression and liberation. The other contradiction is between the banking model of education and problem-posing education. (These contradictions could also be understood as points of tension.)

Freire describes the banking model of education in a list of attitudes and practices which, he writes, "mirror oppressive society as a whole:"

> (a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught
> (b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
> (c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
> (d) the teacher talks and the students listen—meekley;
> (e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
> (f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
> (g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;
> (h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
> (i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
> (j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (p.74)

The student in the example from the Youth Music Institute seems to be trying to defy this list of attitudes and practices. The student asks his teachers to become students and to listen to their students. Freire offers advice as to how teachers might actively change their roles and how students and teachers might come to understand each other differently.

> Indeed, problem-posing education, which breaks with the vertical patterns characteristic of banking education, can fulfill its function as the practice of freedom only if it can overcome the above contradiction (between teachers and students). Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-

> teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. (p. 80)

Teacher-students with students-teachers? Teachers who learn from their students and students who teach their teachers. That sounds like a learning community that might not need a bridge anymore. It sounds like a community wherein students are members whose ideas and music are valued. It sounds like a community wherein teachers actively seek students' ideas, passions, and abilities, and view them as resources for curriculum and for their own learning.

The Wreck/Break/Drop: The Dark Side of Community

At the beginning of this essay I quote Charles B. Fowler, editor of the *Music Educator's Journal* during the Youth Music Report issue, who wrote a response to what he saw as common arguments against the inclusion of popular music into the curriculum from music teachers at the time. Those arguments were: "(1) Rock is aesthetically inferior, if it is music at all. (2) Rock music is damaging to youth, both physically and morally. (3) School time should not be expended teaching what is easily acquired in the vernacular" (Fowler, 1970, p. 38). Fowler provides descriptions of how and why music educators might react this way to popular music, and prescriptions for overcoming those reactions. I disagree wholeheartedly with the assertions of music educators described by Fowler (and so did he, to be clear). Unlike Fowler, I will not attempt to find evidence to refute those assertions or posit prescriptions, instead I will ask what might lead a person to think that way about popular music.

Within the idea of community is the idea of those who do not belong. Similar to the way that defining a term closes its meaning, creating a community closes out people

who do not fit the standards. The socially-constructed standards or boundaries of communities, created by its members, dictate who can come in and who cannot. In many cases those socially constructed standards, borders, and boundaries define an "other" or an enemy as much as, or more than, they define a community's members. The good news is that the field of music education has never been as diverse as it is right now.

Many practitioners and researchers in communities of music education have opened doors and performed acts of hospitality by welcoming new members who will shape new boundaries (hopefully porous and open) over time. The bad news is that some practitioners and researchers, seek to fortify borders, build walls, dig trenches, standardize curriculum, and more. Even worse some throughout history, like some of the educators described by Fowler, have gone on the attack.

I have entitled this subsection "The Wreck/Break/Drop: The Dark Side of Community." I chose each of the words at the beginning of the subtitle because of their dual meanings in music and outside of music, much like the hook and the bridge. To wreck something is to destroy it. When a rapper, or hip hop dancer wins a battle, or decimates a rival rapper lyrically in a song, it is called wrecking. To break someone can mean to destroy their resolve or physically cause them to fracture or to be cut. In music a break can refer to the part of a song where all of the sound stops (small versions of these can be called cuts), or a place in the song where all other sound stops except the drums and sometimes the bass. To drop someone can mean to leave them quickly, to take them down in a fight, or to break up with someone in a relationship. In music "a drop in popular music, especially electronic music styles, is a point in a music track where a

switch of rhythm or bass line occurs and usually follows a recognizable build section and break" (Wikipedia, Drop music https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drop_(music)).

The inclination of communities to define themselves with acts of hostility unfortunately can cause some members of communities to attack those who seek to enter. The following story in *Youth Music: A Special Report* (1969), illustrates one such attack:

> *I had this teacher in a music appreciation course and this cat was really bad. I mean, if it wasn't classical to him, it just wasn't. He was a good vocal teacher, baritone, and everything, but if it wasn't an art song, you know, it just wasn't. One day I brought in the new Sgt. Pepper's album by the Beatles. They have a song on there, "She's Leaving Home," that some bigwig on top said was one of the greatest art songs ever written. He compared it to Schubert.*
>
> *Since this teacher talked about art songs and everything all the time, I asked him to listen to it. So he said, "Okay." I put it on and we listened to it and afterwards I said, "Well, what did you think of it?" He looked at me and started laughing. And it wasn't like it was funny; it was laughing like he was really cutting you right to the bone. That's just about the worst sarcasm you can get- somebody just laughing at you and not saying anything. And I looked at him and said, "Well, what don't you like about it?" "The words are trite," he said, "the instrumentation is bad, the voice is bad, and there's just nothing to the song." And I said, "Well, man, this cat said it was one of the greatest." And he started to laugh again.*
>
> *If a teacher can't be open-minded enough to really listen to something like this, then I say so what if he wants to tear it apart and tell me what he doesn't like about it, because I can sure tear his music apart and tell him why I don't like his songs that rhyme "moon, June, spoon." I'm open-minded enough to listen to his music; I don't see why he can't be the same. We don't mind older folks and we don't mind their music, but don't put us down for ours. If teachers could relate to rock, students might find it easier to accept some of their music. It would be better than throwing all that Bach and Beethoven at us and saying that it's what's happening.*
>
> *-A student, Rochester Inter High School, Rochester, New York.*

Ensnaring young people with popular music and trying to use popular music as a bridge is at worst an act of hostil/pitality; what is described above is an act of violence. At least when communities of music education use popular music as a hook or a bridge, we recognize the utility of the music and our actions as a means of bringing people into

music education, even if we don't intend to honor the music we have only used to get them there. When music educators wreck, break, and drop popular musicians, and fans, they treat them not like guests who have overstayed their welcome, but like enemies -- existential threats to the foundations of communities of music education. Surely people don't do this type of thing anymore. Surely such an attitude won't persist for long. On the contrary, I propose that the ideas that lead to this kind of attack are still taught in schools of music, conservatories, high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools.

As a graduate student, I participated in a composition class in which we were asked to write a piece in the style of a composer of our choosing. I quickly chose Joni Mitchell and asked the professor if that would be ok. He said, "Yes I suppose you could do Joni Mitchell, but we don't want anybody else to do any popular stuff because it is all so similar." At the end of the project we were tasked with making a presentation on the characteristics of the composer and showing off our modeled composition. The professor was surprised by the complexity of Joni Mitchell's compositional styling, and thankfully, by my modeled composition. I was simultaneously happy that he saw the merits of one artist whom he considered to be a popular musician (though Joni Mitchell is more akin to Schubert than to Elvis in my opinion) and sad at the realization that my project was only one of twenty; other people in the class who had asked to model their compositions based on other musicians outside of the western classical canon were denied the opportunity. My example doesn't illustrate anything except that an idea persists. The idea that persists is that popular music (whatever that means) is less than, simple, common, all the same, not worthy of study, aesthetically inferior, etc.

Perhaps my generation and generations to come will loosen the borders, fill in the trenches, open the gates, tear down the walls, and invite in the djs, beatmakers, rappers, banjo players, vocalists who are experts in styles other than bel canto, and people who are making music we don't know about yet. How does the musical life of Billy Cioffi fit in all of this? He is a popular musician and songwriter (at least he plays the guitar and writes songs in idioms that are not associated with western classical traditions). He is a private guitar instructor and songwriting coach. He facilitates adolescent rock band groups. He is educating musically, but is he a music educator? Does he belong in communities of music education? Does he even want to be invited into communities of music education? Would he fit in? What would he have to change about himself to gain entrance? Would he even want to cross a bridge into communities of music education? Is he already in communities of music education but working underground? Are the students with whom he works welcome in communities of music education? Have they been hooked? Did they cross the bridge? Certainly not to get to where Billy is. Billy didn't hook them, they sought him out and their parents pay for access to the music education he facilitates. Are his students in music ensembles at school? Do they write songs in those ensembles? Who has access to communities of music education and how is entrance into those communities gained?

Do music educators even have a framework or a place to understand EDM, hip-hop, rap, Radio-head, Daft Punk, DJing, beatmaking, Janelle Monae? They might reference the work of music education researchers who have explored popular music and ways of engaging with it (Tobias, 2010, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2014, 2015). Teachers might go straight to the source material and try performing, listening, or

creating (Greene, 2009) contemporary styles of music. ~~Communities of music education~~ might perform acts of hospitality and invite YouTube musicians such as Jacob Collier, http://www.jacobcollier.co.uk, dj's, rappers, bedroom beatmakers, and other musical groups and artists to a conference designed to help teachers learn from them. This invitation should not be an invitation that asks them to leave anything at the bridge. Instead it should be a welcome, a "Yes Please Come! Teach us! Bring all that you are and make yourself at home!"

I hope two things. First, I hope that the deconstruction caused by the tension between the desire for community and the acts of hospitality and hostil/pitality in "popular music and music education" (a tension built into the socially-constructed definition of the text, meaning that in the creation of "popular music and music education" as a text was also made the means for its own undoing) will yield space for newness. Newness that may manifest itself as the people who are not present in ~~music education communities~~ (Elpus, & Abril, 2011) and the music they might bring. Second, I sincerely hope that ~~communities of music education~~ have not dug their trenches too wide or built their walls too high to welcome that newness in.

~~METHODOLOGY~~

Words of Warning

This section of my dissertation is what I planned to do. A section entitled Relational Research after the novella in Chapter 4 describes more accurately what I did. The section you are about to read closely resembles the methodology of my dissertation proposal, edited for mistakes and to fix the tense. Whereas before there was a lot of "I intend" now there is a lot of "I intended." You might be wondering why I didn't just fix my proposal methodology to reflect what I have done and not write an extra section. The reason is because I am trying to make a point about how a prescribed methodology in a project like this would have been a mistake. In other words, the reason I have two methodological sections is because I don't believe in methodologies. Confusing right.

Just hang with me. One of the lessons I have learned through doing this dissertation is that it served me well to be flexible and open to new ideas. If I had closed off my options by prescribing a methodology, Billy and I might not have been able to write the novella that appears next in this document. As you read this first methodological section you will see a struggle of ideas. You may notice that I am trying to reject any influence of a positivist paradigm of research while still using words and ideas that are directly related to that paradigm. The dissertation takes a turn after the novella when I become tired of that struggle. For now, here is the methodology that I proposed. You can read more about what happened later … or go and read it now if you want to.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Throughout this project I sought to understand, question, analyze, describe, and to make and find meaning in the storied life of Billy Cioffi. I observed, interacted, conversed, wrote, rewrote, co-wrote, constructed narratives, found narratives, analyzed narratives, journaled, and more. Specifically, I took time to *be with* Billy as we discussed his past, present and future. I was *with* him as he taught, played, told stories, demonstrated, bragged, wrote prose, wrote songs, remembered, recounted, etc. I took time to *be with* him because I didn't want to just observe him, I wanted to experience with him. A qualitative research paradigm lends itself to this type of *being with* as opposed to observing from without. Of course some qualitative researchers do observe from without, and I believe that there is a place for such a practice. Nonetheless, qualitative researchers can do their work and make meaning in many ways, and one of those ways is through analyzing their own experience with someone. During this project I analyzed my experiences *with* Billy Cioffi through narrative inquiry.

Qualitative researchers are not in search of grand generalizable truths, instead they seek to understand, question, analyze, describe in detail and to make or find meaning. They do so by engaging in a number of inquiry activities, including observation, interaction, conversation, writing, making, recording, remaking, storytelling, and constructing narratives, among many others. Qualitative researchers are themselves research tools in qualitative research and as such understand that as they engage in the activities listed above their mark is left on whatever description of data results.

Qualitative research can be defined in many ways and has multiple branches and roots. Qualitative researchers function under certain philosophical assumptions that are

partially a result of some of those roots. Creswell (2013) parses out the roots and branches by examining how different researchers approach the task of qualitative inquiry. He describes philosophical assumptions associated with qualitative research in terms of "ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified), axiology (the role of values in research), and methodology (the process of research)" (p. 20).

I have put the word ~~methodology~~ under erasure (Derrida, 2016) in the title of this chapter because I want to engage in the process of using the term and troubling it simultaneously, thereby rendering the term inaccurate yet necessary (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p.18). I won't be applying an existing methodology, but I will describe what I intended to do. In other words, I had a plan but my plan is not a method and it should not, could not, be replicated when I am done. I did not invent a new methodology, in fact, I drew upon the work of narrative researchers and other qualitative researchers heavily. First, I will describe how I intended to engage in this project ontologically, epistemologically, and axiologically. After those sections, what follows in the rest of this chapter might be read as my attempt both to use and trouble the term "methodology" simultaneously.

Ontology

Ontologically, qualitative researchers assume that multiple realities exist both for themselves and for the people with whom they engage in inquiry. Throughout this project, many realities rubbed up against each other. The nature of my reality and the nature of Billy's reality met as we worked to construct a narrative out of his experiences and the things that I experienced with him. While I cannot fully know Billy's reality and

he cannot fully know mine, we have enough common experience to be able to communicate with each other about how we perceive reality. Throughout this project, Billy and I discussed topics directly affected by the ways we perceive realities. As a researcher I must account for the fact that Billy and I don't share a unified perception of reality. We did, however make meaning together, and the meaning we made contains elements of our shared realities. Shared by Billy and me, and possibly by you, the reader. It is entirely possible that the reality or realities represented in this document will conflict with your own perceptions. Should that happen I hope that you, the reader, will take the opportunity to question your own perceptions, as I will try to question mine. Specifically we may question together the reality of music teaching and learning, what we mean when we say "music teacher" and what types of musical experiences we value.

Epistemology

Epistemologically, qualitative researchers function under the assumption that knowledge takes many forms and that there are as many ways of knowing as there are people. Billy knows how to play the guitar. I also know how to play the guitar. Anyone who knows both Billy and me might laugh after reading those two statements. To compare my knowledge of guitar playing to Billy's is like comparing a toddler's knowledge of his native tongue to a seasoned scholar of the same language, and yet both statements are true. I do know how to play the guitar, but not in the same way or to the extent that Billy does. Billy knows how to teach. I know how to teach. Both of these statements are true, but I am sure that they do not mean the same thing. Billy teaches in a context that is different than the contexts in which I have taught, and I teach in contexts

that are different than his. We both have different relationships with our knowledge of teaching, and we have gained our knowledge through different experiences.

These examples demonstrate at least two ways in which knowledge, and ideas about what counts as knowledge, may differ. In the first example I measure my knowledge of guitar playing against Billy's and find my skill lacking. In the guitar example, knowledge is something that is measured by a standard and situated in the context of performance. In the second example I compare our knowledge of pedagogy, but not by measurement against a standard. Instead, I describe how our knowledge is situated in our own experiences. My experience as a college student studying music education and applied to my practice as a teacher is different, but not better than, Billy's experience as a touring professional musician, recording artist, and musical director applied to his practice as a teacher. We both know things about teaching music, but because of the difference in our experiences it would be folly to measure our knowledge against a standard. Our respective knowledge-gaining experiences pertaining to teaching are valued differently by different people. Which leads us to axiology.

Axiology

Axiologically, in their writing, qualitative researchers must account for their values and for the value-ladenness of the activities associated with qualitative research. I value popular music. It has been a transformative force in my life. I use popular music, broadly defined, to understand and explain the world. Popular music is infused into my personal relationships, enhances certain experiences, gives me a sense of ownership and belonging in groups including family, friends, and others, and intertwines with my memories and my sense of time (Frith, 1987). I also value my formal western classical

musical training. I value my religious practice and the lifestyle that comes along with it. I value my family relationships. I value the educational experiences I have had in regards to research. I value formal and informal music education. I value those who have been marginalized by institutions of which I am a part, including religious institutions and institutions such as formal music education and its many organizations. I list these values here in an effort to give you an idea of who I am and the baggage I bring with me on this journey. I find it hard to separate myself from this project, and so you should see me as a part of it. I am a white, male, hetero-sexual, classically-trained, liberal (basically socialist), mormon, music teacher, father, husband, qualitative researcher, songwriter, and budding narrativist. All of me is part of what I have done. David Cleaver (2009) explains the concept of being part of the research by drawing on the work of Johnson (1987), Lather (1991), and Goodall, (2000, p.191).

> Philosophically, this point also links to the important issues of researcher subjectivity and placement of self into the picture. My plan was to avoid an objectivist view from nowhere or a God's-eye-view approach to research (see Johnson, 1987). I acknowledge that I am "embodied in the research - not existing in a transcendental realm" (Lather, 1991) and "authoring a self within the *context of others"* (Goodall, 2000, p. 191).

Like Cleaver (2009), I tried to avoid "an objectivist view" of this project. I too acknowledge that I am in the research. I am in the data. I am in the themes. I value my embeddedness as a researcher. Throughout this document I make an effort to make my bias and values known, not as an evangelist, but as a confessor. I confess to you things that I feel, the things that trouble me, the things that I think might trouble you, the things that I love about Billy, the things that worry me about Billy, the things that I believe about music education, and what I think my experiences with Billy mean.

Writing and Thinking With Theory

Creswell (2013) suggests that philosophical assumptions can be affected by theoretical or interpretive frameworks (p. 35). Researchers enter into qualitative inquiry through theoretical or interpretive frameworks or what Jackson and Mazzei (2012) describe as "thinking with theory." In *Thinking with Theory in Qualitative Research,* they use the idea of "plugging in," attributed to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), to illustrate how researchers might work with theoretical frameworks or concepts.

> We first encountered plugging in on page 4 of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*: "When one writes, the only question is which other machine the literary machine can be plugged into, *must* be plugged into in order to work" (1987, p. 4). In our thinking with theory, we were confronted with multiple texts - or literary machines: interview data, tomes of theory, conventional qualitative research methods books that we were working against, things we had previously written, traces of data, reviewer comments, and so on ad infinitum. That is, we had a sense of the ceaseless variations possible in having co-authored texts that relied on a plugging in of ideas, fragments, theory, selves, sensations. And so we moved to engage in plugging in as a *process* rather than a *concept*, something we could put to work … (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 1).

In their book, Jackson and Mazzei analyze data generated through interviewing "ten women who were the first generation in their families to graduate from college, and who then went on to earn doctorates and become academics" (p. 2). They present the analysis six different times, each time thinking "with" different theory, or plugging the same literary machine into different literary machines repeatedly. Rather than focusing on theoretical constructs (phenomenology, critical theory, postructuralism), they focus on six specific philosophers and one specific theoretical concept attributed to each philosopher respectively: Derrida and thinking with deconstruction, Spivak and thinking with marginality, Foucault and thinking with power/knowledge, Butler and thinking with

performativity, Deleuze and thinking with desire, and Barad and thinking with intra-action. They describe three maneuvers that constitute the act of plugging in:

1. Putting philosophical concepts to work via disrupting the theory/practice binary by decentering each and instead showing how they *constitute or make one another*;
2. Being deliberate and transparent in what analytical questions are made possible by a specific theoretical concept (deconstruction, marginality, power/knowledge, performativity, desire, intra-activity) and how the questions that are used to think with *emerged in the middle* of plugging in; and
3. Working the same data chunks repeatedly to "deform [them], to make [them] groan and protest" (Foucault, 1980, p. 22-23) with an overabundance of meaning, which in turn not only creates new knowledge but also shows the *suppleness of each when plugged in.* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 3)

The "maneuvers" described above help me to think about how I have thought with theory during this project. I have already described in the introduction how the many different texts associated with this project are in the process of deconstruction (Derrida, 2016). In other words, I had already begun to think with deconstruction before I started this specific project with Billy. Throughout this project, I observed the deconstruction of the different texts as they collided, rubbed up against each other, snagged one another, and came apart at the seams. Their deconstruction is always already occurring. I sought to see the space made by that deconstruction and describe what meaning might be made in that space. In other words, I intended to plug different "chunks of data" generated by this narrative study into the machine of deconstruction.

More About Deconstruction

The problem with the metaphor of deconstruction as a machine is that it makes deconstruction seem like a method or something fixed instead of how Derrida describes it. He describes deconstruction as what happens. Deconstruction is what happens to

everything. I think of the line from the Paul Simon song "Everything Put Together Falls Apart:"

Oh spare your heart
Everything put together
Sooner or later falls apart
There's nothing to it, nothing to it

What can be done? Can we stop things from falling apart? It might seem a sad idea, but what if it was seen as an opportunity. Deconstruction is not tearing things apart, it is witnessing as things fall apart. Derrida reminds us that all of the things we build (buildings, works of art, institutions, novels, songs, religions, countries, dissertations, stories, narratives, histories, professional organizations) are always/already falling apart. Derrida does not advocate that we sit back and watch it burn, however, he prompts us to see the cracks and breaks in all of the texts and see how the space created by that undoing is a space to welcome the other (Derrida & Caputo, 1997). In fact, deconstruction is celebrating the space made in texts as they come undone. It is that space, that crack, that at once is the reason the "text" is falling apart and the reason that it will survive and find new life. Deconstruction can be an opportunity to welcome the new from within the old.

From the very moment I started writing this document it began to deconstruct. There are giant fissures in it. There are things missing, and because those things are not there this document cannot hold together. The same is true for all texts. Billy's stories are deconstructing, my retelling of those stories, our reconstructing of those stories, all of them are always already deconstructing. As a researcher I attempted to witness that deconstruction, to point at it and say "What is missing there? What does that crack make room for that we can welcome in?"

For instance, researchers (Keene, 2010, Mark & Gary, 2007) make reference to Lowell Mason as the father of American Music Education. A researcher who is trying to witness the deconstruction of texts might ask, “How can a father be father of anything without a mother?” Using the term “father” as a metaphor for important male historical figures is a textual feature that is a structural weakness in the text. Such a metaphor is very rarely fleshed out to include the rest of the family. The “children” in that narrative are usually mostly male, allowing the metaphor to breakdown further. The “father” metaphor discounts the efforts of slaves to teach music systematically for the purpose of escaping to the north, the efforts of native Americans for thousands of years to pass on musical traditions, and the roles of women in teaching music in many contexts. By witnessing the deconstruction of the “father” metaphor a researcher sees a space created for those who have been othered. Deconstruction is not a method (Derrida & Caputo, 1997, p. 9), it is always already occurring in everything. A researcher who is thinking with deconstruction becomes a witness.

Narrative Research

> It is equally correct to say “inquiry into narrative” as it is “narrative inquiry.” By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method. Narrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the pattern of inquiry for its study To preserve this distinction we use the reasonably well-established device of calling the phenomenon "story" and the inquiry "narrative." Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2)

Narrative-based research draws on the power narrative seems to have in how we think and how we live our lives. As Jerome Bruner (1987) wrote, “We seem to have no other way to account for lived time save through narrative” (p. 692). We live storied

lives, and some of us have questions about those stories. Why do we tell stories? Why do our stories sound like other stories? Do we think in stories? Are the stories we tell ever the same twice? Why or why not? What do stories tell us about ourselves, our ancestors, our future, our world? What happens in our minds when we read or tell a story?

Stauffer (2014) suggests that three streams of thinking about narrative inquiry have influenced narrative researchers in music education. The three streams are linked to the writing and thinking of Jerome Bruner, Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly, and Tom Barone respectively. Stauffer connects existing examples of narrative research in music education to these scholars and justifies the connections because of writing style and common philosophical underpinnings.

Clandinin and Conneley (2006) posit that stories do not occur in isolation but are a part of a complex web of life and other stories. In an attempt to make meaning of our experiences and reflect on those experiences, we tell stories that interact with the real world (Dewey, 1938) in many ways. Clandinin and Conneley (2006) write about how our stories interact with this complicated web of experience by visualizing stories three dimensionally. The three dimensions that they include are temporality, sociality, and place; or in other words, our stories happen in time, interact with others, and in specific locations. They also posit that our stories have direction; they can reach inward, outward, forward, and backward.

The novella Billy and I wrote, and that you will find in the next chapter, interacts with these various directions and dimensions. The novella interacts with Billy's past, present and imagined future. There is a strong sense of temporality and, directionally, the novella reaches forward and backward. The novella inhabits dimensions of place in

settings unique to Billy's experiences. We tried to imbue the settings in the novella with characteristics that help tell the story. This type of rich and thick description (Geertz, 1994) is a characteristic of both qualitative research and literature. What would *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* be without Dublin, or *Les Miserables* without the stunning descriptions of Paris on the brink of revolution? So it is with qualitative research and particularly with narrative research.

The novella inhabits the dimension of sociality in that no person, including Billy Cioffi, is an island. Many of Billy's stories are about his interactions with others. Directionally, we worked to make the novella reach outward to you the reader. I see this "reaching outward" in multiple ways. Some stories we tell are for others and some are for ourselves. We reach inward with some stories because we need to remember ourselves, yet these same stories can also reach outward because others relate to them. One way stories reach outward or one way they embody the direction of outwardness is by drawing others inward. The inwardness or outwardness of a story might change depending on whether it is told in first-person (from the I point of view), second-person (toward You, the reader), or third-person (omnicient overviewer or he, she, they). A story in first-person might embody inwardness and also outwardness in the way that it draws people in.

Jerome Bruner (1987) "tries out" the idea of narrative as thought and as self making, particularly in the case of stories we tell about ourselves, or autobiographical narratives. He suggests that the stories we tell about ourselves are affected by the stories that others have told about us, about themselves, and about others. Bruner suggests that the people closest to us have the most effect on the way we tell stories about our own

lives. For instance the way my father tells stories about work, home, church, and family, may have an affect on how I tell stories about those things. Bruner addresses the idea, described by Henry James, that "stories happen to people who know how to tell them" (p. 691). Here we see the idea that truth or reality is socially constructed and individually understood. Are the stories we tell even true? True to whom (Polkinghorne, 2007)? Is the purpose of a story to be true or is the purpose of a story even controllable?

In this telling of stories, I seek to enter into dialogue, I seek to "conspire" (Barone, 2001) with Billy Cioffi, and with you, the reader. We might conspire to think about what music education can be. We might conspire to make meaning of Billy's story together. What might our conversation mean to him? What might our conspiratorial dialogue mean to me? What might engagement with this text mean to you? What shared meanings might we create as we conspire together?

Tom Barone (2001) explains the idea of a conspiracy between writer, participants/characters, and readers in the context of a postmodern approach to writing. In his view there is a difference between an author and a writer. Barone's writer, unlike an author, "presumes strong, revolutionary-minded readers who disdain subservience" (p.179). A writer "may still intend to persuade the reader—but not to adopt a 'truthful' vision (moral or empirical) inscribed into, and sanctioned by, the text … Writerly persuasion is of a different order, aiming to entice the reader into wondering about what has been previously taken for granted" (Barone, 200l, p. 179). Barone summarizes Mikhail Bakhtin's essay *Epic and Novel* (Bakhtin, 1981) in order to draw attention to the novelness (as in a literary novel) of his own narrative work. Bakhtin makes a distinction between epics and novels as types of text, and Barone puts that distinction in context:

> Epics for Bakhtin, are stories that seek to suppress a variety of discourses by converging upon a correct, final interpretation of events. Epics include cultural narratives such as myths, fables, and legends. Or they may be works of propaganda that support a cultural script, authoritative stories that tell us in a dogmatic fashion how to live our lives, identifying correct endings and scripted purposes for living. (Barone, 2001, p. 156)

In contrast….

> Novelness, for Bakhtin, is an attribute of any text that promotes a dialogue between a set of views or cultural frameworks. Literature with novelness is polyphonic, respecting the variety of languages found within the dialogue between the author of a work, its various characters, and its readers. Each of these contributors to a set of textual exchanges speaks with a distinct style and from within a unique existential situation, through utterances shaped by specific social and historical forces (Holquist, 1990, p. 88), and no voice, including the author's, is privileged over others. (Barone, 2001, p. 156-157)

Barone's *Touching Eternity: The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching* is neither novel nor epic, but it has the characteristics of novelness and bears little to no resemblance to an epic. *Touching Eternity* is novel because it folds in many voices and connects readers to their own conceptions of contemporary reality (Bakhtin, 1975/1981, p. 11). Barone tells stories that center around an art teacher named Don Forrister. He tells the stories of Forrister's former students and of Forrister himself. Barone writes that the "book is designed to stimulate thinking about the enduring outcomes of education (p. 151)." It is a patchwork of stories, as well as commentary about those stories and about how they were written. In *Touching Eternity* Barone pushes the boundaries of research towards the literary arts.

Barone's writing is important to me methodologically and philosophically. Certain strains of narrative research, including the work of Barone, have strong roots in the literary arts and literary criticism as demonstrated above. Barone aims to write artfully. Indeed he uses literary devices including plot, foreshadow, character

development, and polyphony, among others. In other words he aims to write well-crafted stories to encourage critical questions about the lasting effects of education. Barone imbues his research with "Bakhtinian novelness" (p. 156).

Roland Barthes declared that the author is dead (1977). Tom Barone (1989) plays with this idea in his work. His multi-layered story "Ways of Being at Risk: The Case of Billy Charles Barnett" (1989) purposefully raises questions about the author and his place in the narrative. His book *Touching Eternity* about an art teacher specifically aims to trouble the idea of a fixed reader and writer, specifically in his last chapter. Barone is not cold or objective. He is a very warm presence in his writing. He accounts for his own feelings and bias and is part of the story. His own thoughts about his writing and his opinions about the student (Billy Charles) and the teacher (Don Forrister), and much more, are present and always in question. Barone reminds readers of his postmodern approach in *Touching Eternity*:

> I can only remind readers that this book was composed in a postmodern spirit, and like all life narrative, is rife with exaggerations, distortions, inconsistencies, contradictions, and imaginary constructions that disqualify it as a final, factual rendition of people and events. (p. 178)

The statement reminds us of the aims of qualitative research, that is, to make or find meaning, and the philosophical assumptions that truth is socially constructed and individually understood and therefore not entirely knowable.

In the final chapter of *Touching Eternity* Barone describes in detail his thinking, and the thinking of others, pertaining to narrative research and more specifically the research and writing he carried out to complete the book. The last chapter begins with this statement:

> This book is designed to stimulate thinking about the enduring outcomes of education. To that end, I have attempted to avoid posing as an omniscient researcher-author performing a soliloquy for a silent—or silenced—reader. Instead, I have employed an experimental, postmodernist approach that honors the life stories of school people, that displays researcher judgments that change over time, and that invites participation by the reader. The text aims to promote polyvocal, conspiratorial conversations between the writer, the protagonists of those life stories, and the readers of the study, thereby furthering a fundamental, but often neglected purpose of educational inquiry. (p. 151)

Barone states that the purpose of his research generally is not to obtain certainty but to raise questions. Narrative research, like story itself, depends upon an activity (storying) that typically doesn't make certifiable claims of accuracy. In this project, a narrative inquiry of the musical life of Billy Cioffi, I draw on the work of Tom Barone because of his focus on raising questions through his writing.

The Great Questioning

My son William was asking me about this project the other day at the dinner table. I was complaining about things, as I am wont to do, and he was trying to be helpful by talking about my writing. Will was seven at the time.

> ***Will:*** *What are you going to write? What is it going to be?*
> ***Me:*** *I am going to write stories about Billy Cioffi.*
> ***Will:*** *Is there going to be a plot? What is going to happen in the story?*
> ***Me:*** *There might be a plot but I don't know yet what the stories are going to look like.*
> ***Will:*** *Why are you writing stories about Billy?*
> ***Me:*** *That is a very good question Will … hmm … Billy has had a very interesting musical life and he is now a guitar teacher. I think that his experiences as a professional musician, recording artist, songwriter, musical director, and teacher might help music educators think about music education differently. I hope that I can write stories about Billy's life that will raise questions about what types of experience we value in the world of music education, who we reach as a profession, who we invite, who we exclude, what and how we teach, and stuff like that.*
> ***Will:*** *What do you think will be good about it?*
> ***Me:*** *I hope it will be interesting, and I hope it provokes thought about music education.*

A couple of things about that conversation: first, after this conversation I skipped my weekly meeting with my dissertation advisor because of how helpful and generative William's questions were, and second, my answers to William's questions were and are very much informed by my reading of the work of Barone. In many ways I have tried to do what Barone has done: provoke thought and raise questions about things that may have been previously taken for granted in education through the act (art?) of crafting stories about education.

> ***William:*** *In your dissertation are you trying to persuade, inform, or entertain?*
> ***Me:*** *Well … I think … some of all of them. Some informing … maybe some persuading but not really … I definitely want it to be entertaining.*
> ***William:*** *So kind of all of them?*
> ***Me:*** *Yeah, kind of, but maybe not so much persuade. I don't know maybe we should add a fourth option. Something like trouble, or provoke.*

William is in the second grade and he is learning about author's intent. I have tried to be clear in this document about my intent, but when William asked me another one of his great questions I was immediately baffled. Persuade? Inform? Entertain? What about discover? The author's intent is to discover through the act of writing (Richardson, 1994). What about provoke? The author's intent is to provoke thought and questions. What about trouble? The author's intent is to trouble certainty. Are all of these just tools of persuasion, information, and entertainment, or is there something more. Is there a fourth option?

As I mentioned earlier, Barone (2001) sees a difference between an author and a writer. Barone's writer, unlike an author, "presumes strong, revolutionary-minded readers who disdain subservience" (p. 179). A writer

> may still intend to persuade the reader---but not to adopt a 'truthful' vision (moral or empirical) inscribed into, and sanctioned by, the text. The writer resists the compulsion toward propaganda, toward self-righteously tricking or bludgeoning the reader into accepting an agenda, however morally and politically enlightened. Writerly persuasion is of a different order, aiming to entice the reader into wondering about what has been previously taken for granted. (Barone, 200l, p. 179)

In my second conversation with William, I was worried about the word persuasion and the above passage gives a clue about why. I value the work of Barone, and when I first read this passage I knew that I wanted to be a writer and not an author. I may want to persuade you, not because I think I know more than you, but because I want to enter into a "conspiratorial conversation" (p. 178) with you. I don't want to persuade you to believe anything or to do anything in particular, however, I want to persuade you to "question prevailing notions of educational significance" (p. 179).

A narrative researcher may try to persuade through the art of storytelling. The story may inhabit the characteristics of literature (p. 179). It may indeed have a plot, foreshadowing, composite characters, metaphor, maybe even magical realism. Say, for instance, Billy Cioffi of today were to have a conversation with himself as a teenager. What might he say to himself? What might he have forgotten about being a teenager that he could remember by talking to his younger self? A story about this fictional meeting could reveal much about Billy's life experience. Such a story, as an attempt at narrative inquiry, would have to be informed by data and could draw on interviews with the participant, or, better yet, the story could be co-authored by the participant. The researcher and the participant (co-researchers, co-narrativists) could construct the story together with the goal of highlighting themes that had emerged in conversation and throughout the data generation process. Such a story would be informed by the work of

Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner (1997) and would highlight the roots that narrative research has in arts-based research and the literary arts. It would also be a story that reached inward, as a reflection on the life of the participant, and backwards, as the participant would be looking back in time to talk to himself (Clandinin & Conneley, 2006).

What I Plan To Do and How I Plan To Do It

As I begin this endeavor I am becoming a narrativist. "As narrativists we listen *to* story (as does the ethnographer), we listen *for* story (as does the portraitist), and we listen *in* and *through* story to find meaning, to experience resonance and troubling, and ultimately, to prompt further consideration of what it might be to be "wide-awake" in and through music" (Barrett & Stauffer 2009, p. 3). In the novella that follows, I have explored the musical life of Billy Cioffi through narrative, with the aim of raising questions about music education. When I say I have explored Billy's musical life *through* narrative, I mean specifically that I listened to stories about his life, crafted stories about his life, and analyzed stories about his life. This project is both narrative analysis (analyzing data by organizing it into stories) and analysis of narrative (analyzing stories told by others) (Polkinghorne, 1995).

> (**WARNING:** The section you are about to read is influenced heavily by a positivist paradigm in that the writer who wrote it was trying to write a methodology. You will find words such as, procedures, data, methods, etc. The writer subjectivizes Billy Cioffi by saying he will collect data from him. He also describes activities that make the researcher seem like a cold objective person removed from the relational aspects of this project even though he said he would not do that. Keep in mind that this part of the dissertation is more like a proposed methodology and has been left mostly intact to show the change in the mind of the researcher and to serve as evidence that writing is as much an act of learning as it is an act of telling. The writer's feelings about methodologies and research

changed throughout the process of writing. Please see the section following the novella entitled Relational Research for un-clarification.)

In this section I will outline procedures I intended to use to generate data, what I hoped that data might look like, as well as procedures and methods for organizing and analyzing that narrative data that I intended to use as I began this project. I will also describe how I intended to raise questions through writing stories about Billy Cioffi. I have already described how I intended to enter into this study guided by the following philosophical principles/assumptions,

1. Truth is relative to the sphere in which it is socially constructed, and it is individually understood, and thereby not entirely knowable.
2. The Author is dead (Barthes, 1977) but the writer lives on and we are all writers (readers and listeners included).
3. As a researcher I am attempting to be a witness to the deconstruction of texts (Derrida, 1967) that is always already occurring.
4. If the only meaning that is made as a result of this work and its readings is more questions it will have been worth the time invested.

I will describe how those philosophical principles and assumptions will affect my methodology practically in the following sections: Narrative Data Generation, Narrative Creation, Trustworthiness, and Organization of the Stories. It is my hope that by describing my process in detail, I will be able to organize my thoughts and prepare myself to embark on this narrative journey. It is my belief that the act of writing is an act of making meaning. I do not intend to mask that process from you the reader. Although

this document will go through many edits and revisions, my hope is that it will retain a sense of my own discovery as a narrative researcher and writer.

Narrative Data Generation

Billy Cioffi is dripping with stories. His stories usually have something to do with somebody famous within the world of American popular music. Whether a story about helping to launch Darlene Love's comeback tour or an audition for a band on the brink in L.A., Billy always has a story. Is that so different than the rest of us? We all live storied lives, that is to say we are all dripping with stories, some of us just like to tell them more than others. Take, for example, this adage: "stories happen to people who know how to tell them." Jerome Bruner (1987, p. 691) attributes this quote to something Henry James once said, a quick google search of the statement brings up several links that attribute a version of it to *This American Life* founder and host Ira Glass. Regardless of who said it first, the adage points to a constructivist view of stories. In other words stories don't happen, they are constructed. But what are stories constructed of? Surely a key ingredient is experience, and everyone's experiences are different. It stands to reason that a person with a wealth of experience in American popular music and a penchant for telling stories would be able to construct some fabulous ones. Billy Cioffi has constructed many stories about his life and his experiences. I engaged with those stories in several ways as I carried out this narrative research project.

First, I heard and documented his stories as he told them. This process was a lot like collecting an oral history. I recorded interviews with him in high quality audio and video. I prepared for these interviews by writing lists of questions and sending them to

Billy in advance. Mostly I let Billy talk. Billy always has a story to tell and every story leads into another story. Each story has tangents that are indeed stories unto themselves.

Second, I observed Billy in action. As I entered into situations that involve Billy (guitar lessons, gigs, interviews, etc.), I observed as a narrative researcher. I looked for stories. By doing so I gained my own experience and caught glimpses of his experiences as teacher, mentor, songwriter, husband, and performer. I captured these observations through my own personal notes and video and audio recordings. These observations introduced me to groups of people who interact with Billy regularly, and many of them had their own stories about Billy. The walls of Billy's studio office are covered with photographs, guitars, records, cd's, books, and many of these artifacts triggered stories.

Third, throughout the process I kept a researcher journal in which I recorded my thoughts about how Billy's stories connect with each other, other people, and my own stories. I wrote impressions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, details, and more. I wrote about how I decided to put together Billy's stories into a larger work. I was honest about my own feelings regarding the things I heard from Billy and others, and honest about my feelings regarding academic writing and the work of writing a dissertation. Some of that writing led to what you will read after the novella.

Narrative Creation As Analysis of Data

I constructed stories purposefully with Billy to achieve the goal of raising questions about music education. I made connections in my personal researcher notes about how what happened in Billy's stories and what happened as we worked together fit into a larger narrative about Billy as musician and teacher.

I hope that when readers encounter these stories about Billy they will see the mark that my hands have left on them. My voice will be present as much as Billy's. That is not to say that the stories are written from my perspective but that you the reader will be able to notice that the stories are to some extent constructed by me. I made no effort to detach myself from Billy's life. In fact my relationship with Billy grew significantly as a result of doing this project.

Connelly and Clandinin (2006) distinguish between narrative methodologies that tell stories and narrative methodologies that live stories. I did both. The stories we wrote came from the stories that I heard Billy tell me and from the stories that we lived together.

Trustworthiness

After reading the section above you may be worried about my trustworthiness. You may be worried that I only tell rosy stories about Billy that aggrandize him or make him into more than a man. You may be worried that I became too close to "the subject" and by so doing I was unable to see the data without bias. I fully recognize that I am enamored by the idea of Billy Cioffi. His life and experience interests me. I think he is cool. That being said, it was not my intention to place Billy on a pedestal. I did not intend to write a hero story. Billy has told me stories about his life that can be seen as cautionary tales. Those stories are a part of the larger work as well. I remind you the reader that my goal was to raise questions about music education, not to write the history of a music educator. The way that I attempted to raise questions about music education is through "critical storytelling" (Barone, 2002). In other words, the stories you read were selected,

constructed, juxtaposed and crafted by me and Billy, but they are also representations of the life of Billy Cioffi.

Along the lines of trustworthiness I should note that Billy was involved deeply in the process of writing and rewriting. I made sure that the stories I construct based on my observations, interviews, and interactions with Billy rang true to him. He had opinions about the way that I portrayed people and events, and I made sure to solicit those opinions from him as I wrote. He read my drafts and we discussed how the document was constructed as a whole throughout the process.

Openings

I don't know what this document will look like to you. I do know that it is always/already deconstructing. Do you see it? Do you see the cracks? Do you see the tension between the many elements at play? Do you see how they pull on each other? Maybe you see me trying to stretch "music education" as a text to include Billy. Maybe the text that you and I, co-conspirators, have created stretches "music education" as a text so much that it is breaking. Maybe it is creating space in which we can welcome the other, an opening. Let us prepare to welcome the ideas that might come as a result of our shared writing/reading of this narrative inquiry.

Figure 1. Painting of Billy and Paul

RADIO HEARTBREAK:
A MUSIC EDUCATION

The Moment
by Billy Cioffi

I was once informed that Bruce Springsteen thinks that at the end of the universe, beyond space and time, there is a '57 Chevy convertible and "Be My Baby" is playing on the radio. This, I gather, is the Boss' concept of eternity. There are those of us who feel the theory is correct in principle, but different in detail: that it's a '66 Mustang and the selection is "Satisfaction." Still other cultists hold that it's a Chevy Van ('72) and "Stairway To Heaven" is in rotation. The song and vehicle at the end of time are up to the listener.

I like to think of it as The Moment. Did you ever ask anyone whose age corresponds where they were and what they were doing the night the Beatles first appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show? People whose consciousness and imaginations are stimulated by any type of music never forget these magic times. Our song! I have many personal experiences of The Moment and, in each case, the song or piece of music always said just what was needed to be said at that time, making verbal communication unnecessary. It really doesn't matter if the lightning bolt strikes one in a solitary situation or in communion with countless others. (examples: attending the US Festival, watching MTV.) The Moment is what matters.

The moment seems to have reached a kind of perfection in the American Popular Song. The Top-40, the museum au courant that spews out both disposable and indispensable memories. How does one measure the difference between, say, Van Gogh's "Self Portrait" or Hank Williams' "I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry" in terms of the empathy one feels when exposed to either?

What we refer to as standards, be they past or present, are the most prominent purveyors of The Moment. It could be "Just The Way You Are" by Billy Joel or "God Save The Queen" by the Sex Pistols--does it really matter? Sinatra or Cyndi Lauper, who cares? Isn't it enough to know that our weathered and worn human spirits can still be moved and that the embers of organic emotion still flicker in a technological society dominated by machines and numbers?

Maybe I take this pop-music stuff too seriously, but sometimes I can't help but think that it's one of those failsafe devices we accidentally invented to keep our knuckles from dragging on the ground. If we are all destined to be blown back into the Stone Age, let's hope a jukebox and a quarter make it back as well. My personal wish is that the survivors drop the coin in the slot and slow dance to Dion and the Belmonts doing "Where or When."

Chapter 1

"Where in the hell is Glenn?" Billy Cioffi directs this question to his drummer as he stands in front of a small crowd of people at the Tempe Festival for the Arts. One of his many guitars is hanging in front of him. His long gray hair is in a ponytail. He is wearing sunglasses, a leather jacket, tight blue jeans and cowboy boots. Couples eat food from a local brewery and sit outside facing the stage. Families with children of various ages sit in folding chairs that have been set up for the event. Some of the teens and pre-teens are Billy's guitar students. They are in bands of their own with gigs of their own to prepare for as well. Billy helps them both technically and creatively in weekly guitar lessons, band rehearsals and, for some of them, songwriting lessons.

The sound system has feedback troubles. One of the many microphones on the stage has picked up sound from one of the monitors and is looping it through the system over and over. It's a simple enough problem to fix but Glenn, the sound guy, is nowhere to be found. Billy turns and asks his drummer again, "Where is Glenn?" He walks up to a microphone and says, "Glenn, where are you buddy?"

Billy is relaxed even though he is obviously not pleased with the situation. He has worked with thousands of sound technicians in his life. As a musical director and band leader sometimes he *was* the sound tech, as well as lead singer, rhythm guitar, and roadie all at the same time. Billy could fix the problem himself but at the moment the sound equipment is sectioned off and hard to get to. Eventually Glenn falls out of the brewery where he was taking a break and makes the adjustment.

Billy Cioffi and his band the Monte Carlos had been playing well up to the point of the feedback problem. Before the break they had done a great version of "Walking in

Memphis" by Marc Cohn. Billy had nailed the vocals. They had changed the timing of the song to make it their own and it had really worked. Now that Glenn had fixed the sound problem Billy counted the band in and they started into a song he had written recently for the album he was currently working on. The song was about his dog who had passed away about a year ago. Billy had played this song before and he knew that people loved it; it was a song that made grown men cry.

Something about playing this song, "And He Runs," about his old dog, with this band, on a bright sunny day, with his sunglasses on, thinking about death, thinking about life, thinking about running … it all just fell into place. He was thinking all of this as he played and sang. He didn't know how to explain it. Maybe performing music that you know really well allows time to become more open. Or maybe it was the theme of the song, a boy and his dog trying to outrun time. The guitar solo was coming up and he felt like a prophet. Something inside his conscious brain, before his conscious brain, knew the sound his guitar would make before he could tell his fingers to play it. Billy was having a moment. This was why he continued to gig.

He was strumming the last chord of the verse just before the solo and looking out at the crowd when it happened. There was the family with their pre-teens, and the teenagers, his students. There were the lovers kissing and whispering. Three beats away from the beginning of the solo, he felt completely in sync with the song, the band, the crowd, the moment. He lifted his fingers, tightened his grip on the pic and moved it toward the low E string. His left hand slid into position ready to do an improvised dance with the music it would make. He hit the note and everything froze.

That is, everything froze but him and the sound of that note. He was moving slowly out towards the frozen audience. He was floating. He couldn't be, but he was floating. Was it an out-of-body experience? Was he dying? No, not dying, but maybe that is what everyone thinks when they die. Maybe this is what dying feels like. It was like the feeling you get when you stand close to a big speaker and the music pushes through you. He felt like he was being slowly pushed by the music coming from the speakers on stage. (He was feeling great just before all of this floating happened, so he couldn't be dying.)

Billy turned around mid-float. He could see his body standing there, the first note plucked, ringing. The sound of it began to amplify unnaturally. His first thought was to look for Glenn, but this sound was different than the feedback. Nobody was moving. The crowd, his band, Glenn, they seemed to be unaffected by the constantly increasing volume of the sound that pushed him outside of himself. The sound continued to grow and grow and he moved to cover his ears … Billy looked for his hands, his legs. There was no him to find except for the figure back on stage, but Billy knew that some part of him was moving. Was it his soul that was watching the whole thing, floating away? Just as the sound became too much to bear the scene became blurry and he was somewhere else. He had been transported.

Billy tried to focus. He could still hear the sound that had pushed him off the stage but it was fading, though not completely. There was music again, but not the song he had just been playing, another song. He heard somebody playing an acoustic guitar. It was a song he knew maybe better than any other, "Runaway" by Del Shannon. His vision began to clear and he couldn't believe what he saw. A young Billy Cioffi sat in his grandfather's office playing a version of the "Runaway" intro. As he looked Billy tried to

figure out if he was even there. Had he taken something? Come to think of it, yes, he had, but his bass player Rich's medical marijuana vape stick had never had this effect on him before. How could this be possible? Young Billy just kept playing that intro over and over again.

Billy began to collect himself. He started to listen. He tried to push the remnants of sound from the stage in Tempe away and focus on what his younger self was doing. He had seen enough time travel movies to know that he should not interfere with young Billy. The thought occurred to him that he couldn't do anything but observe even if he tried. In fact, he began to realize that he could control only his gaze. He couldn't move through space but he could pivot to look at Young Billy's hands or shoes, or the ceiling of the room. He looked at Young Billy's fingers but it was difficult to focus. Too many questions. Was he actually in New York circa 1964? How could that be? Had he entered a memory? It had to be more than a memory because he was not in control. He couldn't suppress it like a memory. (He felt more inside of a memory, than a memory was inside of him). He was there, but why?

Billy focused a little more, still not very well but better. He watched his own younger fingers. They were so much pinker than his fingers now. He looked at the clothes Young Billy was wearing and remembered how they felt. The corduroy pants and fitted button up shirt. His face was so young. Sometimes when Billy looked in the mirror now he was surprised to *not* see a younger person staring back at him. But not this young.

The significance of the moment began to dawn on him. This song was important to him in so many ways. Learning this song, this way, changed things. He remembered how it felt to finally get the intro right. He remembered figuring out the rest of the song.

Billy watched Young Billy and knew that his ear was getting better at hearing how the intro worked. His fingers were getting better at moving to play the right note at the right time.

Billy suddenly recognized that this moment was after his first guitar lessons. He and his best friend Michael Olesko had noticed a small guitar/accordion center offering lessons and they made a deal with the owner for the both of them to take lessons at the same time for seven dollars so it came to $3.50 each for one hour. They took only five or six lessons. Michael didn't take to the guitar as well as Billy did. Billy didn't like lessons very much, which he realized was hilariously ironic, considering he now taught upwards of 40 guitar lessons a week. But the thing that really helped Billy learn to play was learning "Walk Don't Run" by the Ventures.

Billy refocused on young Billy's fingers playing the intro to that old Del Shannon song. Del Shannon, man, Del Shannon! This was the beginning of a long story arc in Billy's life. The name of Billy's first band was the Shanndels, after Del Shannon. He and Michael Olesko, who lived just a couple of blocks away from the very room young Billy was in right now, were Del Shannon devotees. Later in life Billy would get a call from Del Shannon asking him to record some background vocals on one of the last recordings Del ever did. He would pick up the phone and hear Del Shannon's voice say, "Billy, do you want to come and do some backup vocals on this track we're recording today? I got Tom, Jeff, and George down here already." Billy would say, "Tom, Jeff, and George who?" Del would answer, "Tom Petty, Jeff Lynne, and George Harrison." Billy would reply quickly, "I'll be right there."

This moment in his boyhood bedroom made that distant future memory possible. Distant future memory? What in the world was happening? His younger self was getting better at the intro. Billy could play that intro now without thinking. Young Billy was playing it on his father's cheap out of tune parlor guitar. He remembered now that he had figured out how to play the whole intro without tuning the guitar. Seeing himself in this stage of his life made him wonder how he ever learned to play. He was so young.

The noise from the stage in Tempe started to get louder and seemed to vibrate faster. He couldn't push it out. He was being pulled back now. Everything got blurry. The sound from Billy's guitar in Tempe 2016 overtook the sound of Billy's guitar in New York circa 1962. Suddenly he was back. The sound was unbearable at first but in what seemed like an instant it vanished and he was whole again. Body and mind. Body and soul? Who knows? The note he played that had seemed to start the whole thing was done. It couldn't have lasted more than a second, but somehow he had spent what must have been 4 or 5 minutes in his grandfather's office decades ago within the span of that note.

Now that he was back in his body his muscle memory took over, as if his mind had two parts. One part playing the solo while the other part was still returning, trying to comprehend what had just happened. He looked down at his fingers, something he told his students never to do, and the difference was striking. He had just been looking at his teenage fingers and they were so young and pink. His fingers now had calluses and were worn by the sun and years of playing the guitar. Young Billy had trimmed fingernails but now the fingernails on his right hand were kept long for guitar picking. He was proud of his hands. He was glad that he had trained them to do what they were doing now almost without thinking. In fact, the solo was almost done and he was ready for the last verse,

the verse of the song where the boy and the dog have grown old and the dog dies. Though part of him was still thinking about what had just happened, he sang out soulfully …

Last night I held him in my arms
as we put him to sleep.
My wife she sang to him
as we listened to him breathe
and I knew that he trusted us.
We'd never do him wrong.
Those aged legs would be limber soon
and then Lee was gone.
But we'll run
'cause it's only time we're chasing.
Yes we'll run
'cause it's something we're all facing.
And I know when that day comes
I will call and he will come
and we'll run.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEct45c0g3U

As the band finished the last verse Billy was still trying to figure out what had just happened. He quickly thanked the crowd and said they were going to take a break and come back on in 5 minutes. Many times before in performances his mind had wandered in memory. Usually the memory was something that dealt with the song he was playing. He was quite capable of holding vivid glimpses of memories in his mind as he played and sang songs that he knew well, but those memories would generally fade as a complex part of the song would demand his full attention. This episode was different entirely. He was not in control of it. Had he been thinking about learning to play earlier? He wasn't sure what had triggered the … event.

What should he even call it? It was like nothing he had ever experienced, and he had experienced a lot. Time traveling to his own boyhood home, that was new, but also familiar. Familiar in that "finding a journal from years before" kind of way, when you

actually touch something from your past that you haven't touched in years and feelings and thoughts come flooding back. Now that he thought about it, he had been thinking more about his past lately. The songs on the album he was writing in many ways dealt with his past, but then again Billy always told stories about his past to his students and to anyone else who cared to listen. Sometimes Gwen and Billy would lay in bed talking about the past and laughing about all the horrible shit they had done together. Billy laughed now as he lit up a cigarette. Maybe he was telling too many stories about his past and it was getting to him. Maybe he ought to tell Gwen about what had happened … or what he thought had happened … it had seemed so real.

The next set was going to start. He sucked the rest of the cigarette down and put the butt out on the brick retaining wall. He walked on stage and introduced the crowd to the newcomer on stage. It was Michael Bruce, the guitarist for the Alice Cooper band, a friend of a friend. They played a few songs together and that was that. The crowd was pleased. Billy had yet another gig under his belt and had apparently traveled through time. He thought about the event as he gathered up his gear and packed it into the back of his Honda mini van. There on the back seat was a box of CDs he had forgotten to bring to sell at the gig. Gwen was always reminding him to mention that he had CDs but he always forgot, maybe on purpose. Who knows why? He got in his car and thought about it the whole way home.

As Billy drove home to Gwen the passing cactuses triggered that feeling you sometimes get when you look at your surroundings and realize that you are where you are. You aren't that kid you once were. You aren't living in L.A. anymore. You aren't touring with a band as 19-year-old and living in a house in Amherst, Massachusetts with

your band mates. You are teaching private guitar in Scottsdale, Arizona, miraculously married to a woman who had every right to leave you high and dry, but for some reason has forgiven you and lets you keep buying guitars. You are recording an album of original material and helping some students produce their own albums of original material. You, Billy Cioffi, musical director for the stars, staff songwriter, frontman, leader of the band, are now a private guitar teacher living northeast of Phoenix in a beautiful little condo, and it is good. In some ways he felt like this was what his whole life prepared him for, to be where he was now, to teach the kids he was teaching.

Billy was tired. All of this thinking made him tired. When he got home he took off his boots, sat down on the couch, and started watching the news with Gwen. The news was beyond horrible. A couple of weeks ago Donald Trump had won the presidency of the United States of America and lost the popular vote by almost 3 million votes. Both Gwen and Billy cursed at the T.V. as a talking head defended Donald Trump's inflammatory statements about Muslim refugees. Billy tuned it out and thought about telling Gwen about what happened at the gig, but then talked himself out of it. Instead he cracked open Bruce Springsteen's autobiography as Gwen switched to the History Channel to watch Ancient Aliens, one of their favorite shows to fall asleep to.

Bruce Springsteen and Billy were born only days apart. Bruce in New Jersey, Billy in upstate New York. Bruce the son of Irish and Italian immigrants, Billy the son of Irish and Italian immigrants. Both left home right after high school and formed bands. Both signed early with regional record labels, both signed again with bigger labels. Billy knew a thousand guys just like him and Bruce. The difference was that when Bruce was

given the notice that his third album better have a hit or else, he wrote “Born to Run” and it exploded up the charts.

Billy once released an album that was a Billboard top pick. Critically acclaimed but not a big seller, just like Bruce’s first two albums. In the reviews he was even compared to Bruce Springsteen. Billy didn’t have sour grapes about it because he knew exactly how the music business worked. He knew intimately how the whole thing worked. Joni Mitchell wrote a song about David Geffen called “Free Man in Paris,” in which she referred to the business as the “star maker machinery.” Billy had been a part of that machinery.

Billy maintained a strong belief that certain ideas float around and infect the minds of people in a certain area and era. When it came to him and Bruce, ideas were in the air and they were both infected by them. Billy also had no delusions of grandeur. Billy was different from Bruce Springsteen in many ways. They had many of the same cultural influences but not the same talent. Billy had talent but sometimes one of the worst things that can happen to you is talent. Bruce also had an ability to focus. He didn't mess around with drugs and didn't get sidetracked. Billy got sidetracked. He didn't understand who he was until later in life. For the longest time he just wanted to be a star. He just didn't know what he wanted to say. All he really wanted was a hit record, without asking why he wanted a hit record. He failed to bring it home, failed to focus.

Billy didn’t like to talk about regret. He found a quote, attributed to Emerson in various places on the internet, summed up how he felt about regret. “Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day. You shall begin it

serenely and with too high a spirit to be encumbered with your old nonsense." Billy had a lot of old nonsense, so much so that if he focused on it, he couldn't do anything. He also felt that some of the nonsense of his past had led him right to where he was. Wherever you go there you are. Like that book by Jon Kabat-Zinn. He also felt like where he was was pretty great. He was, among many other things, a teacher, and he was cognizant as a teacher that maybe he was supposed to fail. Fail at the game that Bruce succeeded at so well. Billy felt a teacher has an obligation to try to prevent his students from making the same mistakes. A teacher should be honest about his critical errors and mistakes of judgement, and Billy was always exactly that. Brutally honest.

He decided that his guitar student Paul would have to read Bruce's book. It was going to be required reading. It would help Paul understand what Billy was talking about all of the time. The story in many ways paralleled his own, although he doubted that Bruce Springsteen was having bouts of out-of-body time slippage. Maybe he was. Maybe it was an epidemic among 60 somethings with a penchant for songwriting and storytelling. Maybe that is why Bruce wrote his memoirs. Maybe he too had slipped back to his adolescence and seen, as Billy had seen. Who knows? It was time for bed. He wasn't going to tell anyone about what, in his mind, he began to call the time event. Not yet anyway. Billy decided he was going to think again about what he saw and examine the memory of the memory as he drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 2

On his way back from Mesa Community College on a Wednesday morning, Billy was trying to decide if he was busier when he was a music director in L.A. managing all of the details of putting together a professional performance, or if he was busier now as a

private guitar teacher, part time English professor, and gigging steadily around the Phoenix area. As a teacher he still had to put together performances and manage all kinds of details, and in a lot of ways the students he worked with now were easier to deal with than, say, Chuck Berry. The teenagers were less moody. He pulled into his garage and went inside his house. He only had a few minutes to get ready for a day of lessons at Kirk's Studio for the Performing Arts.

Billy had all kinds of students. One of them was a 50-year-old man named Ed who used to race formula cars and then had an accident. A tire flew through Ed's window and the doctor said he wouldn't live, but he did. He had gone through physical therapy to learn to walk again. Ed was getting better at the guitar, and he and Billy were writing songs together. They were working on recording some of Ed's songs for a book that Ed was writing about his whole experience. Billy would sit with him and work on chords and lyrics. The songs were coming together nicely. They had scheduled time to record the songs at Daniel's studio this coming weekend.

Billy had a good network of people in the Phoenix area, and Daniel was an important node in that network. Daniel was a bass player and professional sound technician who owned his own studio—Electric Orchid Studios; Billy and Daniel were working on starting a label together to promote local talent, including some of Billy's students, like Paul and Kimmy. Kimmy was a songwriter and Paul was a shredder. Billy helped both of them expand their ranges. Paul was a 19-year-old kid, and he taught lessons at Kirk's Studio too. If Billy was honest with himself, Paul would be a better guitar player than he was, if he wasn't already. Kimmy was an excellent lyricist and writer. She had won national awards for some short stories and she also had a beautiful

voice. Billy put Paul and Kimmy together as a duo to write and perform songs and their album was just about done.

Billy grabbed all of the stuff he needed from his house and got back in the van. The drive to Kirk's Studio was barely a drive at all. He would walk it except for all of the stuff he had to carry. He pulled up to the back of the building and took the elevator up one floor to the studio. He said hello to Jamie, the receptionist, and walked back to his studio space. He unlocked the door to the small room and looked at the state of it. There was a small amp on the floor, two chairs, a small stool, a bookshelf full of the stuff of memories. The material that, if perused, would send his mind in a thousand directions. Pictures of past showcases (the giant performances that involved all of the students taking lessons through Kirk's studio), biographies, magazines, notebooks full of lyrics, poetry, prose, phone numbers, chords. Billy turned his gaze away, thinking that he might fall into one of those memories like he had during the performance at the Tempe Festival for the Arts. He looked at the small electronic keyboard he often used to help students visualize chords in a way other than looking at their hands on the neck of a guitar. He sat down in his chair, picked up his Taylor acoustic guitar, and began to riff around on a blues pentatonic thing he had been playing with the other day. He played until Ed Timmons showed up.

"How you doin' man?"

"All things considered?" Ed asked with a smile on his face.

"All things considered," Billy answered in anticipation.

"Pretty shitty," Ed answered and laughed.

They both laughed but only because they knew it was true. Ed was going through his third divorce, and this one was taking him through the wringer. Billy sometimes felt as though lessons with Ed were part therapy. The songs they wrote together were a type of therapy. The thing about writing songs with someone is that it's revealing. When you write songs with someone you create a bond. Billy had collaborated with many people writing songs and it always felt that way to him. There is some kind of mysterious thing. You can't help but get inside each other's heads. You are going back and forth in the lyrics and relating about things in your lives. Songs don't come out of nowhere. There is a narrow seed of something from your life in every song you write. Used to be that Billy's songs were written with the aid of some sort of stimulant, but not now, at least not in Kirk's Studio.

"What do you got for me today?" Billy asked.

"Well how 'bout we work on my stuff today?"

"Sounds good, brother man. Why don't you come on in and get set up, and I will find the chords and lyrics in my notes."

Billy started to look in his bag for a yellow legal pad that he had scrawled some lyrics and chords on during the last session with Ed. He found it and settled in as Ed pulled out his guitar. Ed sat hunched over his guitar, Steve Martin white hair covered by a baseball cap and glasses on the end of his nose, looking at the music stand as Billy arranged the lyrics and chords.

"Ok, it started like this, right?" Billy said as he started a picking pattern and a chord progression on his guitar.

"Yeah that sounds right," Ed said as he started strumming along. He was watching Billy's fingers and trying to keep up. After a couple of times through the progression he had it.

"Then it does this, right?" Billy asked as he played the same progression in reverse. "For the bridge?"

"I can't remember?" Ed responded.

"Yeah, here it is," Billy said, pointing to the chord symbols on the legal pad. "It goes like this for both the verses, and then does basically the reverse for the bridge and then the chorus goes to this part."

Ed started playing from the beginning and began to sing quietly the lyrics that he had written with Billy. Billy listened.

We've been through a lot.
I lost myself and didn't come out on top.
Now all the shadows are behind me
Out in the sunlight's where you'll find me
This time around.
I finally made a choice
This time around.
I finally found my voice.
I can finally be the man you saw in me.
Your love has set me free this time around.

"Good, man, keep it up," Billy said, as he started picking the progression along with Ed. They got to the end of the first chorus and it fell apart. Something wasn't quite right with the lyrics or the chords. Billy looked at the two sheets and said, "Let's make a new one." He pulled off another piece of paper from the legal pad and just wrote out the chords. First the verse, then the chorus, then the bridge.

They both started playing and singing, then Billy stopped playing to listen to Ed. Ed was not a very confident singer, so Billy helped him out by singing along.

This time around
I finally made a choice.
This time around
I finally found my voice.
I can finally be the man you saw in me
Your love has set me free this time around.

Billy started to pick the progression again as they approached the chorus. He strummed the first chord of the chorus and suddenly it happened again. It was just like before. Everything froze and he was floating, or his consciousness was floating, away from the frozen scene. Before, the first time, the sound had been huge and overbearing as if it was a feedback problem. Now it was similar, but there was no electronic amplification. The sound from Billy's guitar was reverberating, but very slowly. It was odd but pleasant. The A chord was completely distinguishable to him. He heard each string of the guitar. He looked and could see each string bent as if in mid vibration.

He looked at Ed who was frozen, just beginning to suck in air to start singing the lyrics of the chorus. Billy looked at himself, and he was also getting ready to sing. The sound started getting louder, the scene became blurry, and he was being pulled backwards again. The A chord grew louder, but it was changing. The scene became a complete blur, but as the sound changed, Billy's vision began to clear, and he started to make out what looked like a record player. The A chord from back in his studio faded but not completely. He tried to focus on the record player that was pumping out a 60's pop song. Next to it there were stacks and stacks of LPs. As the scene came into focus he realized where he was. He was in Todd Everett's living room in Los Angeles, California.

He looked at the record spinning on the turntable and saw the album cover for a band called the Tremeloes.

A flood of memory engulfed him. The song was “Here Comes My Baby” by Cat Stevens, as performed by the Tremeloes. How could this be possible? He tried to hear the A chord from his studio but it was so faint. He turned away from the record player and there he was. Billy Cioffi circa 1971. He was only 19 years old and in L.A. It was truly odd to see himself through the eyes of experience. The time event a couple of weeks ago was still on his mind, and now this? The Billy now in front of him had grown so much from the young awkward teenager playing “Runaway” he had seen in what he could now call the first time event. Now he looked like a boy pretending to be a man and doing a damn good job of it. Billy knew better, of course, but 1971 Billy didn’t. You could tell just by looking at him that he thought he was pulling it off. Maybe he *was* pulling it off, and Billy thought he wasn’t because of hindsight.

Billy knew the wonders that were yet to come, and the mistakes and heartaches as well. He knew that young Billy’s bravado would carry him far, but also cost him much. He thought all of this as he looked his younger self in the eyes. He also knew that the time that had passed from learning to play the guitar in his grandfather’s New York office to sitting here in Todd Everett’s Los Angeles living room was filled with a wealth of life experience. Opening for the Lovin’ Spoonful and the Alman Brothers, seeing Van Morrison live on Boylston street in Boston with only one other person in the audience, being arrested for possession, girlfriends, his first record deal, forming and leaving bands, sex, drugs, and … well … rock ‘n’ roll. Really, it was more life than a 19-year-old kid

should be allowed to experience, but there he was, living in Todd Everett's apartment in Los Angeles, California.

Todd Everett was sitting next to him. Todd had a very nice apartment on Normandy Avenue in North Hollywood around the corner from Shelter Records. Billy was remembering so much. Shelter Records was where Leon Russell and Tom Petty had recorded. Todd was the music critic for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, which the L.A. Times eventually bought. Because he was a music critic, Todd was invited to every show that took place in the city. Billy knew that this was an important time in his life. The first week he moved to L.A. Billy had met Gene Vincent's producer Tom Ayers, who got Billy a gig with Gene Vincent. Tom was also trying to get Billy a deal at RCA as a solo artist. Billy lived with Tom for a few months and eventually wore out his welcome. Tom Ayers and Todd Everett were friends, so Tom asked Todd if Billy could stay at Todd's house. Todd agreed.

Todd was awkward and gangly. As Billy looked back and forth from his own young face to Todd's face next to him, he remembered something David Lee Roth once said about music critics that Billy always thought was funny and more or less true. Roth had reportedly said that the reason music critics loved Elvis Costello was because they all looked like him.

Todd was one of the first generation of popular music critics. He was sarcastic, off the wall, and he had controversial opinions. He was seven years older than Billy, which didn't seem like a lot to Billy now, but he remembered that back then it felt like Todd was so much older and wiser. In a lot of ways, he was. Todd was the person who helped Billy find the beauty and artfulness of country music.

"Why are you listening to that shit, Todd?" Billy had said.

"What's wrong with it?" Todd answered.

"I don't know. It's country, man."

"You don't like country?" Todd asked him.

"No way man, it's hillbilly music," Billy had said, already doubting his words. It was like that feeling you get when you state an opinion to a person you respect, only to find out that they think differently than you about the issue. You immediately start to wonder if you were wrong.

"You are missing out on a lot of good music," Todd had told him.

Billy looked around Todd's front room, looked at his younger self as his consciousness, or whatever, floated around. He remembered all of the music he had heard for the first time right there in front of that record player, usually smoking weed and drinking beer. Todd would open one of the many LPs that came in stacks every week, and he and Billy would listen. Every Monday and Wednesday, UPS would bring new records and swag. Todd and Billy would sell the extra records and swag and use the money to buy food. Billy's young ears heard so much music sitting right there.

Todd introduced him to the Louvin Brothers, the Carter family, Bob Wills and many more. Billy learned to listen past stereotype and past genre. He started to become a connoisseur of song. Somebody once told Billy that a good song is a song that can take many arrangements and hold up, regardless of genre. He started to learn that was true of many country songs. Of course there were some songs that were good only as country songs, and that was just fine, but it was a revelation to Billy that many of America's

greatest poets and songwriters were hillbillies, or, in some cases, just acting like hillbillies. The way someone talks may not be the way someone thinks.

Todd had changed Billy's life for the better in more ways than one. Being there again in that moment, Billy remembered what had happened just before this and what was to come directly after. The mind, it seems, can do this. We remember whole days' worth of experiences in seconds--the mind sums it up. For instance, Billy was remembering now why he had moved out to L.A. He had driven out with his road manager on a tip from his girlfriend, who was singing with Bo Didley. She had said that Bo might have a job for Billy. Well, it turned out Bo Didley didn't have a job for Billy then, but he would travel with Bo on a tour bus later in his life.

Billy and a friend named Danny Phipps got an apartment at the Landmark Hotel. Coincidentally, when they left only a week later, Janis Joplin checked into that very room, which is where she died. Billy went to the Musicians Contact Service and registered. Hollywood was jumping; it was all about rock and folk music. It was a good time to be a musician. He soon got a call from Tom Ayres. They needed a singer and rhythm guitarist to backup Gene Vincent of "Bee Bop a Lula" fame, and Tom wanted Billy to come out and audition. Billy asked, "How am I gonna get there? I don't have a car."

"I am gonna pick you up in a Cadillac tomorrow at 10 a.m.," Tom had said. Billy took the ride in a Cadillac up into the Hollywood hills and did the audition right there in Tom Ayers' living room. He got the job.

Billy looked at his younger self sitting on Todd Everett's couch listening to the Tremeloes play a Cat Stevens song. He and Todd were getting ready to go to Cat

Stevens' big show at the Troubadour. Everybody wanted tickets. Todd always got tickets to everything, and he always had a plus one. Todd had a really hard time finding dates, so Billy often ended up being Todd's plus one. Billy saw a lot of shows that way and met a lot of important people. Important in a superficial way, as in famous, and also important in an instrumental way, as in people who helped him land good gigs. For instance, Billy knew, watching his younger self listen to the Tremeloes sing a song that Cat Stevens had written, that his younger self was going to go and sit at the Troubadour next to Cher, David Geffen, Phil Ochs and Paul McCartney later that night. Robert Hilburn, an important music critic, from the LA Times, would also be there.

The moment Billy was witnessing from his own past was a sort of homework project. He and Todd were looking into Cat Stevens' work, and they had found out that he had written "Here Comes My Baby" for the Tremeloes. It was different than all of the songs on his new album. Billy looked down by the stack of records, and sure enough, he saw a record sheath for *Tea for the Tillerman*, Stevens' album from 1970, and the sheath for his 1971 album *Teaser and the Firecat*. That album had songs such as "Moon Shadow," "The Wind," and "Peace Train." "Here Comes My Baby" was different. It was more of a break up song. Billy and Todd thought that it was funny that Cat Stevens (Mr. Peace Train) had written a break-up song for a Mersey-Beat band.

Later that night at the Troubadour, Billy would lean over to Todd and say, "Wouldn't it be hilarious if he did 'Here Comes My Baby?'" Todd would say, "Request it." So as Cat Stevens walked by their table that night, Billy shouted out, "Do 'Here Comes My Baby.'" Cat Stevens looked over at Billy and smiled and laughed. He got up

on the stage and did his first two numbers, and sure enough, he looked back down at Billy and played “Here Comes My Baby.”

The song on the turntable ended. Young Billy stood up and walked right by where Billy’s consciousness was. (Was he there? Was it his consciousness? What the hell?) Young Billy lifted the needle off of the record and set it back in its cradle. He walked across the room and grabbed his guitar and started to strum out the song. As soon as he strummed the first chord, everything began to blur and Billy knew what was coming next. The sound from that chord mixed with the sound of the chord from back in his studio where he and Ed Timmons were getting ready to sing the chorus of a song they were writing together. Or had they already sung it? Billy wasn’t quite sure how it worked.

The sound of Billy’s studio began to get louder and clearer as the vision and sound of Todd Everett’s apartment faded into the past for the second time in Billy’s life. This shit was weird. It all happened very quickly. He felt himself pulled into his body backwards, and as that happened, Billy sang the first word to the chorus of Ed’s song and strummed the first chord. Then he stopped. Ed Timmons played a few more chords and sang a few more words, but then looked at Billy, who was very still and seemed to be staring into space.

“You ok, Billy?” Billy didn’t respond immediately. His mind was still reeling. Billy just kept thinking the words “right place, right time,” and he laughed a little out loud.

“Billy?” Ed asked again.

“Yeah. Sorry, brother man. I was having a senior moment there on one of those chords. The song made me remember something and I got a little distracted.”

"No worries, you just spaced out for a couple of seconds there."

Billy used the term "senior moment" when he forgot something or when he was taking what he felt was too long to look something up on his phone. A little bit of self deprecating humor helped defuse an awkward moment, but now Billy wondered if this actually was a "senior moment." Billy worried about things like that. He and Gwen were not getting any younger, and they had already had their fair share of medical adventures. Was age attacking his brain? This was the second time it had happened, and it was just like the first. It wasn't like any drug-induced hallucination he had ever had. It was clear, and it also felt like an out-of-body experience. What the hell was going on?

He started playing the song again and singing the lyrics with Ed. They went through the song two more times and got the changes a little tighter. Billy helped Ed with some fingering issues and gave him some exercises to practice, but the whole time he was thinking about his damn time travel issue. It was a full-fledged issue now. It had happened twice in the space of two weeks, and he was wondering if he ought to tell somebody about it.

"All right, man, that does it for now. We still good for this Sunday at Daniel's?" Billy asked as he stood up and put his guitar back on its stand. Ed answered, "Yeah, I'll be there."

"Ok, you take it easy and hang in there."

"Will do. You do the same."

As Ed left, Billy sat down, grabbed his guitar again, and started to play. He played the intro to one of his own songs that was going on the new album. It was kind of a country-sounding song. It was a song about Del Shannon's suicide called "Searching or

Running Away." The title was a play on two of Shannon's most popular songs, "Runaway" and "Keep Searching":

I got a letter tellin' me
A friend had passed away.
I couldn't help but think about you
And how you left that day.
You didn't say goodbye
You didn't say why
Or try to explain.

Were you searching or running away?

Some people have all the luck and none of its good.
Who chooses the chosen few I never understood.
How could things go so bad?
Everything you had
You had to make your play.

Were you searching or running away?

Love is so precious It's easy to forget
Some poet wrote the only sin you can't forgive is regret.

What might have been
Is never begun.
There's nothing I can say
Now that it's done.
You didn't say goodbye
You didn't say why
Or try to explain.

Were you searching or running away?
Were you searching
Or running away?
Were you searching
Or running away?

His student Cameron walked up to the door as he was playing through it, and asked, with a hint of judgement in his voice, "Is that a country song?"

"Maybe?" Billy answered, "You got a problem with that?" as he continued to pick and strum.

"No. I just don't like country, man," Cameron said.

"Well," Billy paused, smiled, and then said, "You are missing out on some great music."

Chapter 3

Sunday morning Billy woke up and saw he had missed a call from Daniel. Daniel ran his Electric Orchid studio out of the house he owned with his girlfriend and things had been going south with her in a bad way. Billy worried that something had happened. Billy loved Daniel like a brother. Daniel had been a support and help to him. They collaborated on many projects, most recently recording several of Billy's songs to put into another album. Billy felt great about it. He felt these songs represented some of his best songwriting and Daniel really made them sound good. They had even made a music video for one of the songs and had some professional photos taken for the album artwork.

Without sitting up, Billy checked his messages to see if Daniel had left one when he called. He saw that Daniel had called really late but hadn't left a message. Billy thought about calling him until he realized that it was early for Daniel. Since the problems with his girlfriend started, Daniel hadn't been sleeping very well, so even though it was 9:00 am Billy knew that Daniel had probably gone to bed only 4 or 5 hours ago. Billy worried about Daniel. He wanted him to be happy and find love and stability. Billy knew the darkness and depression that could follow a break-up of this magnitude. Daniel was planning on marrying this girl. They owned the house and, by extension, the studio together.

Billy lay there musing. Gwen was still asleep. There were a couple of years in Billy's life when he was wandering and self-medicating. Actually those years were not long after that moment in Todd's apartment he had been so unceremoniously pulled back to a couple of days ago. He had been in love with a girl named Joanne. Joanne was very sophisticated and was Billy's educator in many ways—life, love, books, music, film. She was also spiritual and worked in circles of avant garde artists and their friends. Billy had met her as a result of the Gene Vincent gig, and he had started really developing as a songwriter when he was with her.

Joanne was older than Billy and had been involved with the hippie movement up in San Francisco. In the end, she left Billy for another woman. Billy missed her terribly, and it hurt. There was a void in his life and he tried to fill it with drugs, alcohol, and numerous relationships. He was a drift, at sea with no land to cling to. He was running, stumbling from gig to gig. If it weren't for the kindness of people like Todd and his own God-given talent as a musician and songwriter, who knows where he would've ended up.

In 1974 he met Gwen. Billy's friend Gary Hodges, who was the drummer for Buckingham Nicks, invited Billy to have Thanksgiving dinner with him and a girl from Texas. All three of them had nowhere to go, so Gary figured it was a good idea. When they came to pick up Billy, his apartment door was swollen shut because it had rained the night before. Gwen had to climb in through the window, and Billy helped her in. The first time he met the love of his life, she climbed in through his window. Billy remembered that Gary had told Gwen, "You're gonna really like Bill, he's crazy." They went down to Olvera Street and had Mexican food and tequila for Thanksgiving. Afterwards they went

back to her apartment and played strip poker, and they have been together ever since. They went down to the same Mexican restaurant every Thanksgiving they lived in L.A.

With Gwen came more stability, more focus, something to fight for. He also gave up drinking very soon after that. He wanted that for Daniel. Somebody to love. Someone who loved him. Billy and Gwen had had their share of problems, including Billy's own infidelity that had resulted in the birth of Billy's daughter. Amazingly, unbelievably, Gwen had stuck by him through the custody battle and the whole ordeal. They had stuck by each other through hip replacement, colostomy bags, medical bills, dental implants, master's degrees, job loss, dog loss, good songs, and bad songs. It was a love made strong through the refining fire of life. That is what Daniel needed, someone who would love him when his damned teeth fell out and he had to collect his piss and shit in a bag. Billy was forever grateful that he had Gwen and that she stuck by him, in spite of it all.

Billy rolled over, gave Gwen a kiss on the forehead, and rolled out of bed to get ready for the day. He remembered that he was supposed to meet Ed Timmons out at Daniel's house this morning to record some of the songs that he and Ed had been writing together. He thought about Daniel and Ed. He thought about Todd Everett. They were still in contact, even though Billy now lived in Scottsdale, Arizona, and Todd lived in California. Facebook was truly a marvel. Billy had been able to connect with so many people from his past through Facebook. Todd and Billy still occasionally talked on the phone but mostly they kept in contact through Facebook.

As he showered, Billy thought about his time travel problem. He wondered if it was a degenerative brain disease. He wondered about his own mortality, which made him think about his students and his album. He wondered about the mark he would leave on

the world when he passed into whatever realm or plain of existence comes next. He knew that there would be students who would remember him. But more than remember him, he knew that they had learned from him. They had learned to play the guitar, to play blues scales, to play chords, to play melodies, but most importantly, they had learned to listen.

Billy got out of the shower, dried himself off and looked at his face. He smiled so he could see the temporary dental implants that had been put in a day or two after the second time event. His face hurt but he looked like himself; there wasn't too much swelling. He took one of the pain pills that the doctor had given him and brushed his teeth gently. He was glad that he was going into Daniel's studio today and that Ed was going to be there. It would be good for Ed and Daniel to meet for a few reasons. First, Ed had been through a number of bad break-ups, and if Daniel's break-up ended as bad as it was looking, Ed at least might be able to commiserate. Second, Ed was paying for the recording time, and he was co-writing the songs with Billy. Third, Ed was interested in investing in Electric Orchid and Chromatique, the label that Billy and Daniel were starting up. Depending on how things went down with Daniel's break-up, that third reason could be very important.

Billy decided he wouldn't call Daniel. He would just go over and wake him up when he got there. Ed would be meeting them at 10:00. Billy got dressed and loaded his twelve-string guitar, his mandolin, his Taylor acoustic, his Dobro guitar, and an electric guitar into the back of his van. Billy had guitars in his living room, guitars in his bedroom, and seven guitars in the spare bathtub. Each of the guitars had a story, a lineage. If a picture is worth a thousand words, how many words is a guitar worth? He grabbed his little silver gig bag where he kept all of his capos, tuners, extra strings, slides,

and a harmonica or two. He slipped a pack of cigarettes and his lighter into his front vest pocket. He put on his boots, and told Gwen he loved her, got into the van and started toward Daniel's.

Billy was about five miles away from home before he realized that he had forgotten his phone. He swore, then he turned around and headed back. He pulled halfway into the garage, got out of the car and almost to the door into the kitchen, when Gwen opened it, and, with a smile, said, "Here ya go." Billy laughed, and said, "Thank you," as he leaned in for a kiss. He hurriedly got back in the van and checked his phone. Ed Timmons had called. "Shit," Billy said to no one. He was going to be late now.

Billy put his phone in speakerphone mode, called Ed back, backed out of the garage, and hit the road.

"Hey, Billy," Ed said, as he answered the phone.

"Sorry I missed your call. I got halfway to Daniel's when I realized that I had left my phone by my bed. Another senior moment."

"You've been having a lot of those lately," Ed said jokingly.

"Well, I'm an old ass man," Billy said. "What's up?"

"Well, where is this place? I think I am in the right neighborhood--my phone keeps telling me I am here, but all I see are houses. There is a big red house with a big unattached garage, is that it?"

"Yeah, man, that is it," Billy answered. "I'll be there in about fifteen."

"All right, man, see you soon," Ed said.

As the phone call ended Billy realized that Daniel was probably not going to be awake. He quickly called Daniel to let him know that Ed was there already. Daniel didn't

answer. Billy kept driving and pulled into the neighborhood, worried that Ed was just sitting outside waiting because Daniel didn't answer and Ed wouldn't know to check the studio entrance.

Billy pulled up to the house and walked through the gate and then into the door to find Daniel making an espresso for Ed. Daniel looked like he hadn't had much sleep. He was making a cup of coffee for himself, and as soon as it was done Billy grabbed it, took a sip, then smiled at Daniel, who turned and smiled at Ed as if to say, "What a lovable asshole," and immediately started to make another cup of coffee.

The three of them finished up their coffees outside in a really lovely courtyard between the house and garage. It was a beautiful Arizona morning. Birds were chirping and they just sat there quietly as Billy and Daniel had a cigarette. Billy kept an eye on Daniel for any signs of distress. He hadn't asked about the late-night call yet because Ed was there and Billy figured Daniel didn't want everyone to know about his problems. They put the butts of their cigarettes out and walked into the studio behind the garage.

The set up was really quite impressive for a home studio. Daniel had about seven racks of equipment, most of which was vintage stuff that he didn't use anymore, but he also had a new high-tech setup that he used all the time. There were drawers and drawers of high-end microphones and some old microphones as well. Billy asked Ed to help him bring in all of his guitars and gear. Ed was there just to see the studio and because he helped write the songs they were going to record. When they had all the gear inside Billy opened all of the cases and said, "Well, that deserves a picture." He stepped back, pulled out his phone, snapped a picture, and sent it to Facebook, making sure to tag Daniel and

Ed in the post. Daniel was almost ready to start recording, so Billy sat down and started tuning his guitars. Daniel asked, “What are we starting with?”

“Let’s start with ‘This Time Around’,” Billy answered.

Billy and Daniel had recorded most of “This Time Around” previously, so Daniel pulled up the tracks that they had already recorded and pushed play. The three of them put on headphones and listened. Billy picked up his 12-string and started picking along. They got to the end of the song and Daniel said, “That was good, just do it like that.”

“All right, let’s do it,” Billy said.

Daniel counted him in, and the song started playing. Billy began to pick. He made a couple mistakes but kept playing. They went through most of the song, but he got lost on the chord changes in the chorus, so they had to stop. They did a few takes and got some really good ones as well as some patch-ins that would fix parts that he had messed up. Billy took his headphones off and said he needed a smoke. “I actually have to make a business call so that works for me,” Ed said, standing up and placing his headphones next to the console.

Daniel didn’t say anything. He stood up, took off his headphones and stretched his arms and body. They all walked out of the studio. Ed went out to his Porsche to make a call, and Daniel and Billy sat at the table in the courtyard. Billy lit up a cigarette and so did Daniel. Billy watched as Daniel stared into space, then pulled out his phone and started texting someone. Billy waited another minute or so and said, “So what happened?”

“It’s over, Billy,” Daniel said, staring at his phone.

“I know, you told me last week.”

"No Billy. All of this is over," he said, signaling towards the studio and back to his house.

"What do you mean?"

"Her father wants me to give him back the money he put into the studio and the house within 30 days or to put the house up for sale."

"Are you serious? What in the hell? He can't do that," Billy said.

"He can, Billy. He helped us buy the house and set up the studio."

"I know but the bastard *shouldn't* do it. You've put your whole life into this place." Daniel didn't say anything. He looked too tired to be emotional about the situation.

"Did you sleep at all last night?" Billy asked.

"I finally fell asleep at about 6 a.m.," Daniel answered.

Billy looked at Daniel's face and saw the bags under his eyes, the mop of hair on his head. He thought about how much they had been through together. Daniel was a true friend. He had helped Billy out numerous times. He was a great collaborator and recording technician. They had had disagreements, big ones, disagreements that could end friendships, and yet here they were. Billy was worried about the future. What would happen to the album that Paul and Kimmy had recorded? What about Adam Ezrick's album? Both were ready to go, and Billy's album was almost ready. Daniel couldn't afford to pay the money back to his ex's dad. He couldn't afford to start from the beginning again. His mother had invested a significant amount of money into the studio as well. What about her? Did she even know yet? "Did you tell your mother about this?"

Daniel closed his eyes and laughed and shook his head as he rubbed his temples with one hand across his forehead. Then he glanced up with a look of exasperation and said, “When she found out she fainted.” He took another drag on the cigarette and shook his head again He reached for his phone and then said, “If it wasn’t enough to break my heart, now she is trying to ruin my life and kill my mother.”

Billy started thinking about Ed out in his Porsche. He thought about how Ed had just gone through a terrible divorce and wanted this recording project to go really well for his book. The idea was to use the songs as promotional and supplemental material to the book. Billy remembered again that Ed had expressed interest in investing in the studio. Now was not the time to figure that out, but it might be worth looking into.

“Did you tell Ed about any of this?” Billy asked.

“No,” Daniel said looking at his phone. “But he knows that we broke up. He knows that much--he said you had mentioned it.”

“Yeah, I told him,” Billy said.

Daniel put the butt of his cigarette out and put his phone down. He looked at Billy for the first time that day and said, “I have no clue what I am going to do.”

Billy looked back and said, “It will work out, brother man. We’ll find a way.”

Just then, Ed walked back into the courtyard and said, “Well, that went well.”

Daniel stood up, started walking towards the studio, and said, “Well, let’s record a little more and call it a day.”

Billy laid down tracks on all three songs for Ed's book with his twelve string. He was glad that he did not have to sing today because his mouth hurt from the implants. It took them about two hours with a couple of cigarette breaks and multiple takes for each

song. Daniel was great when it came to getting his work done. He was a professional. He knew exactly what needed to be adjusted and he had worked with Billy enough that they could communicate without too much verbiage.

When they were done, Billy packed up his guitars and all of his gear still worried about Daniel. Billy and Ed grabbed some of Billy's gear and walked out to the van. As they were loading guitars in the back, Ed said, "Man, the songs sound good. You and Daniel are great at this stuff."

"We do what we can," Billy replied and then added, "You helped write the songs, you deserve some credit as well."

"Well, thank you, Billy," Ed said as he grabbed the rest of the guitars and handed them to Billy. "I guess I'll see you on Tuesday then?" Ed asked.

"You bet, brother man. Same time, same place," Billy replied. Billy wondered if he ought to tell Ed about Daniel's problem as he watched him walk to his Porsche. The moment passed. He should probably talk to Daniel about it before he told Ed anyway.

Billy walked back to the studio and found Daniel on his phone in a heated discussion. He stayed for a minute or two, then decided to leave and text Daniel later. He got in his van and drove back home to watch the news with Gwen while he graded papers from his writing class at Mesa Community College. Maybe they'd rent one of those Marvel movies on cable this evening. Tomorrow was a full day of teaching, starting with his 7:30 class at MCC and lessons at Kirk's Studio from 1:00 to 8:00 pm. He kept thinking about Daniel and Ed and the studio. Ed was in a position to help Daniel and was already asking about it, but how could Billy make the deal happen? He decided to wait and see what Daniel said.

Billy thought about the drama of life. He had certainly dealt with his own fair share of drama. Some of it personal and some of it in association with the people he had worked with in L.A. If life is a novel, drama is the stuff that makes it memorable. It's not always good when you are going through it, but it shapes the plot. Drama makes up the twists and turns that lead people to where they end up. It doesn't always end up all right, either, but Billy couldn't complain, at least not too much.

Suddenly Billy realized that he hadn't thought about the time events all day. Maybe it was because he was so worried about Daniel. Maybe it was because he was so focused on the technical aspects of the music while he was recording. Truthfully, he didn't know why he was being pulled into his past. The two times that it had happened he had been playing his guitar. The first time it happened, he had smoked just a little bit of weed, but weed had never had that effect on him before. The second time he hadn't smoked anything but regular old Marlboros, so it probably wasn't the whacky tobaccy that did it. Who knows? The time events were a current piece of drama in his life, and a significantly weird piece of drama at that. Who knew where the twists and turns would lead him?

Chapter 4

Billy walked into the band rehearsal room at Kirk's Studio where a group of teens and pre-teens were setting up to play. The lead singer, Angelina, 14, was holding her iPhone and singing to herself the lyrics to "Mony Mony" ala Billy Idol. Tim, almost 14, was setting up his electric guitar and amp, getting ready to play lead. Andrew, 13, was fidgeting with his electric guitar and amp, getting ready to play rhythm, and Cameron, a fresh-faced 14-year-old young man, was setting up his electric bass. An 11-year-old boy

named Nic was adjusting his drum set. Billy walked in surveying the room. He walked over to Cameron and said, "Cameron**,** what's going on?" Cameron looked up from his lead sheet and said with just a dash of sarcasm, "Uh…we've got this *super* easy song right here."

For a bass player, "Mony Mony" *was* a very easy song. All the player had to do was play three or four notes over and over again in a repeating eighth-note pattern. There were a couple of more difficult parts, but not for a bassist like Cameron. Cameron was the rare student who *could* play guitar but *wanted* to play the bass. Bass was his thing. He was into bassists like Flea and Victor Wooten and was getting good enough to play some really tough stuff. But he was also part of this band and the band had been asked to play "Mony Mony" at the Kirk's Studio for the Performing Arts Showcase in a couple of weeks.

Billy picked up on the attitude. He knew exactly how Cameron felt. Billy also knew that just because the bass part was easy didn't mean that it wouldn't be fun to play. He had played some of the easiest songs in the world in front of screaming crowds. Billy also knew the joy of playing a song that people would sing *and* dance to--"Mony Mony." Sure it was simple, but the song always got people moving and participating, which is why *this* band was getting the song ready for the showcase.

Rather than address Cameron's concern about being bored by the "easy song" head on, Billy decided to take a different tack. "Well, let's run it. Cameron, you're the leader, count the band in and let's do it."

"All right," Cameron said begrudgingly. He looked back at the drummer, called out the counts, and the band started. Cameron was the best player in the band. He had a

good sense for it. He was also the oldest in the group. Somewhere after the first chorus and before the second verse, something went wrong with the timing. The singer was out of sync with the rest of the band. They all looked around at each other, still plodding along. If you have ever been in any musical group, you know the feeling—a little bit confused about what had happened, a little bit frustrated that somebody had messed up, but not quite sure that it wasn't you. Billy, who was sitting in a chair listening, knew exactly what the problem was. He waited for Cameron to stop the group and fix the problem. The awkwardness continued for a few more bars and then Billy stood up.

"Wait, wait," he said, as the band slowly fell apart. "What happened?" Billy asked. The band waited in silence not quite sure what had happened.

"Uhh …" Cameron said.

Billy could tell that they all thought the singer had messed up but didn't want to say it out loud. Billy also knew that it wasn't the singer, it was the band. Angelina had been listening to the song non-stop to get the timing right. Billy knew what had happened but he didn't want to say it. He looked at Cameron and each of the other band members in turn, going around the half circle, ending with Angelina sitting on a cabinet holding her iPhone. None of them said a word. Angelina looked frustrated and embarrassed. She knew it wasn't her fault, and she knew that everybody thought it *was* her fault. Billy looked back at Cameron who finally broke the awkward silence.

"Angelina is missing a cue."

"Is she?" Billy asked.

"Yeah, right when the second verse starts," Cameron answered, looking at Billy, who was looking back at him with a slight look of incredulity, which caused Cameron to

doubt himself. “Well I think so… Let’s try it again from the top and see what happens. Nic, count us in,” Cameron said.

The drummer counted the band in and they started playing the song again. Everything was just fine until just before the second verse, when everything got off again. This time Cameron called out, “Stop, stop, stop. What’s going on there?” He looked at Angelina and then at Billy. Billy looked back at Cameron with a face that said, “Don’t ask me.”

They tried it again and the same thing happened. Billy stood up and took control. He had hoped that they would be able to figure it out by themselves. Truthfully, they probably would have figured it out eventually, but Billy only had a couple more rehearsals with them before the Showcase. So he decided to step in.

“Why don’t we listen to the song? Angelina, play the song on your phone and put it up to the microphone. Nobody play this time, just listen and count measures after the first verse.” Angelina pulled up the song and started it. The band listened. At the end of the first verse and chorus Billy held up his hand and counted out four measures of instrumental stuff before Billy Idol started singing again. Cameron realized what the problem was. His eyes got big and he said, “Oh I know what was wrong. We were only playing two bars there and going right into the next verse.”

Angelina nodded, “Yeah, I felt like you guys were missing something, so I just kept starting the measure after.”

“Am I supposed to play that little two measure fill right there? Cause I haven’t been,” Tim asked.

“I don’t know, what do you all think?” Billy said, looking back at the band.

Cameron spoke up. “Yeah, add in a little fill, that way we know to wait four measures.”

“I don’t know how to play it,” Tim said.

“We can work on it in our lesson later, but for now, let’s just count the four measures as you vamp through the chord progression and then start the next verse,” Billy said.

After Billy’s intervention, the band members worked out most of the kinks by themselves. By the end of the rehearsal, they knew they would be able to clean up the song and have it ready in time for the showcase. Billy could tell Angelina was relieved that the problem was resolved. She seemed her happy self as she helped put away instruments. He thought about how much learning had just occurred and how much potential there was for learning in a rock band. The band of teens and pre-teens who had just finished rehearsing got gigs every once in awhile around town, and they did some of their own stuff. They had Billy once a week to help them rehearse once a week, and most of them took private lessons from Billy as well to work on their instruments or songwriting or both.

It had been different for Billy when he was a kid. Nobody told him or his friends what to play. They covered what they wanted and wrote their own songs when they got tired of the covers. He didn’t ever think about learning in his first bands, he thought about all of the girls who would think he was cute. As a result he learned to play the guitar and write songs pretty well. Billy and his friends learned from each other. It wasn’t an educational pursuit, and yet he learned so much. Experience and interest seemed to be

Billy's most important teachers. It might not have been the most efficient way to learn, but it certainly had been an effective way to learn, at least some things.

The theme for the upcoming showcase was "The Awesome 80's." Billy had reminded his students last week that even though the Billy Idol version of "Mony Mony" was an 80's hit, it was originally a hit in 1968 by Tommy James and the Shondells. Cameron had said, "God, you know everything Billy."

"Almost everything," Billy responded. Billy had an encyclopedic knowledge of American popular music. He knew who sang what first and who drummed on each recording. Some people might think of it as a trivial body of knowledge but for Billy it was a side effect of his work as a professional musician and teacher. It was also his passion. That is the American popular song was his passion, and not just Rock 'n' roll. He knew Tin Pan Alley as well as he knew Laurel Canyon. He knew Nashville as well as he knew the Chitlins circuit. Billy made it a point to know. He had recently finished his master's degree in English and his thesis examined American popular song as literature.

About a year after he finished that degree, Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for literature (Bob didn't make time to attend the award ceremony. He had a gig and Billy knew as well as anybody that you never turn down a gig.) Billy was asked to lead a celebration in the English department in honor of the award being given to Dylan. Billy did a short set of Dylan tunes and talked about where the songs came from and what they meant to him. Other people were invited to read or sing their favorite lyrics from Bob Dylan tunes. One of Billy's favorites was "Don't Think Twice." He had learned how to play that song as a kid who had just left home. He was in a band with some older guys and one of those guys had studied with Bob Dylan's guitar teacher, Dave Van Ronk. Six

degrees to Billy Cioffi. Billy often joked that his life felt like that parlor game where you try to connect two actors with less than six degrees of separation usually associated with Kevin Bacon. The difference being that you could connect Billy to anybody in popular music by six degrees of separation.

As the kids finished cleaning up the instruments Billy looked at Cameron.

"Are you ready for your lesson?" Billy asked.

"Yeah, man, let's do this," Cameron responded, shouldering his bass guitar and picking up his amp.

They said goodbye to the rest of the crew and walked out into the lobby that Kirk's Studio shared with an orthodontist. Cameron's mom, who was sitting on the couch, smiled and put down her novel. "Sounds good from out here," she said.

"Yeah, I think they will have it better than good by the showcase," Billy said. "Is Cameron ok to do a lesson right now?"

"Oh yes, we were planning on it," she said.

"Ok, he'll be done in about 40 minutes."

"Sounds good."

Back in Billy's studio Cameron sat down and pulled out his bass guitar. Billy took his phone out of his breast pocket under his vest and plugged it into the little amp on the floor behind his chair. He found the Red Hot Chili Peppers song that Cameron had started working on and pressed play. The song was called "Can't Stop," and Cameron liked it because it was a challenge. He also liked it because the chorus was different than the verse, which meant it required two different styles of playing. The verse required a slap and pick style of playing, and the chorus switched to a more legato style of play.

The first part of the song was easy but fun to play, and Billy watched as Cameron used two fingers to pluck the bass string over and over in a 16th-note pattern with his finger on the seventh fret of the third string and then pluck the same pattern on the open third string for the intro. Cameron was concentrating on the crescendo into the last part of the intro, and Billy could tell he was having fun. By the end of the intro Billy plugged in his guitar to play along and hesitated. Every time he touched a guitar lately, which was a lot, he thought about the two time events. It had been at least a week since the last one, but not so long ago that he thought he was in the clear. It raised questions in his mind about what made those two events happen. Was it something outside of his control or did it happen because of something he thought or did?

Billy started playing along with Cameron and the recording. He knew the song well enough to figure out the patterns. He focused on Cameron's fingers. He could tell that Cameron had been practicing. For some reason, that made Billy remember his very first gig with his first band and he decided he would try an experiment. He was going to try and focus on that memory. He was going to try and trigger a time event. He kept watching Cameron, who was looking intently at the tab sheet and doing really well. Billy strummed the basic chords, and as he did, he tried to remember the details of his first gig. The image of Michael Olesko's face appeared in his mind. Michael was smiling and playing a keyboard. Billy kept playing along with Cameron while trying to focus on the memory. It wasn't working. He could remember it, even some of the details, but he wasn't *there*. At least not like the two times before. He kept trying to remember the details of that first gig as he played but all he could think about was Michael Olesko. Michael was the lead singer of their band the Shandells, named after Del Shannon. He

was also in the next band, which was the same group of people but they had had to change their name to the Gray Things because a local DJ started to promote them, sort of, and his name was Lee Gray.

Billy strummed along with Cameron. He had given up on trying to trigger a time event, but he was still thinking about Michael Olesko. And then it happened. He strummed a chord and everything froze. He floated out away from himself just like the two times before. Had he done it? Had he triggered a time event? It was almost as if his mind had to wander to make it happen. He had been trying for two full verses, trying to focus on his first gig and then he gave up. But when he stopped trying and just thought of Michael it worked. So maybe he *did* have some control, but to where and when was he being time-sucked?

Billy's studio began to blur. The sound of the chord from the Chili Peppers song sustained unnaturally and grew fainter. Billy was nervous. Was he going to see the first gig? The scene began to clear and come into focus. He could tell that he was outside because there was natural light. A figure was standing on what looked like a porch and as the scene came into complete focus he saw himself wearing a leather jacket with fringes on the sleeves. He was looking down the street with a huge smile on his face, excited about something. Billy peered in the direction that younger Billy was looking so excitedly and saw another figure running toward him. It was Michael Olesko. He was running awkwardly, as though he was zipping up his jeans. He was. Young Billy ran down the steps to meet him and the two boys embraced. Billy realized what this moment was.

"Did you hear it?" Michael asked excitedly.

"Holy shit man, yes I heard it. Come on it's still on," young Billy replied. The boys ran into the kitchen where the radio was blaring. The song was "Charity" by the Gray Things. It was *them*. It was their first song on the radio. "Charity" was being featured on the Sound Survey on WTRY. Michael had called minutes before to inform Billy their song was coming on and then hung up the phone to run over. The song was only two minutes and fourteen seconds long, but he had managed to get there by the beginning of the second verse. They were right by the speaker of the radio, even though it was at full volume.

Billy looked at the boys' faces, his own younger face, and wondered if he had ever been that happy since. He was happy now just being able to see it again, reliving it. The song had taken on a life of its own after the boys had recorded it in October of 1966. The boys didn't know at the time that this song was about to become a regional hit and that by February of '67 "Charity" would be playing on radio stations all over the northeastern United States. They didn't know that they would be playing in venues all around the area for months because of this song. Young Billy and Michael also didn't know that this song would be published on numerous psychedelic garage band compilations throughout the years. The song represented a sound for many collectors of that type of music. If you Google the song now, you will find YouTube videos created by fans of the song. The song, in many ways, was the first step for Billy into music as a profession. But the boys that Billy was watching right now didn't know any of that. Yet they were ecstatic. They were thrilled to be hearing themselves coming out of the radio. Just imagine it.

Billy wanted all of his students to have moments like this. To be able to hear their songs on the radio. He had a list of students he thought were good enough to do it and the list was getting longer every year. Cameron, Paul, Cally Rhodey, Kimmy, Madison Holmes. They were all enormously talented and would be better than him eventually. A couple of them were already. Billy certainly wasn't as talented as Cameron was now at the age of 14. His students had helped him realize his limitations as a teacher and an artist, and he saw that as positive. It was like the I Ching said, "In order to rise to your potential you have to know your limitations," or something like that.

Billy took in the scene and the feeling as the song faded out, what a moment. The DJ, Lee Gray, who had been promoting them and got them hooked up with the people who produced their record, came on the mic and said, "Well, that hot little tune was 'Charity' by the Gray Things, recorded right here by some local boys. Michael Olesko on lead vocals, Billy Cioffi on lead guitar… "

The boys erupted with shouts and started jumping around. They couldn't even hear Lee announce "Jack Warrington on bass, Dennis Boyagian on rhythm guitar, and Steve Colfer on drums." Some of Billy's younger siblings who were not in school yet came into the kitchen to see what was going on. Billy's grandmother also came in and told the boys to be quiet.

The sound of the Chili Peppers chord back in his studio was getting louder. He decided he would try and fight the pull back. He focused his consciousness on the moment. He tried to remember what was going to happen next. He watched Michael and young Billy jump up and down and howl and go crazy. He remembered that the nuns at school were going to let him and Michael skip school to promote the record. The sound

of the Chili Peppers chord faded slightly--at least he thought it did. Then, as he was thinking about the nuns, he remembered the first gig, the one he was trying to time travel to. The gig would only have been a year and some change before this moment right now. They had used a cookie tin for the cymbal. Billy had used a Dean Markley acoustic pickup on his grandfather's parlor guitar. He didn't have an amp, so Michael and Billy had figured out that they could use the record cutting machine that somebody had given his grandfather to repay a debt. The thing must have weighed a thousand pounds but they rolled it out to the school gym and played for the school dance. They weren't the Gray Things then, they were the Shandels, but it was the same guys. So much fun. The joy of playing in front of a crowd. The thrill of it.

Just then the Chili Peppers chord got louder and Billy thought it sounded different, as though the bass had changed. He saw young Billy and Michael talking, getting on the phone, probably to call one of the guys in the band. The scene began to blur and Billy didn't think he could stop whatever force it was from sucking him back to the present. So he let his mind relax as the scene faded into white light and the colors of his studio started to separate, become more clear, and take shape into recognizable objects. The sound of the Chili Peppers chord was louder now, almost at what Billy thought was the volume when he left … and just like that he was back.

The Chili Peppers song continued as he had left it. He missed the next chord and the three chords after that but he just kept looking at Cameron's fingers. As he watched Cameron's fingers his eyes teared up. He was overcome with the joy he had just witnessed. He felt that tightening in his chest. He was grateful. In spite of all the mistakes he would make after that moment, he would know joy and would make music. He would

love and be loved. He would befriend and be befriended. Billy wiped his eyes and saw that Cameron had noticed. They looked at each other, the wise old rocker and the young bass player. Billy lifted his eyebrows and smiled a sideways smile at the boy, and then started strumming again. Cameron kept on playing as they rolled into the end of the song.

"Wow, I didn't realize that I was that good," Cameron said, in obvious reference to Billy's tears.

Billy laughed. "The way you were playing reminded me of how great it is to make music. You looked like you were enjoying yourself. It specifically reminded me of the first time I heard a song of mine on the radio," Billy replied.

Cameron nodded, gave Billy a look that purposefully inferred that he thought the old man had lost it, and said, "OK?"

"Oh, shut up, and forgive an old man a sentimental moment," Billy laughed.

Cameron laughed as well, then asked, "What was the song?"

"Charity," Billy said, and then he grabbed his phone and looked the song up on YouTube. "We wrote it with the producers. It was supposed to be called 'Talkin' New York,' but the producers helped us write different lyrics. It was an amazing experience. It was the first time I ever entered a recording studio, but definitely not the last. I was not much older than you. What are you, 14?"

"Yeah," Cameron answered.

"Well, I was 16 so not much older. It was such a big deal to me. You know, I heard myself on the local radio station. You hear that, right there?"

"Yeah, is that you on the lead guitar?" Cameron asked.

"Yeah, that's me. I've gotten a lot better since then," Billy answered.

"Nice bass work," Cameron said after listening for a while.

"That would be Jack Warrington," Billy said.

"Do you keep in touch with all of these guys?" Cameron asked.

"Most of them," Billy said. "Michael, the lead singer on this song here, was in a couple other bands with me, both back east and in L.A. We are like brothers, man. Being in a band is great. Don't you think?" he asked Cameron.

"Yeah, it's fun. My favorite part is playing in front of people, though. Rehearsal kinda sucks but yeah it's great to play out."

The YouTube video of Billy's "Charity" stopped playing, and Billy asked Cameron, "How do you feel about 'Mony Mony'?"

"I like that thing Nic was doing on the drums during the break down," Cameron said.

"You still feel like it's a boring song?"

"I don't know, it's just not my favorite song. It's just not a challenge, ya know, not like this one we just played. I get to slap and pick and do the arpeggios and stuff. This is funky and 'Mony Mony' is just straight rock. Ya know what I mean?"

"I get it, brother man, and look, I know how you feel. I have played songs that I don't necessarily love, for all kinds of gigs. In your case, you are part of this group and you are the leader, man. I know the showcase isn't a paying gig like some of your other ones, but you should treat it like a serious gig, because some of the other kids you and the band are backing up won't have other gigs. For them, this *is* their show, right?"

"Right, I get it, and for me the showcase *is* kind of a big deal 'cause I am playing on so many songs. It's like a lot of work," Cameron said.

"Yeah, you are doing a ton. How many songs are you playing on?" Billy asked.

"I think twelve."

"Do you feel ready?"

"No way man," Cameron said, laughing.

"Well, what do you need help on?" Billy asked.

Cameron looked up at the ceiling and bit his bottom lip and bounced his knees. "Umm…"

"How are you doing with 'Livin' On a Prayer?'" Billy asked.

"Pretty good. Once I figured out the key change and the timing, it was easy. We're gonna do a full run through next Saturday right?"

"Yeah, next Saturday is the big rehearsal, and then we do a big run through again next Friday, the day before the big show. How do you feel about that?"

"Meh," Cameron said, with an exaggerated frown and a shrug of his shoulders.

"Just make sure you have fun. You know the stuff--just make sure you have fun playing it. Even 'Mony Mony.'"

Cameron laughed. They went over a couple more songs for the showcase. Cameron started running his parts. Billy couldn't stop thinking about what he had just witnessed. He couldn't help thinking how lucky he was. He had lived a life that people only dream of. Granted it hadn't all been joyful celebration, there had been hard times and there had been really hard times, but he had met Jimi Hendrix, toured with Chuck Berry, and recorded with Del Shannon. He thought about how all of that, the good and the bad, had led him to be where he was right then. In a lesson with Cameron in Kirk's

Studio for the Performing Arts in Scottsdale, Arizona. If everything he had ever done had led him to this moment, then he had no regrets.

"Honest to God," he said in his mind as he watched Cameron absolutely nail the transition in 'Livin On a Prayer,' "not a single regret. Well ok, I regret cheating on Gwen but I don't regret the beautiful child that my mistake created." The mother of his daughter had done everything in her power to ruin Billy. She wanted him to leave Gwen, which he was not going to do. It had been the darkest period in his life, and it was not a time he looked back on without at least thinking about the word regret.

Billy reminded Cameron to relax and to think about his stage presence, to think about how he looked when he was playing. Cameron was really a great player. He was the kind of player, or would become the type of player soon, that Billy would love to have in the Monte Carlos, Billy's Band for almost 40 years. Cameron was nearing the end of the song. Billy thought about Michael and his first band. He couldn't stop thinking about how great that day was, that whole year. He decided that he would call Michael and have a chat. Would Michael believe him if he told him about the time travel thing?

Billy wanted so badly to tell somebody and was almost to the point of telling Gwen. Gwen would understand. If only he could take someone with him. Now that would be a super power. Kinda like that X-Men movie where that mutant girl sends Wolverine back to the past. But how could he do that if he wasn't even sure if he could control it himself? Had he triggered this last event or not? He had tried to go back to his first gig and didn't get there, but ended up kind of close. Was it Michael who triggered it, or the memory of Michael?

Cameron finished the song and said, "Well, that was good, right?"

"I'm really impressed with your progress this year Cameron," Billy responded. "You're going to do great at the showcase."

Cameron started packing up his gear. Billy straightened his music stand and put his guitar back on its stand. He stood up as Cameron zipped up his bass case and shouldered his backpack. Billy told Cameron "Stay out of trouble." Cameron turned around with his backpack over one shoulder, his bass over the other, his amp in his hand, and said, "No," with a sly smile, and kept walking. The braces on his teeth looked painful. They reminded him of his own dental work. The implants felt better now and the pain had mostly subsided.

"See ya on Friday, wise ass," Billy chuckled.

"Next Saturday, grandpa," Cameron said, waving goodbye without turning around again.

Chapter 5

Cameron was his last lesson for the day. Billy picked up his guitar and started thinking about the whole time travel thing and whether or not he could control it. He rubbed his temples with one hand. Was it some sort of higher power that was trying to teach him a lesson? Was he missing it? He thought about talking to Gwen about it. She could help him think it through. One thing was for certain--he should start writing lyrics about it. He grabbed his pen and a yellow legal pad and set them on the music stand. He played around on his guitar and started picking a pattern in the key of D. He played through a few different progressions until he found something that felt good. He refined the picking pattern and the chord structure, all the while thinking about Billy Cioffi the

chrononaut, the musical time traveler. He stopped playing and scrawled the words onto the legal pad.

The Lost Horizon

Verse 1

Take a left on the highway
Let's get an early start.
Take the wheel point the car and cross your heart.
You're about to find something
You don't know what.
But you're looking for answers and you wanna show your stuff.
You say enough is enough and you come on tough
And then you throw it all away
And play it rough.

Verse 2

The road tells you secrets that you don't wanna hear
So you just have to listen and watch what appears.
You never know the reason you turned out this way.
Wherever you go there you are And your not going to stay.
The past always leads you to the unkown somewhere.
And you can drive yourself crazy
Askin' how'd you get there.

You gotta taste for wanderin
So take it out for a spin.
Is looking for the lost horizon
The original sin?

Why are we always runnin
to the next best thing.
Never grateful for the moment
and the happiness it brings.
So no reason to pretend (you can't out run time)
That you're going home.
Even though you're in the middle of a crowd
Everyone dies alone.

In your mind there's something better
Around the bend.
Is looking for the lost horizon
The original sin?

He started to sing through it. The melody flowed from him as though the chords provided the context and the melody found its own way. He thought about the inevitable. He often thought about what it would be like to pass on. He knew he would do it alone. Even if Gwen was by his side, you can't pass on with somebody. He felt like that much was true. He might be able to be with Gwen in whatever plane of existence comes after this one, but he knew that passing from this to that would be a journey he would have to take alone. He wasn't really afraid, more curious than anything else. Sure, he didn't want it to hurt, and he didn't want it to be a long slow death, but nobody wants that.

"Boy, this is getting morbid," he said out loud to nobody but himself. He liked some of what he had written but didn't like what it was making him think about. He started playing through the song again and thinking about trying to time travel again. He started thinking about when. He felt his brain fight with that word. The word wanted to mean *when* in the future but in the time events *when* was the past. He said the word out loud: "When. When do I want to see?" His mind began to comb through his life. Maybe he could go anywhere. He thought about the time when he was the tour manager for the Pointer Sisters. No. Too much drama. He thought about the time he had returned Jimi Hendrix's guitar to Jimi Hendrix and sat there in Jimi's studio while he was mastering some tracks and they all smoked weed and drank beer. That might be a fun one to see. He was still picking around on his guitar as he thought about all of this. He thought about Chuck Berry. He focused on Chuck Berry. He focused on a memory of him. He could see Chuck's eyes staring right back at him.

Billy began to feel a pull. It was happening. He was doing it. He tried not to lose his focus. He felt the pull grow stronger. Everything froze. He left his body, left through

his eyes out into the room. The room began to blur and spread as if it were slowly turning to smoke. He turned to look at himself alone in the studio, now just a blur, and he was sucked out of the room and into … who knows what, the transition? He could still hear the sound of his guitar strings reverberating as if in super slow motion. It reminded him of this thing one of his students had shown him a couple of years back called the Amazing Slowdowner. He was entering another space. The scene began to clear and he knew exactly where and when he was. Japan 1997.

It had worked. The scene became crystal clear and there he was. Chuck Berry. Chuck was walking away out of the door. He left the building. Billy turned around to see himself and there *he* was. Billy Cioffi, 1997 in Japan. He must have been 40 something and he was looking good. Younger Billy was holding an envelope and older Billy knew exactly what was in the envelope--about $3,000.00. It had fallen out of Chuck's guitar case. Billy watched his younger self and knew exactly what he was thinking. "Chuck would never admit he lost it, he is too prideful, and nobody would know if I pocketed this cash right now." It was Chuck's petty cash for their time in Japan. They had just finished the rehearsal meeting at the venue, and everybody had cleared out. Billy was always the last one out for this exact reason. He was the musical director and tour manager, and he had to make sure nobody left their stuff behind. Just imagine if Chuck had left his guitar behind at a venue.

Billy watched and knew exactly when he would make the decision to give the money back to Chuck. Younger Billy looked up, right through where Billy's consciousness was watching, and then ran right towards him and through him. "That was weird," Billy thought as he turned his gaze to watch younger Billy run out the door.

Billy's consciousness was pulled out the door with him, and there was the white limousine and there was Chuck again, about to get in. Younger Billy yelled, "Hey Chuck." The Father of rock 'n' roll turned his head and gave Billy a look, as if to say "What the hell is it this time?"

Billy and Chuck had a professional relationship. Billy had just run a long rehearsal and everybody was travel weary. Billy was also a task master. He treated everyone fairly but if it was time to work they worked. He wore many hats. He made sure that things got done. If there were photo shoots, he made sure that they didn't take too long. Sometimes, at corporate gigs, the rich CEO's who thought they were important would want to have a meet-and-greet with Chuck. Sometimes Chuck was too tired to pretend to care enough to gladhand with the rich white guys. Billy was the one who had to tell them no and deal with the aftermath.

Billy was the one who made sure that Chuck got a rented Cadillac in his name at any and all domestic gigs so that he could drive himself to the venue and hotel. Billy thought this was a habit from Chuck's early days as a performer on the Chitlins Circuit. Once at a gig in the early 50's, some racist mobsters told Chuck he couldn't leave, and when he tried to, they broke his guitar. Can you imagine breaking Chuck Berry's guitar?

One day at a rehearsal for a gig in Moscow, Billy walked into the room and said, "All right, clean all this up. We got to get out of here and get to the hotel." Chuck laughed as everybody jumped up and started cleaning and then said, "You oughta ask Dick Allen what I thought about you when I first met you." Billy was in no mood for games.

"You can tell me right now, Chuck." Billy had toured with Chuck enough now that he didn't care so much that he was Chuck Berry. Some days it was great, but he could be mean. He was mean to the musicians he hired, he was mean to everybody some days. Chuck was no saint.

Chuck looked back at Billy, laughing, and said, "No, I ain't gonna tell you, man."

"Come on, Chuck, you can tell me right here," Billy said, with his arms folded across his chest.

Chuck shook his head and laughed a little more, then looked up at Billy and said, "I thought you were mean."

"You thought I was mean?" Billy asked, as a smile crept onto his face.

"Yeah, man," Berry said.

"You thought *I* was mean," Billy laughed.

"Yeah, but now I just think you are the man who is taking care of business."

Billy realized how amazing it was that he could remember all of that detail in a moment. Of course when you start to tell a story or write it down, it takes tons of time, but the whole story can be glimpsed in the mind's eye so quickly, almost like a reference. He was eyeballs deep in a time travel memory in Japan 1997, and he could still remember another story about a conversation in Moscow.

Younger Billy in Japan walked over to Chuck by the limousine, and when he was close enough so that nobody could see, he pulled the envelope out of his breast pocket and extended it out to him and said, "This is yours." Chuck looked up at Billy and down at the envelope, and a sudden shock came over him. He quickly took the envelope and

said quietly under his breath, “Uh, thank you, Billy,” then got right into the car as he slipped the envelope into his breast pocket. Business taken care of.

The limousine drove away. Younger Billy walked around to the back of the building where they were loading up the van and got in with the rest of the crew. As Billy watched his younger self enter the van he realized that he could still hear his guitar in his studio in 2016. He wasn’t being sucked back, however. He wondered if he had more control now. He tried to focus on the sound slowly ringing, and as soon as he did the memory began to fade and he felt a pull. The memory turned smokey even as the familiar light of his studio began to appear. The music from his guitar grew louder and his vision began to clear and he reentered his body. He immediately stood up.

He had done it. He had thought of a specific memory and was able to trigger a time event that took his consciousness there. He was also able, it seemed, to control when he returned to the present. This was wild. Why did he have this ability? Was he supposed to learn something more from his past experiences that he hadn’t yet? Billy quickly packed his things and headed for home. He looked at the clock on the way out and realized it had only been about 10 minutes since Cameron left. He loaded his gear into the back of his van, shut the back hatch door, and shook his head and laughed. Was this really happening? He got in the driver’s seat backed the van out, and drove the three minutes home. He had just enough time to get ready for his gig at Grapeables tonight. As he got ready, he thought about *when* he might travel to tonight.

The most amazing thing about the whole time travel thing was that he could spend time in the past and come back to the exact moment he left in the present with almost no time lost. The thought of taking a jaunt into the past in the middle of a song he knew well

didn't scare him anymore. In fact, it excited him. Maybe he would go watch himself record backup vocals with Jeff Lynn, George Harrison, and Tom Petty on Del Shannon's last album. Maybe he would visit the Darlene Love gig at the Roxy in 1981, where he and the Monte Carlos helped launch her comeback. Paul Schaffer and Bruce Springsteen had been there. Maybe he *would* go back to that time he returned Jimi Hendrix's guitar.

The Showcase: Part One

Just before the beginning of the annual showcase by the students of Kirk's Studio for the Performing Arts, everything is a jumble. Organized chaos. About a hundred teens and pre-teens are crammed into the green room and courtyard backstage at the Mesa Arts Center. Some of them are nervous, some of them are hyper, and some of them are nervous and hyper. Billy and the other teachers from Kirk's Studio for the Performing Arts hover around the green room where Kirk himself is giving a speech to the students and faculty. There are about 20 boxes of pizza stacked on a counter and bottled waters on the side.

Kirk is wearing a custom-made t-shirt for the event as are most of the students and faculty. He is also wearing a long blond mullet wig with a headband over his perfectly trimmed somewhat receding black hair. Kirk is a Mormon and usually looks like one of those young missionaries they send all over the world. Billy describes him as a boy scout with really great chops on the piano. Kirk was in bands as a teenager and loves popular music so he really gets into it. This year they decided that the theme for the showcase would be the 80's and Kirk looks the part.

Billy stands by the door of the green room and goes outside not waiting to hear the end of the speech. It's not that he doesn't care, it's just that he needs a smoke and this

might be his last chance until intermission. He exits out the back of the Arts Center and walks to the parking garage just across from the courtyard where Kirk is revving up the kids. He lights a cigarette and sits on the wall of the parking structure, making a mental checklist.

Guitars tuned

Amps set

Set list

Help Paul shuffle guitars and players

Billy finished his cigarette as Kirk wrapped up his speech to apathetic teenager applause. He started walking into the building as Paul Avram, Billy's former student and an amazing guitar player walked out. Paul, who is only 19-years-old and who now teaches at Kirk's studio, looked stressed out.

"Where you going brother man?" Billy asked.

"I'm just gonna clear my head. It's so noisy in there."

"Ok do what you need to do. Take five and then we gotta get in there and check guitars one last time." Billy turned and walked into the building past the security booth and down the hall towards the backstage door. The house manager had just now started to let people into the theater. Billy looked at the master playlist on the stage manager's table even though he knew it by heart. He checked the tuning on two electric guitars and checked the levels on the corresponding amps as the students anxiously took their places in the wings.

"Quick, get ready"

"I am ready."

"Hurry!"

Cameron and others were on stage with instruments in hand as the lights came up on the stage and the Showcase started.

Hold me now
It's hard for me to say I'm sorry.
I just want you to stay.
After all that we've been through
I will make it up to you.
I promise to.
And after all that's been said and done
You're just the part of me I can't let go.
("Hard To Say I'm Sorry" - Chicago)

While a group of young girls sang the Chicago song Billy and Paul turned into guitar wranglers. Students whispered to each other a little too loudly as they shuffled into their places. Billy and Paul handed them their instruments, reminded them to be quiet and wait, discreetly checked the amps, then walked off stage as the first song of the show ended. The audience clapped and hooted and hollered. Somebody's mom yelled their daughter's name and the girl waved as she walked off stage. Cameron looked out at the crowd from his place in the band and off stage at Billy and flashed him a goofy smile. Billy told him with a modified stage sign language to watch the drummer who was counting in the REO Speedwagon song.

Heard it from a friend who
Heard it from a friend who
Heard it from another you been messin' around
("Take It On the Run" REO Speedwagon)

"Good job Cameron," Billy whispered as he took Cameron's bass and put it back on its stand. The next group shuffled into place.

"Thanks man," Cameron replied in a whisper.

Billy handed a bass to Jack, another one of his students as seven girls filed on stage to sing “I Wanna Dance With Somebody.” He handed a guitar to another one of his students and reminded them both to listen to the drummer. Then he counted the band in.

So when the night falls
My lonely heart calls
Oh! I wanna dance with somebody.
I wanna feel the heat with somebody.
Yeah! I wanna dance with somebody,
With somebody who loves me.
(“I Wanna Dance With Somebody” Whitney Houston)

I don't wanna talk
About things we've gone through
Though it's hurting me
Now it's history.
(“The Winner Takes It All” ABBA)

Billy watched as Paul, his former student, talked to one of his own students who was up next. On stage a girl sang an ABBA ballad accompanied by another student on the piano. Paul leaned in towards his young student. He whispered and she nodded. She was about to play the guitar and sing “Heartbreaker” by Pat Benatar. She was going to be backed up by a full rock band. Billy thought two things: 1. There is almost nothing better than the feeling she was about to experience. She was ready, confident and about to rock. 2. Billy couldn’t believe that he had been doing this long enough that he had students who had students fronting bands. He smiled and shook his head with his arms across his chest.

Your love is like a tidal wave, spinning over my head
Drownin' me in your promises, better left unsaid
You're the right kind of sinner to release my inner fantasy
The invincible winner and you know that you were born to be
(“Heartbreaker” Pat Benatar)

Billy moved to help Paul get a group of guitar players ready for the next song. While Paul’s 12-year-old student was simply owning the stage, Billy made sure that each player

for the next song had the right guitar and that they were all plugged into their amps. He made eye contact with each of the players and told them with his modified stage sign language to listen to each other and to the singers. “Heartbreaker” was coming to a close and the crowd was loving it. This was the first song that really rocked in the showcase. It was doing it’s job, or rather Paul’s student was doing her job. The next song was a Def Leopard tune and the guitarists were going to take turns soloing for 4 bars each. There were 3 drummers and 9 singers. This showcase was no joke.

Paul glanced at Billy from his place on stage where he was helping his student by playing lead guitar to her rhythm and lead vocals. When “Heartbreaker” ended to massive applause, Paul looked at Billy with a hint of pride on his face. The applause died down and Paul’s student announced the next song. “Thank you, thank you very much. We now present ‘Photograph’ by Def Leopard!”

This show was designed to keep moving. Billy and the other teachers made sure that while one group was playing the next group was ready to go so that there wouldn’t be much wait time in between songs. Billy looked at the band and gave them a count in.

Oh, look what you've done to this rock 'n' roll clown
(“Photograph” Def Leopard)

“Billy my string broke!”

“When do you go on?”

“I’m up next!”

“Here use mine”

The girl took Billy’s acoustic out of his hands and strapped it on. They stepped into the hall and she quickly strummed through the chords of 9 to 5 by Dolly Parton.

"Ok. This will work."

"Of course it will," Billy said.

Workin' 9 to 5,
What a way to make a livin'
("9 to 5" Dolly Parton)

Billy thought about how much Cameron hated this song and quietly laughed. Yet there he was, with so much focus, hitting every note of this Dolly Parton song without fail. You could almost see his ears reaching to hear the piano, drums, singer and guitar. He was doing great, and he was about to get a break during a piano and vocal duo.

Oh - thinkin' about all our younger years,
There was only you and me,
We were young and wild and free.
("Heaven" Bryan Adams)

Billy and Paul began quietly and quickly prepping for the next big ensemble number--a mashup of Beat it and Thriller--when he heard an odd sound. The audio tech had forgotten to turn off a microphone in front of the guitar area of the stage. It took Billy a full half verse of "Heaven" to realize everyone could hear his half-whispered directions to the guitarists. "Scoot over. Are you plugged in? Remember the riffs on thriller."

They'll kick you, they'll beat you, then they'll tell you it's fair
So beat it, but you wanna be bad/
'Cause I can thrill you more than any ghost would ever dare try.
("Beat It/Thriller" Michael Jackson)

Billy peeked out from behind a curtain to see how the crowd was reacting. They were loving it. Little kids were dancing in the aisles. He looked back toward the stage at some of his students. Some of them looked like deer in the headlights and others were smiling and having the time of their lives. Billy still got nervous on stage but he always felt at home there. In the back of his mind a voice said "You got this," no matter what the gig

was. Even if he was scared, he knew he belonged on stage. He was going to play a guitar solo later on “Crazy Little Thing Called Love,” and he knew it would sound good. He also knew that he would look good doing it. Billy always dressed the part. When he was touring with Del Shannon in Japan he started wearing his long hair in the style of a samurai warrior, and when it was time for his solo he would let it all down as if he was preparing for battle. He still did it sometimes. Stagecraft was half the battle and all the fun. You will never catch Billy wearing just a t-shirt and jeans. He always has a vest or a jacket or a button up shirt and always a pair of killer boots.

The next group was on.

And lovin' a music man
Ain't always what it's supposed to be.
Oh, girl, you stand by me
I'm forever yours
Faithfully.
(“Faithfully” Journey)

Billy listened to the lyrics of Faithfully as sung by one of the older voice students and thought of Gwen. “Lovin’ a music man ain’t always what it’s supposed to be.” Billy knew he had been breaking his rule a lot lately--the rule that stated clearly, “Thou shalt not regret your past.” Maybe being pulled back into his past had caused him to remember more clearly, yet always led him back to the point of gratitude. Gratitude that Gwen stuck with him through the custody battle, through the lawsuits, through signing away his parental rights, through all of that shit. Gratitude that he had found Kirk’s Studio. Gratitude that he had been able to play with so many of the greats. Gratitude that he had landed so well here in Arizona after so much turbulence. Wherever you end up there you are.

I got my first real six-string
Bought it at the five-and-dime
Played it 'til my fingers bled
Was the summer of '69.
("Summer of '69" Bryan Adams)

Billy's student finished the Bryan Adams tune and ran off the stage. Billy gave him a high five and said, "Great job brotherman." Billy and Kirk had been communicating without speaking to each other throughout the whole showcase. Kirk knew Billy was a master stage wrangler and he relied on Billy to put these showcases on. A line of young girls ran on stage to sing a mashup of "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" and "Material Girl." Kimmy followed them on stage and grabbed a bass guitar. Billy walked on stage and grabbed his electric guitar. He was gonna play on this one and Kirk was too. Billy looked over at Kirk. As soon as they made eye contact Kirk counted in the tune and on beat four slid his fingers across the keyboard and into the iconic song.

The phone rings in the middle of the night
My father yells whatcha gonna do with your life
Oh daddy dear, you know your still number one
But girls they wanna have fun/
'Cause the boy with the cold hard cash
Is always Mister Right
("Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" Cindy Lauper "Material Girl" Madonna)

Kimmy Lecamwasam was something else. She was out there now playing the bass and singing. She had been recruited by Kirk a few weeks before to help with the Jr. Showcase for the younger students as a ringer. She sang with some of the younger students and played guitar or bass on some of the numbers. She had a beautiful smile. She was really getting good at song writing. Billy watched Kimmy as she picked out the bass line to "Material Girl" by Madonna and couldn't stop himself from smiling. This was a fun number.

Kimmy filed of stage and put the bass guitar down on its stand. One of the older students started an interesting acoustic version of Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean."

be careful of what you do 'cause the lie becomes the truth

Billy looked at Paul who was sitting in a chair off to the side. Paul looked back at Billy and nodded. It was time to get ready for "Livin' On A Prayer."

Take my hand and we'll make it - I swear
("Livin' On A Prayer" Bon Jovi)

Lots of students were playing. Billy watched from the wings. It was amazing to see all of these kids pull together to play these songs. He felt proud of his students. Earlier that week Kirk asked Billy to introduce Kimmy and Paul to the audience before their senior numbers. Kimmy was going to perform an original song that she had written with Paul, and Paul was going to do a Jeff Beck solo number. Billy was honored. He watched Kimmy and Paul on stage mixed in with all of the younger students. Paul stood right by some of his students, modeling how to play the guitar part in case they got lost. Kimmy was singing with the vocalists. *"Whoa oh, livin' on a prayer!"* Cameron was out there playing the bass. Billy felt a pull towards the past but he resisted. He wanted to be present. He also felt a sense of nostalgia being on the sidelines, happy that they were having their moment, but still feeling the desire to get out there and play.

The audience was loving it. Billy knew that people who book musicians want young pretty people to play the gigs he used to get, and he knew that his students were going to get those gigs. He was just a little bit jealous. The "Livin On A Prayer" crew was exiting the stage and they were all very excited. Billy reminded them to be quiet as a brother and sister duo got ready to do the next song.

In your eyes
the light the heat
in your eyes
I am complete
in your eyes
I see the doorway to a thousand churches
in your eyes
the resolution of all the fruitless searches
in your eyes
I see the light and the heat
in your eyes
oh, I want to be that complete
I want to touch the light
the heat I see in your eyes
("In Your Eyes" Peter Gabriel)

"Hey Billy"

"Yes Cameron?"

"You having fun yet?"

Billy turned his head and laughed quietly. Cameron was smiling and laughing as well. Billy used to be surprised by how much he identified with adolescents and how much they seemed to identify with him. He wasn't surprised much anymore by this phenomenon, but Cameron had reached a new level of snark. Cameron was kind of a prodigy. He played upright bass for the local youth symphony on top of all of his pop stuff. "You ready for your favorite song?" Billy asked. Cameron looked at Billy and rolled his eyes.

Wake it, shake it Mony Mony
("Mony Mony"/ "Dancin' With Myself" Billy Idol)

Cameron *was* ready for his "favorite song." He was a professional. The band had transitioned into "Dancin' With Myself" and Kirk was making a cameo. He was on stage wearing his blonde mullet wig, dancing, doing his best Billy Idol impression, and making

a complete fool of himself on purpose. He achieved the desired response from the crowd. Billy looked over at Cameron. Cameron happened to notice that Billy was watching. He rolled his eyes again and made a point to show Billy that he was just thumping out the eighth notes.

Whatever words I say
I will always love you
("Lovesong" The Cure)

Cameron left the stage, and Billy patted him on the back and reminded him that he needed to be back on stage for the U2 songs. "Lovesong" by the Cure wouldn't be very long. All of this was extremely familiar territory for Billy. Not only had he done dozens of these showcases with Kirk, but he had organized shows 50 times as big in L.A. and all across the country. His company, Monte Carlos Music Production, organized nostalgia shows every year during most of the 80's and 90's. He organized tours for acts such as Chuck Berry, the Drifters, the Pointer Sisters, and many others. His band, the Monte Carlos, backed most of the acts, so he was also the musical director for most of these shows.

In other words Billy knew what it was like to be off and on and off and on the stage. He knew what could go wrong and how to prevent it. He also knew how to work with people who were hard to work with. He had heard teachers say that 8th graders were the hardest people to work with, but Billy found them delightful compared to working with celebrity and the ego mess that came with it. The celebs weren't all crazy, but a good number of them were. The Pointer Sisters had a stipulation in their contract that said that they all had to be picked up in separate limousines. The stipulation was the result of their significant others banding together to make sure that the sisters wouldn't fight about

money or compare notes about business. Without fail, the three limousines would arrive and the three sisters would enter the same limousine and ride together to the gig. Just a waste of money. Billy laughed at the memory.

Next up, a U2 set. Billy handed guitars students streaming onto the stage as other students were streaming off. U2, Coldplay, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, Elton John. All British and yet all making American music. At least Billy thought so. It was the power of the American popular song. In his master's thesis, 2 years ago, Billy posited that the American popular song was more than just throw-away music, it was one of America's greatest literary traditions. The Beatles and the Stones started out trying to play like American musicians Chuck Berry, Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, Buddy Holly, and others. The British Invasion was a giant reflection shining back across the pond. The troops that were part of the British Invasion in the 60's were all raised on American music. They heard it on their transistor radios. They picked it up on the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Networks that broadcast throughout Europe. Then they brought it back to the U.S. in the 60's and they still are today.

I want to reach out and touch the flame/
I have spoke with the tongue of angels
I have held the hand of a devil
It was warm in the night
I was cold as a stone
("Where the Streets Have No Name"
"I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" U2)

The two U2 songs that the kids were playing now were from U2's album *Joshua Tree*. Billy had just heard an NPR feature about the album, which was now almost 30 years old. Bono and the Edge had written the album as a meditation on Reagan's America. It was part love letter, part critique. They had a love-hate relationship with

America. Say what you want but you can't get away from the sound of it. The American popular song pervades.

Billy's own songwriting was rooted deeply in America but also inspired by British acts like the Beatles and the Stones. He spent most of his adolescence and young adulthood trying to look like the British invaders. He had collaborated with a poet named T.R. Hummer on an album called Americamera. Their TV performance of the album was nominated for two Telly awards. He had songs with titles like "Mississippi more or less." Billy had a penchant for writing songs about failed convenience store robberies set in the southwest. Like U2, Billy was drawn to the character of America, or sometimes even caricatures of America.

The U2 songs were done and the performers shuffled off. One of Billy's students was heading out on stage to do a solo version of "Every Breath You Take" by Sting. As he started the song Billy listened.

I look around but it's you I can't replace

Soon he had to shift from listening to shuffling kids into position for the last big number before the intermission. They were getting ready to do "Footloose." "Here put this on," he said as he handed a student an electric guitar. "She's almost done, get ready!"

Please, Louise, pull me off of my knees
("Footloose" Kenny Loggins)

Most people thought of the movie "Footloose" whenever they heard the song by the same name. Billy always thought of the time he saw Kenny Loggins, who was about the same age as Billy, with a band called Gator Creek at the Ashgrove in L.A. He was so good. His songs were well written and well performed. One of his most famous songs,

“Danny’s Song,” was recorded first by Gator Creek than later with Jim Messina. Billy was in L.A. hearing Gator Creek because he had gotten a side job as a review writer through his connection with Todd Everett at the time. He wrote a review of the Gator Creek performance in a now long defunct and short lived magazine called *Phonograph Record*. Particularly he wrote about the promise of the young Kenny Loggins. That was about ten years before “Footloose,” a song that Billy absolutely couldn’t stand.

Intermission

Billy made sure all the guitars were set for the next song that would start the second half. He checked the levels on all the amps and checked the tuning on a guitar that he knew was finicky. The audience was making their way to the exits to buy concessions. Billy patted his breast pocket checking for his lighter and remembered that his cigarettes were in his little silver gig bag up in the dressing room set apart for the teachers. He walked out into the hallway behind the stage. There were kids everywhere. He walked upstairs trying to get past them all, finally got to the dressing room, and grabbed his smokes. He walked towards the doors and saw Kimmy and Paul. Paul was holding a guitar and Kimmy was singing softly. Billy walked by slowly to listen a little. Kimmy’s voice was just loud enough to hear and Paul was playing softly. He couldn't quite make out the lyrics, but he knew them anyway. Billy had heard this song evolve in lessons and rehearsals with Kimmy and Paul. He was proud of them. He walked outside to smoke while he still had time and thought about what he was going to say when he introduced Kimmy and Paul before their solo numbers.

The Showcase: Part Two

Sign says "Stay away fools"
'Cause love rules at the Love Shack
("Love Shack" The B-52's)

"Love Shack" was a great song to start the second part of the show. Billy's student Brett Newsom was doing a spot-on impersonation of Fred Schneider from the B-52's. He was inherently a good kid and a rock 'n' roll aficionado. His parents took him to the Woodstock anniversary concert so he could see The Who. He took two one-hour lessons a week from Billy, which was $500 a month.

"So come along and bring your jukebox money!"

The kid was kind of spoiled. Once Brett was supposed to do a solo with a group of students, and they had practiced hard. He called the day of the performance and said he couldn't do it. Billy was angry at him for a long time. It really pissed him off. You don't do that. You don't let your team down.

Hold your head up, keep your head up, movin' on
("Sweet Dreams" The Eurythmics)

A brother and sister duo were performing the Eurythmics tune while Billy got ready to play lead guitar on "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." The little solo part was complicated, so complicated that the only two people who could learn it fast enough were Paul and Billy, and since Paul was already doing so much in the showcase it fell to Billy to play it. Most people consider Freddy Mercury to be one of the world's greatest singers, but Queen's guitarist, Brian May, is often overlooked. Among guitarists he is admired for his stylings and skill. Particularly it was the unique sound that he got out of his guitar and amp that was hard to duplicate. Billy knew the trick.

This thing called love I just can't handle it
("This Thing Called Love" Queen)

Billy leaned forward and backward with the music. One of the adult students was doing a pretty good Freddy Mercury impression. This song was a gem. Freddy wrote it in the style of an early rock 'n' roll song. Billy loved it. It was right up his alley. When it was almost time for his solo he made his way closer to center stage. He had let his hair down and it was wild and flowing, just like he wanted it. He took two more steps and launched into the solo. His hands danced as his body leaned in and out of the phrases. He looked up and down as if he was looking for inspiration from above or below. The solo wasn't a scorcher. It was a small little thing but it needed to be done right. He felt the pull to his past again as he was finishing a run but he resisted it and stayed focused on the performance. He even felt like he knew where he was being pulled. Something was trying to pull him back to the time he played for Ben E. King on a PBS pledge break special called *Let's Rock Tonight* hosted by Fabian. It was a showcase as well except it was a showcase of the stars from the 50's and 60's. One of the treasured times he had played with Del Shannon. He had to focus … one more lick. He finished up the solo and the crowd applauded. He had to get ready to clap.

"I gotta be cool"

clap

clap

"Relax"

clap

clap

I'll meet you anytime you want
In our Italian Restaurant.
("Scenes From an Italian Restaurant" Billy Joel)

One of Kirk's students played the piano as one of the vocal students sang the Billy Joel song. A group of piano students readied themselves for the Van Halen tune coming up next.

You say you don't know, you won't know until you begin.
("Jump" Van Halen)

Cameron was out there playing bass again. This Van Halen song was one of the songs he could tolerate. Billy once interviewed Eddie Van Halen in the 80's for a cover story for the magazine *Guitar World.* He thought it was hilarious that the guitar students weren't even playing on this song. Eddie was a guitar god. He was not the first person to ever "tap" on a guitar but he certainly brought tapping into the world of rock 'n' roll. Billy asked him about it, and the way he remembered it Eddie said he never meant that tapping thing to catch on like it did. It was just a thing he thought was neat. Watching Eddie Van Halen play guitar must be what it was like to watch Liszt or Paganini play. All three were virtuosos, but Paganini didn't rest his half-smoked cigarette in the strings of his violin while he played.

With the Van Halen group finishing up it was time for Billy to give an introduction that he had been thinking a lot about. Billy walked on stage and up to the microphone. He grabbed the mic and looked out at the audience and began to speak. "It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you a duo that I have spent a lot of time with as a teacher, producer, mentor and, I can truly say, as a colleague. Ladies and gentlemen, two wonderful people and musicians, Paul Avram and Kimmy Lecamwasam, doing one of

their original tunes, ‘Someone Like Me.’ Kimmy is an award-winning writer of fiction and, as you are about to hear, a fabulous lyricist. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you The Written Road!”

Billy turned away from the audience and with his arm out directed their attention to the two beautiful young people walking on stage. Paul had his acoustic guitar strapped over his shoulder and Kimmy walked right up to the mic. Paul plugged in his guitar and started playing the intro to their song. Kimmy closed her eyes and began to sing just as Billy had exited stage left and turned to watch and listen.

Words fell apart at 9:15
You realized you were never good as you believed
A premise you proposed is an empty space in your mind
And now you scramble for a lie to occupy the time

Where will you go when they see through you?
Eyes start to rust
Bones turn to dust
When no one cares who you are will you finally see
You shouldn’t have tormented
Someone like me.

All the lies you grew crawl down the street
Choking everything in which I believe
And I can feel your rabid smile out in the dark
Searching for someone to scar to leave your mark

Where will you go when they see through you?
Eyes start to rust
Bones turn to dust
When no one cares who you are will you finally see
You shouldn’t have tormented
Someone like me.

Billy listened intently to the words that he had heard many times. He had heard them as Kimmy sang them from her notebook in his studio at Kirk’s. She was playing the song on her acoustic and strumming the chords. The first iteration of the song was good

but not quite fully formed. Billy had helped her think differently about the structure of the chorus. He had suggested that Kimmy and Paul start working with each other on songwriting. Billy was a big believer in collaborative songwriting, and this song was one of the results of Kimmy and Paul's collaboration. They were getting ready to release an album called *Embers* that Billy was producing with Daniel. It was all really good stuff and Paul's guitar work was stellar.

Billy realized that he was feeling the pull again and this time it was stronger. He felt it in his mind, as though his consciousness was being pulled back to different memories. He felt as though there were seven or eight windows in the back of his mind and his consciousness was being pulled towards one or all of them. The windows weren't solid structures. They were fading in and out depending how he focused his consciousness. It also felt like a referential nightmare. One memory would trigger others and a window would appear and on and on. Something he would glimpse or hear as he tried to listen to Kimmy would create another opening. The windows overlapped and blurred, but if he focused he could see a brief clear glimpse through one or another. He peered into one of the windows, as it were, and saw himself writing songs with his writing partner Scott Richardson. Another window led to a child custody hearing in L.A., another to his boyhood home in New York writing songs with Michael Olesko. The pull towards the windows grew stronger but he resisted. He closed his eyes and focused on Kimmy's voice. He made it through Paul and Kimmy's song without slipping back in time but he still felt the pull. He got the guitar kids rolling on "Sweet Child Of Mine" and sat down in the wings.

Now and then when I see her face
She takes me away to that special place
And if I stared too long
I'd probably break down and cry
("Sweet Child Of Mine" Guns and Roses)

There were only three more songs left in the showcase. Kirk's student entered the stage for his Billy Joel solo.

He says son can you play me a memory
I'm not really sure how it goes
But it's sad and it's sweet and I knew it complete
When I wore a younger mans clothes
("Piano Man" Billy Joel)

This was the third Billy Joel song of the night. Kirk loves Billy Joel. The kid had done a great job and he bowed and then left the stage. Billy looked at Paul and nodded and then they went on stage.

Billy stood at the microphone with his guitar slung around his front because he was going to play on this number in the band backing Paul. He looked back at Paul who was standing just behind him and to his left. Paul smiled. Billy smiled back and turned to face the audience. "Ever since I started teaching Paul, I have been telling people that if I ever become famous it will because I was Paul Avram's teacher. Paul is my student, my friend and one of the best guitar players I know, which is saying a lot." People in the audience who knew Billy, which was a good number of them, laughed at this. "Ladies and gentlemen, I give you Paul Avram playing 'Cause We Ended As Lovers' by Jeff Beck."

But when our love has gone and passed
Why does the good exceed the bad
("Cause We Ended As Lovers" Jeff Beck)

Paul was already in place and he began to play. They were going to do this as a purely instrumental song that featured an extended guitar solo. Billy started playing as he walked back to his place on the stage. The pull to the past was getting stronger. He looked through the windows in his mind and saw his whole family sitting around the dinner table. Another window led to Billy's studio at Kirk's and a 12-year-old Paul Avram sitting there behind his fender strat with Billy across from him. Paul had worked really hard since Billy became his teacher.

When Paul came to Billy he was a shredder and that was all he did. All heavy metal all the time. Billy helped him hear things differently. Billy helped him listen to the subtleties of guitar playing in all types of music including the heavy thrash metal he loved so much. Eventually Paul became a guitarist capable of playing expertly in almost any genre. Paul had recently stopped taking lessons from Billy and was taking lessons from a jazz guitarist who was helping him learn a bunch of modal stuff. Paul had Asperger's syndrome and like many people with Asperger's he became hyper focused on one thing. Paul's one thing was the guitar and his hyper focus had helped him accomplish things that Billy had only dreamed of at the age of 19.

Paul laid into his guitar and was playing very well technically. Beyond that he was becoming a showman. He looked good and sounded good. He knew what to do with his arm at the end of a phrase, what his feet should do, how to stand. Not that there was one right way to do it, it was just that what he was doing really worked. It didn't look forced or amateurish. He looked and sounded like a professional, not like that 12-year-old metalhead who was in Billy's studio seven years ago.

Just then, as Billy thought about how Paul had grown into the artist he was watching right now, he had forgotten about the pull. He closed his eyes and tried to pull back away from the windows. He was right in front of an opening that led to a lesson with 12-year-old Paul and he couldn't stop. He opened his eyes just as Paul strummed a big lush cord and sent his arm out like a wild windmill. The whole scene froze, and as it had happened before, Billy's consciousness left his body. The sound of Paul's guitar and the band backing him reverberated unnaturally and grew louder as Billy was pulled out of the scene and the stage lights and band blurred into a dark smoke-like vision. The light changed and a new vision came into view. Billy knew it was going to be his studio at Kirk's. He found it funny that twice he had time travelled *from* his studio to elsewhere in his past but now he was travelling *to* a past version of the studio.

The vision began to clear and he could make out the shape of a teacher and student both holding electric guitars. He knew that the figures were a not-so-much-younger version of himself and a younger version of Paul. The sound of Paul playing at the showcase was still reverberating but fading as the sound of Paul playing in Billy's studio began to grow. Paul was using an Eddie Van Halen style of tapping, showing Billy the kind of stuff he liked to play. The vision was completely clear now and Billy's consciousness peered down at the young player's fingers as they flew along the neck of the guitar. Paul had longer hair then. Billy was surprised at how much a person could grow in seven years. Billy looked at his not-so-much-younger self and saw a look of surprise on his face. He remembered being surprised, but he didn't remember showing his surprise that much. The kid had a ton of natural talent, so much so that Billy knew right away at that time that his job was not going to be to instruct him so much as it was

to help direct his abilities. Billy was going to help Paul understand where the music he loved came from. It was as much an exercise in taste and aesthetics as it was a technical lesson.

Billy appreciated all types of music but he insisted that his students knew where it came from. The younger Paul finished playing his song and flipped his hair out of his face. “That was pretty good brotherman. Where did you get that song?” younger Billy asked the long-haired youth.

“Zakk Wylde,” Paul responded.

“Ozzy’s guitarist?” asked Billy.

“Yeah, but he has his own band now,” Paul answered.

“Is it a blues band?” Billy asked and watched the confusion come over the long haired youth.

“Uh … no it’s a metal band,” Paul answered with a smirk on his face.

“Well why is he writing blues tunes?” Billy asked facetiously.

Paul was confused and almost offended. “What do you mean?”

“You just played me a whole bunch of blues licks. You were just tapping them.”

“No man that was metal,” Paul responded

“What are the chords to that song? I heard E, A, and B right?”

“Yeah but there are some 7’s in there.”

“Right, and it goes like this, right? If I was playing rhythm on that song I would play it this way, right?” Billy started playing the song in a straight eighth note rhythm. He played through the chords of the first verse. “Now start your solo. I’ll play along. One, two, three, four!’

Paul hurriedly got his guitar ready during the count in and was ready to start shredding by the time Billy said four. He started into his solo and played it really well, but he wasn't in sync with Billy the whole time. He was rushing. Playing to the beat of his own drummer. They played through the first part of the solo and then Billy stopped.

"See man you're playing the blues," Billy said with a smile on his face.

"I don't get it," Paul responded.

"Look man do you know what the blues sound like?"

Paul thought for a second flipping his hair out of his face. "I guess."

"Play those chords I was playing but just play them in a shuffle like this," Billy demonstrated. Paul quickly figured out the pattern and started playing.

Billy waited until Paul was solid on the progression and then started soloing over the chords. He tried to use some of the same notes Paul used when he was soloing so that it would be immediatley recognizable to him. Paul watched Billy's hands intently. Billy finished his 12 bars of a blues solo and ended.

"That was weird." Paul said. Billy laughed.

Billy's consciousness was beginning to feel a pull back. He could hear the sound of Paul from the present playing a very bluesy Jeff Beck tune at the showcase. He eventually would come to love the blues. He never gave up on his love of metal and to this day was one of the best shredders Billy knew, but he was also just an all-around great guitarist. He could play country, punk, funk, rock, metal, grunge, blues, and bluegrass, and now he was studying jazz. Billy was just grateful he could help him get there.

The pull was becoming stronger. Billy heard the Jeff Beck song getting louder and the scene in his studio began to blur and fade. He was in darkness and felt like he

should be going back to the present, but he heard other sounds as well. He wasn't going back to the present. Everything was a dark blur. He could hear a sound but he couldn't make out the scene. He tried to focus. He heard what sounded like Gwen crying, and as soon as he thought it, an opening appeared and he could see the blurry vision of Gwen's beautiful face stained with tears. He was being pulled towards what he now knew was a memory of when he told Gwen he had been cheating. He tried to resist the pull but couldn't. The vision cleared and there he was. Gwen was sitting on the edge of their bed and Billy was standing leaning against the wall across from her. Nothing was said. Billy just stood there silently and Gwen was crying.

Billy felt the pull again and was glad he did. He thought it strange that the pull happened again so quickly this time, but he wasn't complaining. This was not a memory that he wanted to revisit. It was a moment that was burned into his soul. It changed him. Or maybe it was the way that Gwen stood by him and forgave him that changed him. Either way he had changed.

Billy was pulled out of the memory and back into the dark blur. He heard Paul playing in slow motion at the showcase but knew he was not headed there. Other sounds were swimming in his head. He heard what sounded like children speaking in a foreign language and as soon as he thought about it he was pulled. It was like someone telling you not to think of an elephant and you think of an elephant. He heard the sound of those children and his mind made an opening to a dusty blurry vision of an industrial neighborhood in Brazil. He knew it was Brazil. You never forget the beautiful sound of Brazilian Portuguese. The vision cleared and he saw himself there on the street walking by them. He remembered that somebody had told him to watch out for the "piranhas." He

had said, “There is no water here. It’s a dusty old industrial town.” The woman told him in her broken English “No not fish, the children.”

The piranhas were packs of orphans who wandered the streets and robbed people. The little orphans followed the older orphans and the older orphans eventually joined the gangs. Billy remembered that he had hidden his money in his boot. The kids didn’t attack him, but the thought of a gang of orphan children running around Brazil never left him. He was in Brazil for a tour with Chuck Berry. He remembered that Chuck would play amazingly that night and that he would even be pleasant to be around during the show. He gave it his all that night and it was a perfect performance.

Billy listened for the chord suspended in time at the showcase. He could hear it faintly and it grew louder as he focused on it. The vision of his younger self looking over his shoulder at a group of children on a dusty street in Brazil on his way to a bar began to fade. He entered the dark blur and tried to focus on the sound of the showcase in hopes that he could get back there. He started to worry he would be trapped in his memories, in the varied jumbled past forever. Is this how dementia starts? You start traveling to the past in your mind and eventually can’t get back to the present or make sense of it anymore. He tried hard to focus on the sound of the showcase and hoped he would see the lights of the stage and Paul standing there playing. Just as he thought he started to see the stage he heard an unmistakable sound. It was as clear as day. He heard the voice of his mother. “Everybody sit down and be quiet.”

Billy realized then that he had been brought back to the time his family sat around the dinner table to hear him on the radio. He had time-traveled to this day before, when he had seen his friend Michael he had heard himself the first time on the radio. But this

would be the first time his parents would hear this song. They had known that his song would come on again, so they were all gathered around to listen. The sound of the showcase faded completely and a vision of Billy's father began to come into focus. Billy realized he missed that face. His father had passed away only eight years ago. He was wearing a tie and dressed well. Billy's father was always dressed well. It was important for him that Billy had nice clothes as well, which is where Billy got his habit of making sure to dress up for gigs and most other things. Billy's father got him his first pair of Italian leather boots when Billy was a teenager and starting to think about how he looked. The vision was completely clear now. His father was sitting at the head of the table and a young Billy Cioffi was sitting across from him. Billy's mother walked in. "Everybody sit down" she said taking control of the chaos. They were all sitting around the table now. His younger siblings were bouncing around, chattering and laughing.

Billy looked at his younger self sitting there at the end of the table opposite his father and remembered how excited and nervous he was for his family to hear his music. He remembered how he felt sitting there. He didn't know then how much this moment would come to define his relationship to his parents, particularly his father.

The song that had been playing on the radio began to fade and the DJ, Lee Gray, started speaking. "Well well well. Lee Gray here, and it's the top of the hour here at WTRY and you know what that means. It's time for our Sound Survey feature. Today we're featuring a song that we've been getting a lot of calls about all throughout the day. It's a song written and recorded by some local boys in a band called The Gray Things and the song is called 'Charity (Begins At Home.)' Here it is folks, featuring Michael Olesko

on lead vocals, Billy Cioffi on lead guitar, Jack Warrington on bass, Dennis Boyagian on rhythm guitar, and Steve Colfer on drums."

Billy's younger siblings looked back and forth at each other with their mouths open wide in amazement, smiling and laughing at hearing their older brother's name on the radio. Then the song started. The younger siblings were so excited. Billy's mother smiled as she looked at them enjoying the song. Billy's consciousness looked at his father and then at his younger self. His younger self was looking around at the faces of his family as they were all listening. The two youngest siblings were dancing a little in their seats to the delight of the rest of the family. Billy's father was listening with his head down. He was not reacting in any visible way. Billy remembered seeing that and remembered feeling that his heart fell into his stomach.

With hindsight it could be easy to project onto his younger self what he thought he was feeling at the time. Did he consciously want at the time some sort of approval from his father? He certainly remembered being concerned that his father wasn't reacting like the rest of family but he couldn't remember what he wanted to happen. He also remembered what was about to happen and exactly how it would make him feel.

Billy's consciousness watched as younger Billy looked at the top of his father's head. The rest of the family was chattering and laughing. His mother was smiling ear to ear, which was no small thing. His parents were not completely in favor of the path he was taking. It was, after all, the 60's and Billy was a teenager. Billy knew that there had been big fights before this moment and even bigger fights would come after this moment. That made *this moment* even more important. He had at least made something, done something that impressed his mother or at least made her smile. His father was still

looking down when suddenly he tilted his head up and gave young Billy a smile and a nod. For a moment they locked eyes and smiled at eachother. It was as if his father had said, “Wow you really did this,” all within that look and that nod.

The feeling Billy felt at that moment would never leave him throughout his life. He knew the feeling perfectly. It was a burning in his chest. It was love. It was pride. It was happiness. It was joy. It was heartbreak. Billy’s consciousness was suddenly aware that he was feeling it now. How was that possible? He must’ve still had a connection to his body in the present. He was aware of the feeling *now* that he had experienced *then* but it was different somehow. Billy had thought about this moment around the kitchen table numerous times throughout his adult life. The memory was evidence that his parents were proud of him and that they loved him. More that they approved of his craft and his decision to become a musician at least once. They approved of him.

The moment had passed. Just a small portion of a day in a week in a year in a decade of a lifetime, and yet it filled hours and hours of his life’s emotional timeline. Billy felt a pull back to the present and started to hear the chord at the showcase. The scene began to blur as Billy looked one more time at himself sitting at the table with a huge goofy grin surrounded by his family. He wondered what had just happened. He had thought that he could control the time events. He had actually controlled at least one. For some reason during Paul’s solo he was unable to resist the pull to the past and unable to return to the present when he wanted. He had been pulled into multiple moments in the past and then finally into this memory with his family surrounding him. The vision faded and blurred into a smoke-like darkness and the sound of the showcase suspended in time

grew louder. He was able to make out the colors of the stage lights, purple and blue, and the scene cleared.

He was back in his body. Billy felt the feeling that he had felt when his father gave him the approving nod and glance. He was strumming the chords and looking out at Paul in the middle of his amazing solo. The crowd was loving him. They started clapping after a particularly amazing run. Paul took a step forward and leaned back as his pick dug into the strings of his guitar. He was owning it. He had made this song completely his own. Billy's eyes welled up with tears. He laughed quietly because he didn't know whether it was the time event or Paul's playing or both that was causing him to cry.

Paul reached the end of his solo and the crowd was on their feat. They were screaming and shouting. Paul finished off with a flourish. He jumped up and ended by strumming a chord as he landed and then let it ring. After he had let it ring for a few seconds the crowd swelled with their applause so he strummed the chord a few more times, looked back at the drummer and the rest of the band, then signaled the end of the song with a small jump. The crowd kept applauding and shouting as Paul took a couple bows and then walked off stage.

As the audience's applause died down Kimmy walked out and stood center stage in front of a microphone. She was the lead singer for the next song--"Let's Go Crazy" by Prince. The lights dimmed and the stage was bathed in purple light. Kirk sat at an electric piano and changed the setting to a gospel organ and started to play a chord. The spotlight hit Kimmy and she started speaking.

Dearly beloved
We are gathered here today
To get through this thing called "life"

Electric word "life"
It means forever and that's an awful long time
But I'm here to tell you there's something else….

Chapter 6

"What do you mean time traveling?" Gwen asked Billy

"I mean I actually go back in time, or at least my consciousness does, and I am there. I can move my eyes around and see myself and other people from my past and I wasn't even smoking dope," Billy said.

Gwen laughed.

"Only once." Billy corrected himself and Gwen laughed louder.

"Just the first time, but not any of the other times." Billy clarified.

"How many times has this so-called time travel happened?"

"I think seven times." Billy said.

"Seven times?" Gwen asked surprised.

"I'm pretty sure." Billy said.

Gwen looked at Billy as if she was starting to understand. Billy looked back into her eyes so she knew he wasn't joking. "Are you ok?" Gwen asked.

"I feel normal. I can't see out of my left eye, my mouth hurts like hell because of the implants, ya know, normal. I mean I can still remember what I'm supposed to do when I wake up every morning. I'm just worried, ya know. Is there something going on?" Gwen listened as Billy talked. "I mean is there some reason I am being pulled back into my memories of these events. Is it actually time travel or is it all just happening in my head? Or is it both? Actual time travel … in my head and why these specific memories? I was able to control it kind of a couple times but the last one that happened tonight at the

showcase, I was not in any kind of control. It's almost like I am supposed to see these things."

"What things have you seen?" asked Gwen.

"Well the first time, at the Tempe Art Festival, with Rich's vape stick, I was playing that song about when our dog died, and everything froze in the present and I was pulled back to my house in Albany in my grandfather's office. I was there Gwen. I watched myself figure out how to play the intro to 'Runaway' and then I was pulled back to the present right in the middle of my solo.

"The second time it happened I was in a lesson with Ed Timmons and I was pulled back to when I was living in Todd Everett's apartment, not long before we met. We were listening to Cat Stevens records in preparation for his performance at the Troubadour. The third time it happened I was in a lesson with Cameron and I tried to choose the event. I tried to focus on a memory and as I did I got distracted by the idea of Michael Olesko. His face popped into my mind because it was tangentially related to the memory I was trying to get to. Instead I was pulled back to the first time Michael and I heard our song on the radio together. It was such a great memory. Then I tried again in the same lesson and I did it Gwen! I thought of a specific memory of Chuck Berry and I did it! I was there. I saw the whole thing better than I had remembered it. After that I thought I had gained some sort of superpower or something.

"Then tonight at the showcase I felt the pull several times but I resisted it. I held it at bay until Paul's solo. That is the thing Gwen. I think it definitely has to do with the music I am listening to." Up to this point Gwen had just been listening and nodding.

"Well do you think maybe it has to do with what is going on in your subconscious mind? Like what were you thinking about during all of these…um …episodes? Or maybe it has something to do with what has been on your mind lately," she offered.

"Maybe," Billy replied.

They both sat there in a pensive silence. Their dog, Coco Channel, lifted its head off of Gwen's lap in the break of the conversation and looked at Gwen. Gwen petted the dog and continued to think. Billy was laying on the couch and Gwen was sitting in the arm chair. Billy realized it looked like a session with a shrink. He laughed.

"What's so funny," Gwen asked.

"I'm lying on a couch and we are talking about 'what's been on my mind.'"

Gwen laughed, "You can't afford me."

Billy laughed even harder.

Gwen got up from the chair and walked over to the couch. Billy picked up his legs and sat upright. Gwen sat down beside him, turned towards him, and kissed him on the cheek. Billy looked her in the eyes.

"Thank you, Gwen."

Over the next few days they talked about his time travels and what they might mean. Gwen encouraged Billy to write about the events. She had been telling him he should write a book about all of his adventures in rock 'n' roll and she thought maybe his ability to see clearly into the past might help him write it. In a graduate level ethnomusicology class he introduced himself as the history of rock 'n' roll. It was 20% bombast, 20% defense mechanism, and 60% truth. He had lived through what most people can only read and watch documentaries about. He probably *should* write a book.

Billy had been talking to Ed Timmons about helping out Daniel. For a week or so Daniel didn't know what he was going to do. Ed had agreed to help Daniel out with paying off the loan for equity in the studio. It was a desperately needed win for Daniel. It was good for Ed as well. He had been wanting to do something good and to put himself to good use. He would be able to help a local business that was picking up steam, support local talent, and insure that the songs that went with his book were done by professionals he knew and trusted. It was one of those many times in Billy's life when knowing somebody made all the difference.

Daniel was relieved but still heart-broken. Daniel's mother was relieved and thankful to Billy. Billy had been spending time at Daniel's to finish up Ed's songs and some of his own material. Things were working out. Billy had a long "to do" list. He had a never-ending stack of papers to read, he had lessons to teach and prepare for nearly every day, he had recording sessions at Daniel's, and now that the showcase was over he had to get the students in his studio ready for a show that featured only them. He had to see an eye doctor about pain in his eye and he was worrying, praying, and hoping it wasn't some form of cancer. He had to get ready for his monthly gigs at Grapeables and Sapporos. Bills to pay etc. In other words life moves on and Billy's life was full and for the most part great.

The other day a friend from his past sent him some recordings. The friend was a drummer he knew from his days as a staff songwriter at Plain Great Entertainment. The recordings were of him and another colleague who he had written songs with back in the day. They had all been trying hard to make it and not doing half bad. One of the songs they wrote together ended up in a movie called "Deadly Games," which was a pretty big

deal. Billy listened to the recordings in his car. As he listened he was transported. Not like time travel transported. Nothing froze. No out of body experience. Just a clear remembrance. One of the songs was a solo feature by him and you could hear the crowd at the Bla Bla Cafe going crazy. He sounded great and the audience loved him.

Hearing those songs brought tears to his eyes and they trickled down his cheeks as he drove. The songs brought him back to when things were on an upswing in his career. They reminded him of all of the opportunities that he had had in that period of time and how things were going so well. He had been reviewed in the Hollywood Reporter, Daily Variety Magazine and all the local music business magazines. So much potential. He started to regret the fact that it didn't turn into what it was supposed to be. He was trying hard to become a rock star. In his mind he started kicking himself for wasting opportunities and connections. Whenever he started regretting his past he always came back to the same thought. Wherever you go there you are.

If he had not "wasted those opportunities" maybe he wouldn't be at Kirk's now. Maybe all of his mistakes and missteps had allowed him to get his master's degree and to teach three sections of writing 101 at Mesa Community College every semester. Two of his students at MCC had asked if they could do their honors projects in his class. That was a gift. His path led him away from rock stardom but towards an award-winning live TV performance of his *Americamera* album with T. R. Hummer. He never had a hit song, but he got to teach Paul Avram, and even if Paul never got a hit song it was still worth it just to watch the kid play.

He thought to himself as he drove home, "You can't change the past." He was 67 only a couple of years away from being 70. God what does that mean? He didn't feel 70.

He looked in the mirror and saw an older guy, but inside he was not the person he saw in the mirror. He could die tomorrow. He was certainly in the age range where the likelihood of something like cancer, a stroke, or a heart attack was increasing every day. He hadn't done himself any favors smoking for as long as he had. He often wondered where he would end up when he died.

When you die is that it? Or do you wake up in the middle of some alternate reality. Do you wake up in hell neck deep in shit or on a cloud with a harp? A psychiatrist friend in the 70's gave Billy a book called the *Denial of Death*. Billy has always been a reader and was always trying to find stuff to stimulate his mind. The basic premise of the book is that one of humanity's greatest flaws was our seeming inability to accept the reality of death. Billy didn't know what he believed anymore as far as God was concerned. He was born and raised a Catholic and believed in following the traditions and rituals of Catholicism to a certain degree. To a certain degree he found the rituals and traditions beautiful and meaningful. He just didn't know. I guess nobody really does. That was the whole point of the book. No one knows, and yet all religion is an attempt to answer at least to some extent what happens when you die. He didn't know.

Lately he had become more conscious of his family. His mother was 93 now and his father had passed in 2009. He felt a certain amount of regret about leaving his family when he was 17, but as soon as he began to regret he remembered his mantra as of late. "Wherever you go there you are."

His friend Terry Hummer went to New York with Billy once not so long ago for a reunion gig with the Gray Things, and Terry met Billy's family. Billy had expressed to him that he felt some awkwardness because of the way he had left when he was so young.

Terry had told him it was obvious that they loved him and that Billy shouldn't worry about it. "You are way more worried about it than they are," he had said. The way Billy saw it, they had come to some sort of accommodation. Not everybody is the same. Not everybody wants the same things.

Billy wanted peace. On some level he couldn't be happier. He had the respect of his peers and many of his students loved him as a teacher and a mentor. His ego had changed. Ego masks insecurity. Gwen had said once or twice throughout their marriage, "It's all about you. It's always about you!" and for a big part of their marriage it had been true. "Lovin' a music man ain't always what it's supposed to be." The last few years had been much less about him. As it should be. He was happy that he could live a more stable stationary life now to help out Gwen. He had been able to help her through a hip replacement and cancer.

Wherever you end up there you are.

Billy exited the freeway onto Shea Boulevard toward home as he started to think about how grateful he was that his path had led him to teaching at Kirk's. Four weeks ago Jamie, the receptionist at Kirk's, told Billy that he had a new student, Bennett. Bennett was an aspiring actor who was going to audition for the *School of Rock* musical production at a local community theater, the Desert Stages. He came into Billy's studio and as they started to get to know each other Billy found out that the reason for the lessons was so he could learn a song for the audition. Billy found out quickly that even though the kid could sing he didn't know anything about the guitar. He couldn't even play a simple C chord. Bennett had been in several plays, was a lost boy in *Peter Pan* and had a part in the stage production of *Home Alone,* all at Desert Stages. He had been asked

to audition for the role of the guitar player in *School of Rock* but he wouldn't get the part unless he could play the song.

Two weeks later, Jaime told Billy he was getting another student, a cute little punk rocker named Kennedy who wanted to learn to play the bass. She bought a used bass from Kirk and Billy started to teach her rudimentary blues figurations. Billy was astounded that more teachers don't do this. Starting with the blues seems like the most natural thing to do. It's the foundation of American popular music. It's already in our ears even if most of us don't realize it. Billy has had a lot of success getting kids able to play and feel successful quickly using the blues. After Kennedy's first lesson Billy got a frantic phone call from Kennedy's mom. Kennedy was going to audition for the part of the girl who plays the bass in the *School of Rock* production. She had to learn how to play the bass line for "Stand By Me" by Ben E. King. Billy laughed after he hung up the phone. He had assured Kennedy's mother that he would be able to help her learn that song without any trouble. Billy often used that song as a starting point for bassists after the blues stuff. The bass line was iconic and pretty easy to learn. Aside from that, Billy had worked as Ben E. King's musical director for a while.

When Bennett and Kennedy showed up, Billy was right in the middle of preparing the kids in his studio for their own showcase. Billy doesn't do "normal" recitals. He makes students in his studio collaborate in duos and bands. He has found that doing this is beneficial for both the students, because they learn to play with people, and for the audience, because it is more entertaining than listening to 40 kids each play their own little thing. It also gives more advanced students a chance to help out the younger kids and the younger kids get to work with more experienced players. This year, so many of

his students were sick or had other things coming up around the same time that planning had become a nightmare. Add on these two new students who both started taking daily lessons to get ready for their auditions, and Billy decided to push back his studio showcase a month. A couple weeks passed and audition day came and went. Sure enough a few days later Billy received calls from both of the kids parents thanking him. Both of them had gotten the parts. Billy was still going to give them lessons to help them prepare for the production.

Billy thought about what a gift that experience had been. It was, however, just a recent example of the type of thing that happened to him often since he had started working at Kirk's and even more since he had started working at Mesa Community College. Teaching. If you had asked any of the Billy's from the past that he had visited during his time-travel events whether they thought they would ever teach, they would have laughed in your face. Now he felt like it had all led him to where he was. Teaching was a gift. He felt like he was doing a portion of good in the world by mentoring his guitar students and his students at the community college. Who knew?

Billy had only felt the pull to the past a couple of times since the big showcase and not at all in the last two weeks. He wondered a lot about that memory with his father at the kitchen table. Recently, he had written a song for his newest album that he felt got at the feeling that memory always produced in him. He had decided he was going to name his next album after the song. The song was about getting over a breakup by searching on your radio for a song that would ease the pain. The American popular song as a healing balm, a point of connection, a piece of art that could speak the words of your heart, or speak to the pain in your heart. It could help you manage the way you felt about

a particular girl or even how you felt about your parents. The American popular song could transport you through time, both forward and back. The name of the song was "Radio Heartbreak." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ri272Avvx2c

"Back in the day we used to have transistor radio's and I remember when I had my first heartbreak. Went home, stuck that transistor radio under my pillow so my parents wouldn't hear it. That's what happens when your 16. That was the first time I ever heard Roy Orbison.

Somewhere out there in the night
There's somebody playing a song
One especially for me
Could be Muddy Waters or George Jones.

It don't matter who is singing
Its the comfort that its bringing
Maybe its coming from El Paso
New york or Key Largo.

I'm gonna turn that dial till I find radio heartbreak.
Ain't that where the lonely go?
I'm gonna twist till I find something to ease my mind
And take me back to the world I used to know.

Maybe it's Roy Orbison running away with Del Shannon
Talking about love gone bad
Long as its lonesome and sad

I'm gonna turn that dial till I find radio heartbreak.
Ain't that where the lonely go?
I'm gonna twist till I find something to ease my mind
And take me back to the world I used to know.

Oh the smell of misty roses
Light bloomin' jasmine in the air.
Oh the sound of remember
gives me wings and flies me there.

I'm gonna turn that dial till I find radio heartbreak.
Ain't that where the lonely go?
I'm gonna twist till I find something to ease my mind
And take me back to the world I used to know.

I'm gonna turn that dial till I find radio heartbreak.
Ain't that where the lonely go?
I'm gonna twist till I find something to ease my mind
And take me back to the world I used to know.
And take me back to the world I used to know.
I used to know.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ENDING

I wrote four post-novella pieces. In each piece, I address different aspects of the dissertation. All of the pieces are attempts to witness the deconstruction of my dissertation and the texts that surround it. It is up to you to choose which piece to read first. The type of reading experience you are about to have depends on which piece you choose. Below you will find descriptions of each of the chapters.

Relational Research: The Story of Isaac and Billy (p. 200-217)

In this piece, I address issues of methodology. I examine a text I wrote in response to a request from my committee after my dissertation proposal defense to clarify how I planned to carry out the project. I use that document to examine the difference between what I proposed to do and what I actually did. I provide commentary in parentheses and italics to demonstrate that difference. I draw from my researcher journal entries to provide commentary. I focus on the act of writing as an act of learning (Richardson, 2000).

In Dialogue (p. 218-242)

My committee asked me to enter into more of a dialogue with readers and research after my dissertation defense. This section is an attempt to do just that. I invited five people to read the novella and to have a conversation with me. After having separate conversations with all of the readers, I created a composite conversation in the form of a Facebook chat. Because I created a composite conversation based on my separate conversations with each reader, I was able imagine what it would be like to include Jacques Derrida in a group chat about the novella.

Under Deconstruction: ~~Conclusion~~, ~~Suggestions~~, Reflections (p. 243-251)

This piece is entitled "Under Deconstruction" because the fault lines and fissures are more evident than in any other part of the dissertation. While all things are always/already falling apart, this part of my dissertation was the hardest to write. The piece represents a great deal of my frustrations with myself as a writer and how I feel about writing a ~~conclusion~~. Specifically, I try not to make ~~suggestions~~ for further research. I don't want to dictate to you what you should learn by reading my dissertation. I want *you* to decide what *you* learned by reading it.

Data Saturation (p.252-272)

In the book *Acts of Literature* (1992), Derek Attridge interviews Jacques Derrida and in that interview Derrida answers a question that he poses to himself.

> "What is literature?"; literature as historical institution with its conventions, rule, etc., but also this institution of fiction which gives *in principle* the power to say everything, to break free of the rules, to displace them, and thereby to institute, to invent and even to suspect the traditional difference between nature and institution, nature and conventional law, nature and history. (Derrida, p. 37)

This piece is a monster story. It is a piece of fiction in the spirit of the "institution of fiction which gives *in priniciple* the power to say everything to break free of rules, to displace them, and thereby to institute, to invent." It is a conclusion by other means. I try to break free of "the rules" of dissertation conclusions and "invent" another way to ~~conclude~~ a dissertation. The story is a deconstructive gesture. I point towards the tension that is always/already at play in my dissertation, tension between the roles of writer and author, tension at play in the structure of a dissertation, and tension within a qualitative paradigm of research that relies on language adopted from a quantitative paradigm.

RELATIONAL RESEARCH:
THE STORY OF ISAAC AND BILLY

On the Act of Writing a Process Description

Why not start with the story of Billy and Isaac instead of the story of Isaac and Billy? Why do I come first? Does it mean that I think I am more important than Billy? Maybe it's because I am going to write this part of the document from my perspective and not his. Maybe it's just a title that helped me get started writing and we should all just calm down a bit.

This section is supposed to be an example of witnessing the deconstruction of my own dissertation. I see how it is falling apart as I write it. All dissertations are deconstructing. There are major fissures, fault lines and cracks in all dissertations. One of those openings, as I see it, is that a dissertation seems to be a myth. Let me clarify.

In eighth grade I was taught how to write an essay. "You tell them what you're going to tell them, then you tell them, and finally you tell them what you told them." A dissertation is supposed to be a fancy version of that. I introduce you to my topic and I tell you what I plan to do, then I try to do the stuff that I told you I would do, and then I tell you what I did and what I think it means. Barf. A dissertation is supposed to convey to the reader a sense of lessons learned, expertise in an area of research after carrying out a study. It should convey to the reader that the author knew what the hell they were talking about before they started writing. (*Says who?*) What's missing is the part where actually all that writing is a learning process in and of itself (Richardson, 2000).

The act of writing is a way of coming to know, but so often the process of coming to know is treated like an afterthought in academic writing. For me, the writing happened

alongside all the learning that occurred during this project. Derrida might say that it is all writing. If everything is text then perhaps all our actions are writing. Conventional views of academic writing would have you believe that I learned all I needed to learn by carrying out the study, and then I sat down and wrote this document as a description of what I learned. That does a disservice to the learning that has happened, is always already happening, as I write. It further complicates things that my study "is" narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995), because the major part of the project has been writing a story about the musical life of Billy Cioffi. The act of writing was an act of making meaning of what I had experienced as I listened to Billy tell stories.

I prepared a great deal to start to write the novella you have just read. That preparation included writing a full dissertation proposal, and as I wrote it I learned. In other words, the process of writing the proposal was also a series of learning acts. The document for my proposal defense was similar to the first three chapters of my dissertation: an introduction, a literature review, and a methodology. After my advisor approved the document, I walked into a room and hoped and prayed I could pretend well enough that I knew what I was talking about so that my committee would approve my study. Which they did … kind of.

Some of the members of my committee wanted me to clarify some of what I wrote, so I wrote what I called a process document. I am going to put it right here as an artifact for examination. It represents an important act of learning in the process of writing my dissertation. My committee wanted to know more about what I was actually going to do with Billy. My proposal did not leave them with a feeling of certainty about what I was going to do. (*In hindsight, it's probably because I wasn't certain and I*

thought that being certain about it was the wrong way to go. I just didn't know how to say it then.) They also wanted to know about how I would know when I had reached data saturation. When would I be done generating data? As you will read below, I trouble the idea of being certain about the research process and about data saturation, or rather those ideas trouble me.

Below you will find my process text. I have embedded comments into the process document. The comments are in italics and parentheses. *(I've already started that. Did you catch it?)* In some cases I have included my researcher journal entries as commentary. Reading this section will kind of be like reading live tweets about my dissertation as I worked on it. (*Why not?*) My commentary will act as clarification about what actually happened and will also serve as a self-critique as well as a critique of the whole process of writing a dissertation and academic research and writing in general. To situate yourself in my dissertation timeline, the process document (in regular font) was written after my proposal defense and the commentary (*in parentheses and italics)* is happening after writing the novella.

The Process Document

The purpose of this narrative study is to raise questions about music education by examining, writing, imagining, and telling musical life stories of Billy Cioffi (*I still agree with this*). To further clarify how I intend to work with Billy to write stories about his life, I offer this process text. Although I cannot know now every detail of what the process will be, I have planned for how I might organize my time with Billy, how we might organize data we generate together, and how we might organize the stories that will be the result of our time together. (*I love the word might. It leaves room for mistakes*

and does not imply certainty.) Different plans may emerge as well as different organization systems, but for now this is my plan.

On Togetherness

Jeananne Nichols (2016) describes how she worked *with* Rye, a transgender person, to write Rye's story. She describes how she struggled with the ethical quandaries of narrative research including trying to make sure she wasn't putting Rye on display, making sure that Rye would have her say heard, and dealing with "guilt, shame, and anguish" (Josselen, 1996) in the process of working to honor Rye in the study. While Billy is not a member of a historically marginalized population, many of the same concerns apply to this study. I worry about overly romanticising Billy's life story. I too want to make sure that I am not putting Billy on display and that Billy's story and voice will be heard. (*Although Billy would probably say he doesn't mind being put on display.*)

Taking the approach of *collecting* Billy's stories *from* him to tell them *for* him would not honor the storyteller, writer, and musical person Billy is. In an attempt to remedy some of these ethical quandaries I propose that Billy and I work together, that we work *with* each other to generate stories, write stories and arrange them in a collection that makes sense to us together. I don't for a second believe that I have completely mitigated the problematic nature of narrative research by trying to write *with* Billy, but by doing so I feel more at ease ethically. (*I don't know. I did a lot of writing and Billy did a lot of reading and correcting me. It's all writing but it didn't end up like I thought it would. I use some of his writing in the novella and he did write some new lyrics that appear in the novella. All of the stories are Billy's, but I put them in the form that you find them in the novella.*

I wrote a journal entry about this problem. The bold words are comments from Dr. Stauffer, my advisor.

From Nov. 30th Researcher Journal Entry

If I am writing a dissertation I need to write it. I can't have Billy write my dissertation. But if the project is to write a book together about his musical life then what the hell is the final dissertation going to look like. Dr. Mantie seemed to suggest that he wanted it to be more narrative. Well me tooo. So, what if I just hand them a manuscript for a book written by Billy and I. ***Billy and me, yes, I am your grammar coach.*** *Or maybe I do that and let them know what parts are me and what parts are him or just tell them to figure it out by themselves. If we write a book it's not like I will be slacking while Billy writes.* ***You write to get him writing. YOU start the writing****.*

The journal entry above and all the stuff you will read in this section is supposed to give you an idea of what it has been like for me to write this dissertation and more broadly to engage in the whole project. The sentence just above this one probably belongs somewhere at the top of this section as part of an introduction, but I think I'll leave it here to demonstrate how the act of writing is as much an act of learning as it is an act of exposition. It is composition. Writing is a way of coming to know.)

Planning Process and Initial Data Generation

As a first step, Billy and I together will map out a timeline of his musical life. We will mark the most important musical events of his life on the timeline. *(We did that but not all those stories made it into the novella and many stories that weren't on that timeline came up after we made the timeline.)* After we have mapped out those events on a timeline, I will ask Billy to tell stories of each of those events. I will capture those stories using a video camera so that I can transcribe them. I am aware that he may tell some stories as we generate the timeline, and am prepared to record and/or make note of those. (*Didn't really happen like that. He moved too fast. I recorded most of our meetings together though.)*

Billy and I will organize his stories by theme. I imagine a mind map that allows us to connect the stories like a network (see Figure 2 on p. 206). For instance, many of his stories may be connected by common threads such as the guitar, learning to play, style, important guitarists, influences, teaching guitar, etc. Other examples might include stories connected by songwriting, the first song he ever wrote, the best song he ever wrote, learning to write songs, teaching songwriting, influential songwriters, collaborators, etc. The timeline and the thematic mind map will allow us to organize our time and our thinking as we collaborate. Billy and I will agree on a schedule that allows us to go through the process described above. (*It didn't quite work like that. It really was silly of me to expect Billy to follow any research agenda or plan. We ended up improvising around a framework. We both knew that we were trying to write stories about his life and so mostly Billy talked and I listened. Sometimes we had discussions. We would talk about God, regret, music of all kinds, his family, my family, his current album and the albums of his students that he was producing.*

We talked about themes, and there are themes that run through the novella. Some of the themes are ones that I wrote about above and some of the them were themes that could only emerge through conversation with Billy over time. Particularly the theme of regret. It is so funny to read things such as, "Billy and I will agree on a schedule" because it sounds so transactional. "Thank you, Billy, for agreeing to sit down with me to discuss your musical life. I would like to propose a schedule for our meetings." It didn't go down like that. It was more like two friends deciding to meet on Friday mornings and chat about stuff. I met him at recording studios or at lessons, but mostly we sat in his living room or on his patio and Billy told me stories.

Jerome Bruner is known for his conception of a spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1996). *The idea is that learners engage with principles and subjects at young ages in developmentally appropriate ways and then engage with those principles and subjects again and again as they learn and grow. The way I heard Billy's stories and wrote stories with Billy is akin to Bruner's spiral curriculum. I heard some of Billy's stories multiple times and upon hearing each iteration of the story I would pick up new details or he would make new meaning of the story. One story might be connected to other stories that I hadn't heard yet, or it might be connected to stories that I had heard, but the fact that he told it again connected those stories in a new way. I would make new meaning of the stories as I heard them again. Bruner also writes about narrative, or the telling of stories as a primary way we account for lived experiences* (1987). *It makes sense that we would make new meaning of our memories as they take the shape of stories, in our minds and on our lips again and again. What is a life story but a memory that has been given life through our breath?*

In the novella Billy gets to relive parts of his life through a series of what I came to call time travel events. This literary device provides a way for Billy to engage with his past the same way we all do but in a way more akin to vivid magical realism. Music takes us back, or as Frith (1987) *puts it, can "shape popular memory, organize one's sense of time, and intensify a given experience"* (p. 133). *When you hear a song you loved in middle school, can't you just feel the corduroy pants you wore to the eighth-grade dance?*

I started thinking about time travel as a literary device that might help explore Billy's musical life for a number of reasons. First, listening to Billy tell stories is like

stepping into a time machine. He would start a story in 1967 and jump to the 90's then back to the 80's and then back to '67. I would have to stop him and ask, "Ok so what year is this and where are we?" After several weeks of meeting with Billy, I started to develop my own sort of chronography for Billy's musical life. For instance if he started to talk about Scott Richardson, I knew he was in LA in the late 70's working for Plain Great Entertainment. If he said something about the Monte Carlos I knew it was post 1981 and the big Darlene Love gig at the Roxy. Pointer Sisters, early 90's. Chuck Berry, late 80's early 90's.

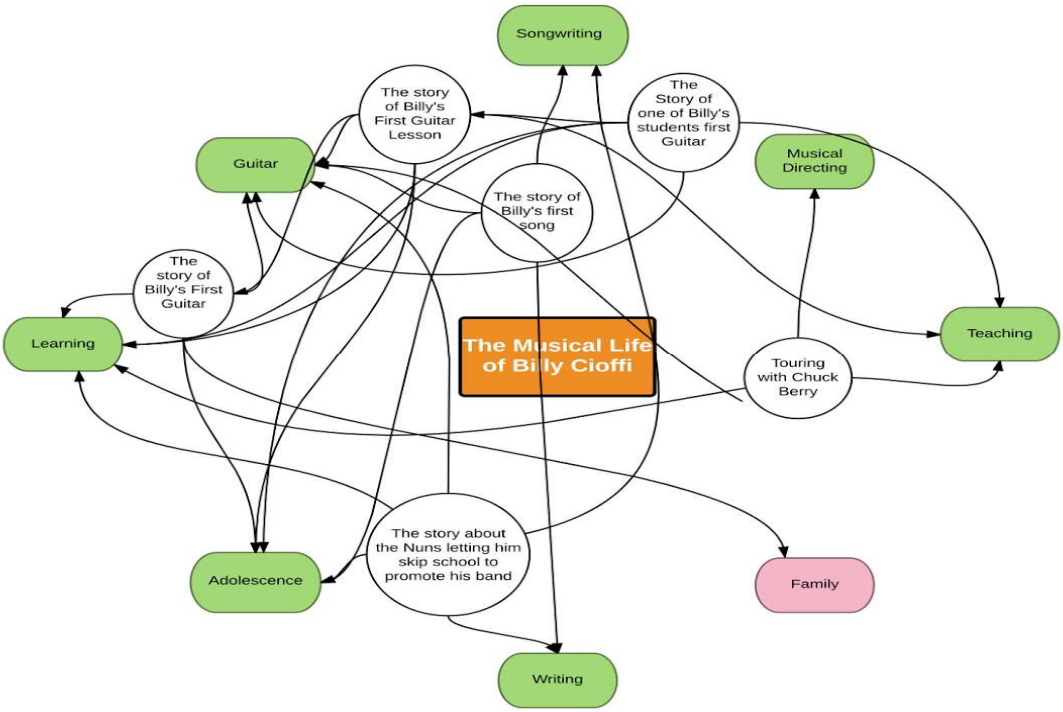
Even though his stories jumped from decade to decade, after a while I was able to place his stories in time and place. The experience of being lost in time and in Billy's stories gave me the idea of writing a time travel story. I read Time Travel *by James Gleick* (2016), *which outlines the history of time travel as an idea in popular memory. The book gave me a good feel for how time travel has been used as a literary device to explore ideas such as regret, fear of death, the inevitability of death and disaster, the meaning of life, destiny, chaos, order, and relationships.*

I also began reading Paul Ricouer's Time and Narrative (2010) *which details the relationship between … time and narrative. The reason I started reading Ricouer's work was because Polkinghorne quotes him and so does James Gleick. Ricouer's stuff is heavy reading, but because I read it I encountered an idea. Ricouer writes about St. Augustine's meditations and one of St. Augustine's meditations is about time. Within his meditation on time there is a term, distentio animi, which is loosely translated as the expanded soul. St. Augustine describes the idea in the context of reciting a psalm. When you recite a psalm you hold the past, present and future in your mind. You essentially inhabit all three*

parts of time. You hold in your mind what you just said, what you are saying and what you are about to say. Your soul is extended across time.

The idea of the extended soul helped me formulate the way that the literary device of time travel could work in the novella. Billy's consciousness, mind, soul, whatever, would extend back in time while his body would stay frozen in the present, while at the same time he could think about the future or even other parts of the past. The idea helped me think about how time travel could be less of a gimmick and more of a literary device. I was really worried about the time travel becoming gimmicky. I am still worried about it. I will probably always be worried about it. By the way, the last three sentences are an example of the extended soul in action.

Figure 2.



Observation and Further Data Generation

In addition to the collaborative story sharing process described above, I will also be observing Billy as he teaches private guitar, songwriting, and coaches adolescent rock groups. (*I did a lot of this but less than I thought I would.*) I will also observe him in his capacity as a creative writing professor at Mesa Community College, and as professional musician and writer of short stories, poems, and songs, as he is published in all three domains. When possible, the observations will be captured using a video camera and will be transcribed for the purposes of continuing our collaborative story sharing process. I will enter into these various observation contexts looking for stories with the themes that Billy and I have discussed. Other themes may emerge during observations, and we will make further connections to the stories of Billy's musical life. As we do so, we will update the thematic mind map with new stories and events. (*This is mostly true, but I wasn't ever able to observe him as a writing professor at Mesa Community College because our teaching schedules were exactly the same. Also, the word "observe" is so clinical. It is one of those words that has been carried over from a quantitative paradigm of research. I am not saying that qualitative researchers shouldn't use it, I am just saying that if the word "observation" were a shirt it would chafe me when I put it on. I went to Billy's recording sessions, lessons, rehearsals, and we even wrote songs together. I guess I observed during some of those. I even recorded some of them with a video camera, but I was never very removed from those situations like I feel the word "observe" implies. I was <u>in</u> the context, not coldly observing from without. I was experiencing the situation with Billy, bringing my context with me.*

I definitely looked for stories in those situations, but Billy and I didn't discuss themes very much and even then not until much later in the story writing process. I had ideas about what the themes might be before I started working in earnest with Billy on the novella, but the themes emerged through the process of Billy and me writing the novella.)

Story Writing, Structuring the Document, and Raising Questions

Billy and I will look at all of the stories and potential stories (*I shouldn't use the word "all" here; it is clearly impossible to look at or hear "all" of the stories not to mention the potential stories … yeesh.*) that we can use that might make sense thematically and decide on a structure for the document. We will be able to make strategic literary decisions about how to place stories. We may decide to structure it as a collection of short stories chronologically or thematically. We may decide that a novel is a better way to structure it. (*All of this structuring business is very interesting. It's funny because when I was writing this process document to give to the committee I am sure that I wasn't thinking about the relationship between structuring and deconstruction. It makes me wonder if struction happens in the same way that deconstruction does. Maybe struction is what happens to things that humans are involved in, just as much as deconstruction is what happens to things (*Jackson & Mazzei, 2012*). I did try to impose a structure on the stories but it never really worked the way that I planned. Maybe that is it. No matter how much we try to structure things they start to deconstruct. I am trying to remember exactly how the novella came to be and I can't quite remember except to say that I wrote a lot and when I stopped writing it there it was. Billy read it a lot and told me to change it and there it was again. I reread it and changed some more things and there*

it was again. Dr. Stauffer will read it and I will read it. My mom might read it. Billy will read it again, and there it will be again and again. I was sure it was going to be a collection of short stories, one of which would use time travel as a literary device or literary machine … a time machine. Instead the time travel story was the first story I wrote and it ate all the other stories.) It may include new song lyrics or poems. (*Indeed it does.*)

As part of this process, we will decide together how to put Billy's stories together in a way that raises questions about music education and that does so in an artful way. We might decide to juxtapose a story of Billy's first guitar lesson with a story of him teaching his first guitar lesson, and a story from the point of view of one of his students. We might create fictional stories based on events from Billy's life. (*After you have read the novella you can see that some of this happened. It was not a series of short stories but there is juxtaposition within the novella.*) For instance we might write a story that involves Billy traveling back in time to visit himself before he is about to open for the Lovin' Spoonful, or before another important musical event, to give himself some advice. (*See, I was thinking about time travel even right after my proposal defense.)*

The final piece will have moments of witnessing the deconstruction of the stories that we have written and of texts that those stories reference or otherwise interact with. Witnessing the deconstruction may take different forms. It may be woven into the stories themselves or it may be analytical essays that are interspersed throughout the document. Billy and I will decide together how best to witness the deconstruction of the texts associated with his musical life and with music education.

(*As soon as I decided to write a time travel story about the musical life of Billy Cioffi, I sketched out a timeline for the story. Actually I sketched out two drafts of a timeline, both of which I used. One ended up stuck to the front of my fridge with a magnet. The other was a google doc. Though the timelines differed, both were useful during writing because I could look at them for a reminder of where I was heading. I showed both timelines to Billy. He helped me edit them. They served the purpose of providing a rough frame upon which I could build the novella.*

The following are excerpts from my research journal. They represent my evolving thoughts about using time travel as a literary device that might both represent what it is like to hear Billy tell stories and also provide a way to jump back and forth in time to different stories about Billy still unified in one narrative. I really geeked out on some of the time travel stuff. I also describe why I think time travel is appropriate as a gesture for witnessing the deconstruction inherent in the text that is the musical life of Billy Cioffi.

January 11th 2017

Happy birthday to me. So Billy and I have decided on time travel. Here is what that means. I was thinking about the way that Billy tells stories. He starts with an event or a person and begins to talk about how he knew them and why they were so important or why the event is so important in his life and that will remind him of something that is tangentially related and all of a sudden we will be in a different place in a different decade but the stories are tied together by a song or a person or a guitar or something else. A simple example of this is the first time he started talking to me about Del Shannon. I think I asked him how he learned to play the guitar and after some talk about a couple of lessons he started talking about learning to play "Runaway" by Del Shannon. He then talked a little bit about forming a band and we jumped around for some decades in his youth but then it ended up with him as an adult playing in Del Shannon's comeback band.

My point is sitting and listening to Billy tell stories is like watching him time travel. It is almost like time traveling yourself. You are unhitched from the bounds of time and you can be in two decades in the same anecdote. Here we are sleeping on Todd Everett's couch and then we are playing as the back-up band for Darlene Love at the

Roxy on New Year's Eve. I could find out how much time passed between the two and I will but he jumps around.

Also the people in his life and important songs and events in his life seem to carry a sense of time travel with them in that the most important people in his life are attached to events and songs that are landmark events and songs in his life. Del Shannon carries through his life, his wife Gwen, Darlene Love, his band mates from the Grey Things, his guitars have traveled through time. (He has a whole bathtub full of guitars.)

Anyways, I was trying to think of a method of tying Billy's stories together creatively. Previously I had thought that we might write a collection of short stories that we might juxtapose against each other creatively, like the story of his first guitar lesson weaved in with the story of the first lessons with one of his students. Still a good idea. I even played around with the idea of Billy being able to travel back in time to give himself advice.

A week ago I dove in and wrote the beginning of a story in which Billy is playing at a Tempe Arts Festival gig (a real life event that I attended) and is transported back through time seemingly through playing the guitar solo to a song he wrote about his recently deceased dog. He slips through the grasp of time and finds himself in his grandfather's office as a youngster learning to play the intro to "Runaway" by Del Shannon. That is as far as I have gotten.

I read the story to Billy and he loved the idea. He didn't so much like the part about him in the bedroom learning "Runaway" (which is based on a story he told me that I need more details on) but he liked the initial time travel episode. We talked about the idea that a solo could be a great vehicle for time travel. He called it "Time travel in 24 bars." I think that it could be a great way to connect Billy's stories of the past to his present life or more recent past. Perhaps he is affected temporally and temporarily by playing guitar solos in that when he does he is transported by the solo to an important event in his music education. It is kind of like amplifying what happens to most of us when we hear a song from our past. We are not transported physically, but in our minds we see, hear, sometimes we even can remember smells and textures from our past. Billy's amplified version of nostalgic temporal transportation is turned up to 11. He begins by playing a solo and then feels all of the things that normal people feel and remember, but for him it has a different effect. He has a type of out-of-body experience in which everything around him seems to freeze in time while he is transported back in time to the event that the solo reminds him of or is tangentially connected to. In our story Billy will be transported to important events in his music education which will allow us to connect Billy's musical life and learning in a way much like the way Billy tells the stories of his musical life, or in other words, not chronologically and out of order, or out of time but meaningfully connected.

January 14, 2017

I have been reading a book about the history of time travel as an idea called Time Travel: A History *by James Gleick. It chronicles much of the thinking about time travel in literature, psychology, physics, and philosophy. The book is great for me because of the questions that he poses about the way we think about time travel. I don't want to get too*

into time travel. After all the book is not about time travel, it is about the musical life of Billy Cioffi and the questions a telling of parts of that musical life might raise. I am starting to believe however that time travel is a storytelling mechanism that fits Billy and his stories and the way he tells his stories. Not everyone tells stories like Billy. Not everyone has lived a life like Billy. I saw the movie Arrival yesterday which deals with a certain type of mental time travel in which the main character starts to learn an alien language which unlocks the ability to see into the future. The story tellers do a fabulous job of using mental time travel as a mechanism to deal with the issues of communication, family, love, loss, life and fate. In Billy's story time travel will be a mechanism for highlighting meaningful connections between important events in Billy's life both past and present, and possibly future. Time travel will allow us to play with the Derridean idea that all things are texts in that he will be able to revisit events and extract new meaning out of those events as a character in the story and also as a creator of the text of the text. Also it will allow us to view the deconstruction of the text that is formal music education, particularly the type of music education that relies on linear thinking (for example, you have to learn notation before you can compose or you have to learn the basics before you can play songs you like). Time travel, depending on how you do it, speaks to a non-linear type of thinking. To unhinge yourself from the bounds of time you have to try to let go of the idea that time is linear. If time is non-linear, meaning that it might be circular or that there is no end or beginning. (See how hard it is to conceptualize?) I will do more reading and writing on this topic. Suffice it to say for now that --

Oh yeah back to how it can be a witnessing of the deconstruction of the text of his life. We relive and make new meaning of our memories or at least we can. Who is to say that that isn't time travel? Well not really but in our story it could be.

Jan 19th 2017

I have been reading a book by Paul Ricoeur called Time and Narrative in which Mr. Ricoeur is doing a critical analysis of the aporias found in St. Augustine's "Confessions," particularly his meditations on time and eternity. St. Augustine is often quoted in books about time travel, in fact he is quoted in the other book that I am reading about the history of time travel. The quote he is most associated with is the part where he says that he knows what time is until you ask him and then he can't explain it. I paraphrased it horribly there but you get the gist. Bruner talks about the idea that we seem to have no other way to account for the passing of time but through narrative and he references Ricoeur's work. The greatest part of the Ricoeur book so far is the Augustinian idea of distentio animi or the distended soul. Or the expanded soul. The idea is that we hold in our mind three presents: the present future, the present and the present past, and the way it is done is by enlarging the soul, more to come on this later.)

On Being "Done" *(Back to the process document.)*

It will be done when it is done. (*I was just a teensy bit upset when I wrote this.*) It is a work of art inquiry (*My friend Austin and I were talking about why we have to qualify it as art inquiry and not just art or not just inquiry, isn't there an element of inquiry in all art?*) (Eisner, 1996). Billy and I will be writing stories together and we will do our best to make sure that the stories encourage questioning. We will question ourselves and we hope that the stories we write will raise questions in the minds of the people who read what we have written.

Dr. Tobias asked about data saturation during the proposal defense … I don't think there is such a thing in narrative research. I suppose if I was approaching this from the point of view of a detached researcher doing a case study as an outside observer I could make up something about knowing that I had "collected" enough data to "accurately" represent the case. But I am not endeavoring to "collect" data, and I am not doing a case study as a detached researcher, and accuracy is not my aim. I aim to deepen a relationship with a person (Nichols, 2016). Billy and I already have a good relationship and that is one of the reasons that I can even propose to write stories *with* him about his musical life. I am not collecting data: instead Billy and I will be generating data together, and the data will be storied. Storied data. (*After having spent so much time with Billy I don't like the term "generate" any more than I like "collect." I don't really like the word "data" all that much. I like listening to Billy tell stories. Save the data for the statisticians.)*

Billy is full of stories. I don't want them to end. You might say that Billy is saturated with data in story form. I want to submerse myself in those stories. I want to

drown in them, live in them with Billy. Data saturation? How will I know when I have heard enough stories? There cannot be enough. I guess if Billy told me after months of working together, "Well, that's it, I've got no more stories," that might be data saturation. We will be "done" when we decide that we have created a work that we are both satisfied with. I don't know yet what stories will be part of that work and I have only one goal for the work. Let me make mistakes. Let me learn through making something with someone, by inquiring *through* writing and researching *with* someone (Richardson, 2000). *(That is what I proposed. That is what I did.)*

IN DIALOGUE

I invited five friends to read the novella and have a conversation with me about their reading. I sent each person the novella and the following questions.

1. What questions, if any, did reading the novella raise for you about music education?

2. What other texts in your life did your reading of the novella interact with?

3. If this were the first in a series of novellas about the musical lives of people, what would your idea be for the next novella?

After time to read I called them individually and recorded our conversations. I let the post-reading conversations go where they needed to go, depending on how each reader responded to the novella and answered the questions I sent as well as questions that arose through our dialogue. Because readers engaged with the questions through their own individual contexts, our conversations about their reading of the novella are texts in and of themselves.

Below you will find a composite conversation created from the multiple conversations with the five people who accepted my invitation to read and talk about the novella. I wrote the composite conversation as if we had had a collective Facebook chat. In the collective chat, I attempt to represent the similar and contrasting responses of the individual readers. It only occurred to me after having conversations with all of the readers separately that I might put their words in dialogue with each other. Had I thought of it earlier, I might have convened a real Facebook chat.

Creating a composite conversation after the fact afforded me the ability to weave in elements that would not have been possible during a real Facebook chat. For instance,

I added Jacques Derrida as a participant in the chat. I imagined what it would be like if Derrida had read the novella and we were friends on Facebook. I derived the Derrida character based on readings of many transcribed conversations with him such as those found in "Points …" (1995) and "Acts of Literature" (1992) and "Deconstruction In a Nutshell" (1997). In every transcribed interview with Derrida that I have read, he answers questions in a lengthy way, going on tangents that are related but often circulating back to the original question.

Creating a composite chat also allowed me to put the readers' ideas in dialogue with each other and with my own thoughts about the novella. For example, two readers talked about flow and Csikszentmihalyi in our private conversations, so I added an interaction between them to put them in dialogue regarding that topic. Throughout the chat, the words that readers (other than Derrida) speak are largely their own and drawn directly from my conversations with them. I specifically try to stay out of the "conversation" between readers, but of course I constructed the conversation so I am very much in it. Inviting individual conversations and constructing the collective chat was not an effort to determine the effectiveness of the novella. Rather, this was an effort to enter into dialogue with readers as well as open an opportunity to enter into dialogue with other texts through their readings.

I hope that you will think about what you might have said if you were participating in such a conversation. Whenever a new person shows up in the chat below, everyone who is already in the chat welcomes them, which is a nod to a deconstructive gesture. Caputo (1997) describes deconstruction as welcoming the other and so, in that spirit, feel free to participate. I have left blank spaces in the conversation where you can

add what you might say. Feel free to print out the pages and write on them, or, here is a link to a google doc where you can contribute to the conversation. https://docs.google.com/document/d/18jnqF9KKH0h3EANPREqox9jsIIIkC8HbWdri7QyGVao/edit?usp=sharing

Welcome!

The Readers

Jacques Derrida was/is a French philosopher known for deconstruction. He is arguably one of the most famous philosophers of the twentieth century, and although he has been dead for more than a decade, I imagined that he agreed to join our chat.

Ryan Bledsoe is a colleague and friend who lives in McKinney, Texas. She and I were in a Paulo Freire book club together during my first year of doctoral studies. We have collaborated on many projects in the last four years, including a grant we received to make a programmable robot that teaches kids how to code through musical engagement. We also frequently read one another's writing to give each other feedback. Ryan is the founder of the Duo Musical Playground https://www.learnwithduo.com/, which is "a place where adults and kids create together."

Paul Ricks and I both started teaching in 2008. He taught 5th and 6th grade and I taught music at Nibley Park, a K-8 school in Utah. Paul is the teacher I want to be when I grow up. He found amazing ways to engage kids in fun student-centered projects. Students in his classes wrote raps, comic books, made movies, blew things up, and read real books. He famously never opened the district-mandated basal readers despite being asked about why they were still on the shelf wrapped in plastic. Instead, students chose what they wanted to read. At the time of writing this Paul is a doctoral student in

children's literature at Penn State University where he teaches children's literature courses for preservice teachers and a course about informal learning.

Steve Bickmore is my dad. He is an Associate Professor of English education at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. He and I have published two chapters together about the intersections between young adult literature and music. He blogs every Wednesday about young adult literature here: http://www.yawednesday.com/. He has been the editor of *The ALAN Review*. He has also published journal articles and book chapters about new teacher induction, young adult literature, and interdisciplinary learning.

Doug McLennan was the first principal I worked with as a music teacher. He hired me for my first job. Prior to that, Doug had quit being a principal at a different school to live on a boat in the Caribbean with his wife Linda for two years. I met him right after he returned. Now, Doug owns about 40 acres in the high desert of Nevada that he calls Solace Ranch where he builds small cabins out of found materials including whisky bottles and Volkswagon bug windows. Every year he hosts a huge party for family and friends called "Music Weekend." Solace Ranch is one of the most serene, mind clearing, inspirational places I have ever been, and it is a great place to make music. http://sha332.wix.com/solace-ranch#

Jenae Maley is an undergraduate in music education at the University of Central Missouri, where I am (at the time I was writing this) a first-year faculty member. Jenae is currently the president of the collegiate chapter of the National Association for Music Education at UCM. Everyone who knows her says she is going places. She advocates having a growth mindset and is an all around go-getter.

This Space is for you. Tell us about yourself.

The Chat

Isaac: Hello everyone.

…

Isaac: Anybody there?

…

Jacques: Knock. Knock.

Isaac: Ah, Jacques, bienvenue!

Jacques: Ha! Where are the rest?

Isaac: I don't know. Let's get started and see if our conversation makes room for the newness that they will surely bring (wink wink).

Jacques: Surely. This text is falling apart, and they will be able to leap into it through the gaping cracks that are appearing even now.

Isaac: Always?

Jacques: Already!

Isaac: LOL! So, just to start, thank you for agreeing to read our novella.

Jacques: It was my pleasure, or rather it pleased me to do it. I could say that I knew that it would please you and so I was pleased to please you, not that reading the novella was unpleasing, but my motivations for accepting your invitation are many and complicated.

Isaac: One of the things I was trying to do in the novella was raise questions about music education. Did reading the novella raise any questions for you?

Jacques: Yes of course. Questions about music education? Of course. Notably the title of the novella itself, *Radio Heartbreak: A Music Education*, right away raises the question that there may be other music educations and that this music education is but one of many. So from the very beginning I am questioning how the events, the emplotment, is educative and for whom. Is the novella overtly educating the reader or is it descriptive of Billy's education? I say the word emplotment, but the novella is not merely emplotment, as in the novella is not a series of historical events in narrative form. There is also the element of magical realism a la Fuentes or Marquez. The addition of the fiction of time travel to the narrative depiction of the life of Billy makes it more than mere emplotment. Normally I am not drawn in by fantasy, in fact, I do not enjoy fiction of this sort. The act of fictionalizing or the play of fiction as it pertains to philosophical questions is interesting to me, though the time travel in the novella plays on the edge of fiction and memory. In many ways our memories are fictions. Billy's memories are portrayed as moments

of the past which he visits via a fictional temporal shift. In this way it is a fiction within a fiction. The spectrum of literature allows for many fictions. The daily fiction of memory is a fiction we depend on to make certain sense of our lives. My reading of those fictions within fictions raised questions about the educative nature of memory. Of course there are many questions that arise in the novella that are philosophical in nature, ontological questions such as: What is the point of regret? What is the point of our mistakes in life? What is a teacher? What is education? I thought quite a bit about the question of one's legacy. How will the things we do live on after we have died? It is a rather selfish thought, but we do think about it.

Isaac: I love the idea of fictions within fictions. It reminds me of Jerome Bruner's writing on narrative. He writes that "we seem to have no other way to account for lived time save through narrative." Our memories are not exact reenactments of the events in our lives but we use our memories to tell stories about our lives. The "fictions within fictions" idea seems a lot like that. I agree that peering into our own memories can be educative. Educative for yourself and educative for others if we tell stories based on those memories. Also thank you for your questions. They are similar to some of the questions that were in my head as I wrote the novella.

Jacques: You are of course welcome to the questions. If I may say a bit more about fiction. Fiction does not mean dishonesty. I say this because our conversation could be construed as a critique of the integrity of memory. Narrative, literature, fiction, they are all ways to explore our lives, among other things. Readers and

writers both explore their lives and the many aspects of their lives through reading and writing text.

Isaac: Yes and all things are texts, not just the things we write on the page but our actions, the stories we tell and our interactions with each other.

Jacques: Somebody said something like that once. I seem to recall he was French.

Isaac: Yes, I seem to recall that he had very cool hair.

Jacques: The coolest, if my memory serves me well.

Isaac: Ha ha. Perfect. Did your reading of the novella raise any questions specifically about music education?

Jacques: I read through, around, under, above, and before the novella in that I brought to my reading my own pre/con/sub/post-texts. I have written about/towards/for/through/around both music and education but never about the specific discipline of music education. Discipline in the sense of a branch of knowledge and not so much the practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior through punishment to correct disobedience. Although the latter is very much a part of public education these days, that is, the punishment for noncompliance. Billy it seems, through my reading of the novella, was noncompliant and the novella could almost be read as a cautionary tale whose moral is "be wary of noncompliance," but it can also be read, as the title suggests, as a music education in and of itself. That is, Billy's life in/through/around/with music is his music education and his music education informs the music education of his students through his pedagogy.

The text of my reading contains the questions "What other music educations exist that are forgotten? Who remembers the music educations that others have forgotten? How are music educations deconstructing and what newness will their various deconstructions make space for?" A transcendent reading of any text will highlight the openings made by the deconstruction of that text. That is not to say that the reader or the text is transcendent, but that the way in which they read the text transcends the text itself. Such a reader/reading is prone to see questions, prone to read beyond the text. Humans are not simple text decoders. We connect/create/converse with our world through/in/around literature.

Paul: I have something to say about this.

Isaac: Hello, Paul. Welcome!

Jacques: Welcome Paul!

Paul: Thank you. Pleased to meet you, Jacques. Your question about "other music educations" really resonated with me. Reading the novella made me think about the term "music education." One word is situated as an adjective for the other, but is it possible that they are actually more like synonyms? Is music education only learning how to play instruments and singing?

I was thinking about my Uncle Charlie, who I look up to in pretty much every way imaginable. We used to jam out to music on our drives to and from construction jobs. He used to tell me about one hit wonders like Strawberry Alarm Clock, about Sir Elton needing Topin, about Garfunkel maybe being an opportunist/maybe not, about Credence being from San Francisco and singing like

they weren't, about certain songs that were covers where the covers were more famous than the originals. I feel like that, in many ways, was a music education, and I'd like to think that someone else in the universe recognizes it as such. Maybe that is one of those music educations that you were talking about, Jacques. The novel weaves the learning that takes place in spaces such as Billy's studio with the learning that takes place elsewhere and elsewhen, for Billy and for the other people in the novella. So I'm wondering, How might educators reimagine the spaces and places they occupy to get away from privileging one type of learning or space over the other? What might happen if students started studying the music they already care about?

Isaac: You are good at that Paul. I always tell people the story about how you never opened the basal readers that the district bought for all of the teachers. I remember the students in your class writing their own "choose your own adventure" books. They read the books they wanted to read and wrote about their lives in many different ways. They wrote comic books, raps, and poetry.

Paul: Yeah, I remember an administrator walked into my room once and asked me about why I hadn't even opened the basal readers yet, and I basically told him I hadn't needed them yet but they were there if I ever did. Nobody could ever give me a good reason to use those books.

This space is for you. (Or leave a comment anywhere.) What are your thoughts?

Isaac: Paul, that story about the music education you received in conversation with your uncle reminds me of Billy's relationship with Todd Everett in the novella.

Paul: The Todd Everett stuff from the novella is exactly what reminded me of my uncle. I got the impression from reading that section that Billy learned a lot from Todd, the music critic in Los Angeles.

Isaac: Billy once told me that his time with Todd was a form of music education, which is similar to what you said about your time with your uncle. I definitely support the idea that your drives with your uncle could be a music education. I think about all of the music educations that people are engaging in that are not noticed or valued.

Jacques: Yes. This conversation is a way to welcome those music educations.

Isaac: Thank you, Jacques. Earlier you hinted at the idea that your reading of the novella connects with other texts. What other texts in your life did your reading of the novella interact with? Paul, I'd love to hear your thoughts about this as well.

Jacques: I welcome your question. It is very much in line with what I have been explaining. Of course, there is no outside the text. I am very often maligned for this statement. It ruffles the feathers of the birds in gilded cages. Many think it means that I am trying to say that their work will not maintain its authority.

Yes of course this text, your novella, interacts with many other texts. No text is an island. On the other hand all islands are texts and surrounded by texts. I am always drawn to the philosophical. Books, yes, but also film and the text of life and of death. Billy is 67 in the novella and obviously he is thinking about death. I thought about death a lot before I died. Death has many texts surrounding it and my reading of the novella interacted with many of those texts. For example, I thought of *The Talmud* and *The New Testament* but also all of the texts that come with those texts. Perhaps those texts, like the works of Plato, Sartre, Rousseau, and others, are always with me. Perhaps more so for me than for others.

Paul: I have a pretty liberal definition of text, but a few of my thoughts while reading the novella were as follows: I thought a lot about my Uncle Charlie, as I mentioned before. I thought a lot about my experiences as an elementary teacher. I thought about my mom playing songs she didn't know I was listening to. I thought about how rough it was for me that my high school girlfriend couldn't sing. I thought

about seeing the Steve Miller Band with a different uncle (Uncle Joe) for my first concert, seeing U2 with my little brother (his first concert, my first moment realizing we were going to be friends and not just brothers). I thought about watching my wife pull Primus tickets out of her bra (hottest thing I've seen to date). I thought about dissecting music videos with my 6th graders on Poetic Mondays, jamming out with my friend? Mike Raffiti—especially to The Pixies and Clem Snide, creating playlists for each lecture that I teach and halfway hoping my students don't notice. I thought about texting Jeff Chambers and Nathaniel each time I hear something new about Radiohead, showing my sons some of my favorite songs/wondering if I should, smiling when my boys can tell me which ones are by Pearl Jam, finding out that I loved hip hop later in my teaching career, crying when I hear certain songs, getting the chin quiver when I think about crying about certain songs, jamming out with my friends Twan and Dave on road trips, speaking in coded musical references with my sister, wallowing in the pensive ether when my heroes die tragically, watching Netflix documentaries about The Band and George Harrison and Foo Fighters and Nas and Stretch & Bobbito when I should be grading papers, walking with my earbuds in and feeling either more vulnerable or more invincible because of it, wondering what it might be like to be Randy Newman, and not jonesing for former flames but still thinking about them every time I hear certain songs.

Isaac: Maybe I should write a book about your "music education" Paul. It is evident that you think a lot about music. I remember realizing this when we were teaching together. I am notoriously bad at finding new music but you were always burning

me cd's and telling me to listen to things that I didn't know about. Maybe the lesson to learn here is that many people live very rich musical lives. Even people who are not completely surrounded by music like Billy. Even doctoral students in children's literature. Your response to the question about the texts that your reading interacted with is full of examples that match an expanded definition of text. Like you said, a liberal definition of text.

Jacques: There are always many lessons to learn Isaac, not only one. Certainly one of the lessons is that many people live rich musical lives. As far as a liberal definition of text is concerned … I urge caution.

Isaac: Hilarious! Jacques, in the past you have written about tension and différance in regards to words and the meanings we ascribe to them. Did you find any tension within the term "music education" as it is used in the novella? Anyone else can respond as well.

Jacques: Tension? Yes of course. The term music education is not used very often if at all in the novella, but because the title *Radio Heartbreak: A Music Education* works as a preface to the text and is both part of and preface to the text, the title sets up a tension between the term "music education" as most people understand it and this story, which represents *a* music education. There is a tension at play there. Wherever there is tension there is différance. The tension between the many meanings of the term creates the différance.

Doug: I actually had some thoughts about the novella and music education.

Isaac: Hey Doug.

Jacques: Bonjour, Doug.

Isaac: Welcome!

Jacques: Welcome Doug!

Paul: Welcome!

Doug: Thanks. I feel like the drama of the story distracted me from the music education stuff. The drama didn't make it a bad story, in fact the problems of Billy's friends and his own insecurities made the story better. But because we worked together at Nibley Park, Isaac, and I know you quite well as a teacher and a friend, I found myself wondering what all of that had to do with music education. There were moments in the novella that were focused on teaching and learning, such as Billy working with his students and him learning some things during his past. I just had trouble connecting it to music education and what I saw you do as a general music teacher at Nibley Park.

Isaac: Yeah, I actually thought about how the novella might be confusing to people who find it linked to music education research. I realize that writing a time travel novella about Billy is not the quickest route to "music education" as most people think of it, but that was kind of the point. Most of the papers that I write and in much of my research, there is usually a section that addresses the "what does this have to do with music education?" question. In my practice as a teacher and as a teacher educator, I work with kids in public schools and with people who are going to work in schools. Most of my research focuses on the musical lives of people that are not valued as much in public schools as they should be. I try to help people who want to work with young people musically to think about the musical lives of those young people. My colleague and friend Elizabeth Bucura

was in the same doctoral program as me and her dissertation talks about multiple types of music teachers and the multiple spaces in which they work. She troubles the term "music teacher" like we are troubling the term "music education".

Steve: Hi everybody. I think I'll join in here.

Isaac: Hi Dad. Welcome!

Jacques: Bonjour Steve. Welcome!

Doug: Welcome Steve!

Paul: Welcome Steve!

Steve: Thank you all. Doug, I think what you just wondered about--what the novella has to do with music education--is exactly what Jacques is trying to explain. There is a tension between what most people think of as music education and what the novella represents. Billy learned about music through different means than people who learn about music in school. He learned on the road. He learned because he was passionate about something. Why don't we try to engage with kids in education by using what they are passionate about? That is a problem in education in general. The novella made me think about that. That is where the tension is for me. I mean, some kids love choir, band, and orchestra and are passionate about it, but not all of them. Kids should be allowed to experiment with things they want to do. Maybe it's playing a different instrument or making movies or something else.

Paul: Or writing comic books, or making robots, or making mazes.

Ryan: I agree with Steve and Paul.

Isaac: Bledsoe! Welcome!

Steve: Welcome Ryan!

Doug: Welcome!

Paul: Welcome.

Jacques: Welcome!

Ryan: Thank you friends. Steve, what you just said about passion and learning reminds me of something I was thinking about when I read the novella. Seymour Papert http://www.papert.org/ talks about this idea of having an affective relationship with the thing you are learning about or the thing that you are learning through. In other words people want to learn when they care about something or when they are passionate about it.

Doug: Oh I totally agree. That is one of the things that I really identified with in the novella. It was fun to see somebody get passionate about something. The parts of the story where Billy lets the moment just take him, or the idea that you just let your passion lead you instead of trying to lead it. I really identify with that because I feel like I have done that in my life and it has really worked out for me. My family had other ideas for me. When I decided to be a P.E. teacher, before I was a principal, they were horrified. They thought I should become a "professional." Even up until my mom passed away she was always saying, "I will pay for you to back and get a master's degree in something else," and I was getting ready to retire. I think a lot of times we don't encourage students to follow their passions and because of that people lose their passion.

Steve: Yes. We (public education) kill passion and exploration sometimes.

Doug: Yes we do. As a principal I tried to push against that trend but the almighty test

and the test pushers are powerful.

Isaac: In my mind, the novella represents a different type of music education then the type my dad mentioned up above or the choir, band, orchestra model. The novella even represents a music education that is different than what Billy provides for his students.

Jacques: Voila. That is the tension I speak of. When we say "music education" multiple meanings may exist to which those words may apply. The multiple meanings cause tension which cause openings which bring with them a chance to welcome the other.

This space is for you. (Or leave a comment anywhere.) What are your thoughts?

Ryan: Another question that my reading of the novella raised was about how the novella seems like a big reflection. Billy seems to be reflecting on his life as a musician, learner and teacher. How do experienced music educators reflect on their musical learning? Maybe there should be more memoirs about musical learning and teaching. I don't know, the musical lives of music teachers. Something like that. Kind of like the memoir I am reading right now called *Sonata* by Andrea Avery. She is not necessarily a music teacher but the novella reminded me of Avery's memoir. Isaac, since you asked what other texts did our reading of the novella interact with, I might as well say that the novella also reminded me of *Touching Eternity* by Tom Barone partially because I am reading it now for my own dissertation but also because the stories in the novella are rich like the stories in *Touching Eternity*.

Jenae: Ryan, I love the idea of more musical memoirs.

Isaac: Welcome Jenae!

Jacques: Bienvenue

Ryan: Welcome Jenae!

Paul: Welcome!

Doug: Welcome!

Steve: Welcome Jenae!

Jenae: Thank you all. I am just glad to be here. Ryan that thing that you said about memoirs really stuck out to me because I love musical memoirs. I love to read about musicians, and that is one of the reasons I liked the novella. I think there should be more stories about music teachers and young people too. Isaac was

telling me about *Songs In Their Heads* by Patricia Shehan Campbell. I can't wait to read it. Maybe more stories like that.

Steve: Jenae, I totally agree. There is lots of room for more narratives about the musical lives of people. Personally I would like to see more diversity. Maybe some stories about the musical lives of black or Latino youths in America or maybe youth from other countries.

Doug: I was thinking that it would be great to have more stories about the creative lives of people not just in music. I play the string bass a little but my real creative outlet is building things. I know that you are focusing on music, Isaac, but reading the novella made me think about how there must be amazing stories about the creative lives of people.

Isaac: That's so interesting Doug. I have been thinking about how hard it is to cross disciplines and how it shouldn't be so hard. Maybe some stories about cross-curricular creativity would be a good way to start to solve that problem.

Paul: Let's do something together.

Isaac: Let's do it.

Ryan: I have a lot of ideas about more stories. There should be stories about teens who are not in music programs in school. There should be stories about music in families or the musical lives of families. There should be stories about anyone who struggles in formal musical education. I also thought about musical relationships of all sorts. When Julian and I are old we will have made music in many ways with many people. Is there something special about making music with somebody?

Doug: I think there is something special about musical relationships. Every year I throw a big music party at my ranch and people of all musical abilities come and make music together. Ask Isaac about it. Every year people who only know each other through the music weekend rekindle musical relationships by playing songs that they played last year and by learning new songs together. There is something special about the musical relationships that have developed at Solace Ranch.

Isaac: Amen.

Jacques: Hallelujah! Sounds fun. May I come?

Doug: Of course! You are all invited. June 22 - 24.

Paul: Here are my ideas for new projects. *My Top Five*—borrowing from ethnography, five students tell their life stories in five songs. *Guilty Pleasures*—an examination of bands (e.g., Malawi Prison Brass Band, The Institution) that form in prisons and potentially help inmates transcend the experience. *That's When I Knew*—interviews of people who can trace their epiphanies/moments of clarity back to certain songs/experiences with music. *The Mamas and the Papas*—families trace genealogical histories and shared experiences through remembering what their parents, grandparents, siblings, etc. listen to. *I Used to Love This Song*—a hippie examination of what it means to be human by looking deeply into songs that mean different things to us at different times in our lives. I already gave you clever titles so you don't even have to worry about that part.

This space is for you. (Or leave a comment anywhere.) What are your thoughts?

Isaac: Thanks Paul and thank you all for your ideas and for agreeing to be part of this conversation. If I may redirect a little bit before we sign off, I asked Jacques and Paul about this earlier and Ryan already said something about it but I want to ask the rest of you what other texts in your life your reading of the novella interacted with?

Steve: I thought a lot about the music of my own life. I never pretended to be a player but I listened to a lot of music. I still do. I thought about songs while reading the novella, songs like "Red Rubber Ball" or "Young Girl" or bands like Eric and the Animals. My sister Dawn and I would negotiate about which records we would buy together and which ones we would buy separately so that we could maximize the power of our limited record buying money. I got really into soul in high school--James Brown, Sly and the Family Stone. Stuff like that. I realized later as

an adult that I was always interested in music that came from the blues and I just didn't know it. Reading the novella also made me think about Johnny Cash and the idea that there are songs that you should know if you are an American musician. Johnny Cash famously told his daughter this and she has recorded a bunch of those songs, that is, songs that her dad told her she should know. I also thought about the connection between lyrics and music and how Bob Dylan won the Nobel Prize for literature a year ago, something Billy mentioned in the novella, which made me think of Woody Guthrie and how his words and his music go hand in hand.

Isaac: Billy would love this conversation. His whole master's thesis is about how the American popular song is one of our greatest literary traditions.

Steve: Another thing that I thought about as I read was how Billy's time travel shared some characteristics with the mental state of flow attributed to Csíkszentmihályi (I had to look up how to spell that).

Doug: Steve, I thought the same thing. It reminded me a lot of flow. Billy's time travel reminded me of times when I have been doing something physical that is really demanding and then I lose myself in the moment. Sometimes it could be working on some sort of construction project or a sport.

Steve: I felt the same way. There have been a couple of times in my life when I feel like I have achieved flow. Once when I was playing soccer in high school and other times when I have been teaching. Not very often, but when those moments happen they are special.

Isaac: While you were chatting I found this in the wikipedia entry for flow.

Jeanne Nakamura and Csíkszentmihályi identify the following six factors as encompassing an experience of flow:

1. Intense and focused concentration on the present moment
2. Merging of action and awareness
3. A loss of reflective self-consciousness
4. A sense of personal control or agency over the situation or activity
5. A distortion of temporal experience, one's subjective experience of time is altered
6. Experience of the activity as intrinsically rewarding, also referred to as autotelic experience

I think at least some of those qualities are similar to Billy's time travel events.

Jenae: You are going to think I'm crazy, but in my early music class we talked about a monk or priest who described three types of presents, the present past, the present, and the present future. For instance, if you are reciting a chant or a psalm, you keep in your mind what you have said, what you are saying and what you are going to say at the same time.

Isaac: St. Augustine's confessions!

Jenae: Yes. That's it!

Isaac: I used that idea as way to think about Billy's time events. It really helped me write those experiences. I am so glad that you made that connection, Jenae.

Well friends, you can keep chatting, but I have to get going. Once again, thank you for reading the novella and thank you for jumping into this chat. I know you all have busy lives and things to do, so I really appreciate it.

Paul: No problem Bickmore. Peace.

Jacques: Thank you for the invitation. I don't get to do many things like this anymore.

Until next time.

Steve: See you later.

Ryan: Goodbye.

Doug: See you all at music weekend. Ask Isaac for directions.

Jenae: Goodbye.

UNDER DECONSTRUCTION: ~~CONCLUSION~~, ~~SUGGESTIONS~~, REFLECTIONS

I have entitled this section of my dissertation, which I feel might be a complete disaster, "Under Deconstruction" because the fault lines and fissures are more evident here than in any other part of it. While all things are always/already falling apart, this part of my dissertation has been the hardest to write. I have had the hardest time ~~wrapping it up~~. What you read below is not pretty and it represents a great deal of my frustrations with myself as a writer and how I feel about writing a ~~conclusion~~. Specifically, I don't want to tell you what to think about this dissertation. I don't want to dictate to you what you should learn by reading my dissertation. I want *you* to decide what *you* learned by reading it.

I am hesitant to ~~conclude~~, ~~suggest~~, or otherwise ~~finish~~ this dissertation. Part of me just wants to put in big bold type at the end of the novella "The End" with a disclaimer explaining why I won't be explaining anything. Because that is what this section is supposed to do. I am supposed to explain to you how I answered my research questions, what this document might mean for the discipline of music education, and what other people might research in the future. What follows is my attempt to do that without really doing it. It is a complete mess. I am proud of a few ideas below and I am glad some of them will make it into the final document, but overall I cannot with a good conscience endorse this section of my dissertation.

On Beginnings and Endings

Writing with Billy was different than I thought it would be. Some projects might need a clearly defined method before beginning the work. The beginning of this project,

that is writing about the musical life of Billy Cioffi with Billy Cioffi, or rather the edge of this work or the parergon (Derrida, 1979) is hard to pinpoint. Billy had already written beautiful narratives about himself and his musical life, and I began to build narratives in my mind about Billy the day that I met him. Narratives about rock 'n' roll, the 60's, 70's, 80's, guitar playing, L.A., and so on were lurking in my mind before I met Billy, and those narratives likely contributed to this document. I did an oral history project about Billy long before I started my proposal.

I can, though, pinpoint the moment when I decided to turn all of those already lurking/working narratives into a dissertation. Dr. Stauffer and I were walking from the School of Music to the Dean's office, as we often did during my final year on campus, and we were talking about one of my big ideas as a possible dissertation topic. As I recall, I wanted to do a Story Corps type thing, only with the musical lives of people. I wanted to start collecting people's stories about their musical lives. I am still attracted to this idea, mostly because it speaks to one of my beliefs, which is that all people are musical. It might also help music educators expand what we consider to be music education. Dr. Stauffer wisely asked me where I would start.

I was ready to build the booth and start compiling stories onto a website, but in those conversations I began to see that I could just start with one person. That is when I thought again of Billy. Although that moment is not necessarily where this work began, it is when it became my dissertation. After my proposal defense, I dove in, thinking I knew exactly how the writing would go. I thought Billy and I would sit down together and write a story together. I imagined a back and forth wherein he or I would propose an idea for a story and we would counter-propose details and plot elements. That is not at all how

it happened. What really happened is that for a long time I just listened to Billy. I kept a journal and wrote down story ideas. I built narratives in my mind as he told and retold stories. I am a fan of rehearing stories. There are people in our lives who tend to retell stories as if they have never told them to you before. Think about that for a second. Is it simple forgetfulness or could it be something more? Do they *need* to retell that story? Is there something inside of that person that compels them to tell the story again and again?

Billy would sometimes retell a story weeks after telling it the first time, to me at least, and would add new details. There would be more information. Maybe retelling stories is the brain's way of saying, "The way I told that story wasn't quite right," or "It should be told differently this time." Maybe the story took on more detail because something different reminded him of it, and because the thing that triggered the remembering of the story was different, the story took on a different meaning (Marsh, 2007). Memories and stories are complex things.

Billy Cioffi's ~~Music Education~~

Billy's whole life is enmeshed with music. More so than mine and maybe more so than most people's lives. His whole life *is* a music education. Surely he learned other-than-musical things during his life, but often on the periphery of musical activity. Because Billy chose the life of a musician at an early age and left his home at the age of 17 to pursue that path, his life has been centered on musical learning. He sought after music and musical engagement, and the learning of music came out of necessity in pursuing the goal of making it. Billy has made music in many different ways, and each way of making music by necessity has been proceeded by and surrounded by learning. Billy was compelled to learn music because he loved it. He wanted to play it.

Like stories and memories, learning is complex too. On the last day of school before winter break both of my sons were excited. I asked my oldest son, "What happened at school today?" William said, "We didn't learn anything today, all we did was fun stuff." I said, "You are always learning. Your brain is a learning machine that never stops. What you mean is that you didn't do any traditional school learning." Will thought about this for a second (proving my point) and responded by saying, "Yeah, we didn't do anything like normal school learning."

At various points along the way of human history learning became associated with school (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_education), but learning happens constantly and in every context imaginable. I don't blame my child for falling victim to the myth that schools have cornered the market on learning or that fun activities in school don't involve learning. It is not his fault. It is mine. Well, not really, it's society's fault of which I am a part. I am specifically an advocate for schools and schooling. I am, after all, in the 24th grade and will most likely spend the rest of my life at a university. Why wouldn't my son think that schools are for learning? Schools *are* for learning, but they are certainly not the only place where learning happens and maybe not always the place where learning happens best. I hope that I can teach my son that all experience is an opportunity to learn. I am not against efforts to create or design experiences to learn in formal school settings, instead I would like to shine a light on experiences that have not been specifically created for learning but nonetheless teach us lasting lessons. Billy's life is full of experiences like that.

One such experience was forming a band. It was not an experience that designed by a teacher, it was something that Billy did because he wanted to. Through forming a

band he learned a lot about himself, his friends and bandmates, about music, about leadership, and about how to form another band. Teachers could curate such experiences and modify them in formal schooling settings, but by doing so the experience is fundamentally changed because it becomes formalized, or at the very least scrutinized or surveilled in some way, and because it occurs in an institution where there are power dynamics already at play. This observation doesn't mean educators *shouldn'*t try to create units and projects that encourage students to form bands, it just means that it won't be the same as doing so outside of school. Context matters. Billy taught himself how to play the guitar. That is different than me facilitating 8th graders learning to play the guitar or ukulele, no matter how I do it.

Reflections: Or Something Like That

To legitimize what I have learned about Billy's musical life, I'm supposed to tell you what it might *mean* for music education. First, what is music education? Second, how can anything *mean* anything for a giant institution that you haven't even defined for me yet? (Come on keep up. That was a sentence ago!) Third, why should I legitimize to *you* what I have learned?

Let's look at my *research questions.* That might be a smart thing to do in the reflections section of a dissertation. I'll put you all at ease. More like I'll put you all to sleep. Talk about a snooze fest. Do you really want to read stuff you've already read? Ok fine, here it is. Here is what I wrote.

In this narrative study I intend to examine (*as if he were a specimen*) the storied life of Billy Cioffi with the following questions in mind: (*In mind? I am sure these*

questions were in my mind at some point but not throughout the whole study. Give me a break.)

1. What might Billy's musical experience, expertise, teaching, and engagement teach us (*Who the hell is us? Or, as Bowman (2007) put it, "Who is the 'we'?")* about music education? (*What the hell is music education*?)
2. What might the story of his musical life cause us (*Again, who the hell?)* to question about music education? (*Again, what the hell?)*
3. How might his story trouble our beliefs and perceptions about music education?

Back in the first chapter, I wrote, "These questions illustrate why a study such as the one I propose might be useful to the profession of music education. Music educators might benefit from questioning or troubling their long-held beliefs and perceptions about music education. Particularly, we might enter once again into the debate about popular music in public music education in the United States."

Ok. A few things. First, I use the word might six times in the paragraphs above. Why all the mights? It's because I didn't then, and I don't now, want to make anyone think that I am going to answer any questions. I don't want anyone to read this document and get the idea that I have solved a problem or reduced uncertainty. I didn't find a solution to any problem. There was no problem to solve. Instead there was a world to explore.

And then there's the professional literature. What does Billy care about Lucy Greene, who has written extensively about popular music and musicians in education (2002, 2006, 2009)? Nothing. He doesn't care a lick about Lucy Greene. Sometimes I would tell Billy about things I had read. I would try to talk about Little Kids Rock

(http://www.littlekidsrock.org) or Musical Futures (https://www.musicalfutures.org) and the pros and cons of each system. Billy would say, "Let's talk about minstrelsy and the importance of the American popular song." He doesn't care about music education in the same way that I do. It is a different world to him.

To be fair, there are plenty of people with degrees in music education who don't see music education the same way I do, but at least we have read some of the same books and taken similar classes in college. Billy is completely outside the boundaries of formal music education. I guess one of my reflections is just that. There are worlds of music education outside of the institutions of music education. There are so many barriers that prevent people like Billy from engaging with the world of institutional music education. Maybe it is better for *them,* the Billy Cioffi's of the world, if they stay out of institutional music education, but, in my opinion, it is bad for institutional music education, whatever that is, if we keep people like Billy out.

It occurred to me that people might expect me to synthesize what I have learned into some sort of "suggestions for music educators." I asked Billy what advice he would give to people who might be teaching groups of adolescents in rock bands. You see, I am to starting a job as a professor of music education, a teacher of music teachers, and I was trying to see if Billy's wisdom and experience could help me help young people think about teaching. I will be working with people who want to be music teachers, and I intend to use popular music. So I asked Billy for advice, thinking that he might be able to impart some wisdom about teaching young people in a popular music context.

Billy said, "Tell them to work on their badassery, or go out and get some badassery." So there it is. To all my colleagues and fellow researchers looking for the

secret ingredient to helping young people learn to rock, go out and find some badassery. Of course this is all ridiculous. You can't bottle up Billy and put him in a method book. Billy's strengths as a teacher, and perhaps his weaknesses, come from his unique life experiences. If that's true for Billy, isn't it true for everyone? We force young people into auditioning for schools of music and make them leave their rich musical lives outside the door or at the very least keep the richness of their musical lives hidden (see my second essay in review of literature). How would music teacher education, and music education change, if we didn't try to bottle people up and threw out the method books?

Billy's "badassery" answer also made me realize something else. The more I try to explain to you what I learned from doing this project the more I want *you* to make your mind up for *yourself*. Honestly, if there were one thing I think you should take away from this dissertation it is that the interpretation of this text should be left open to you the reader. Don't let me tell you what to think.

I confess I am a bit exasperated. I feel as if it is against my nature to ~~conclude~~ this project in a neat and tidy manner. I know that I need to finish and yet I don't want to connect the dots for you. My dots aren't your dots, and my connections are not your connections. What does this document mean to you? What does it make you want to explore? Did it make you think? Did it trouble you? Your ideas? Your long-held beliefs about music education? Time for another heading.

To the Gate Keepers

Will this document satisfy the requirements for a dissertation? What does a dissertation need to pass muster? The only thing I can think to do is to listen to more stories from Billy and expand the novella. What is it about academic writing that makes

us feel as though we need to explain everything? Academics must be the world's worst comedians. Have you heard the one about the narrativist who couldn't stop explaining what his narratives meant? It's hilarious.

DATA SATURATION

I take no joy in telling you this part of my story but, as you will soon see, joy is not the reason I write it. After I finished the first complete draft of the novella I noticed a change in my relationship to my dissertation in that I had almost no desire to write it. To be fair, after I finished the first draft of the novella life took over. My wife and I put our condo on the market. School got out for all of us. The boys, William and Van, went to the same school where Lesley taught first grade. William was finishing second grade and Van was finishing kindergarten. We had planned a family vacation to Disneyland and we were getting ready for that. As part of that trip Lesley and I had planned to leave the boys with my dad and stepmom in Las Vegas while Lesley and I went to Warrensburg to look at homes to buy because I would be starting my first university job there. After all of that my mom and stepdad were going to meet us at Canyon De Chelly for a short camping trip and then back to Tempe to pack up the house and get ready to move. So, one of the reasons that I didn't want to write was because I was so busy, but the other reason I didn't want to write was because I just didn't want to write.

I had worked so hard and put so much into writing the novella that I couldn't bear to make any more changes or edits. I said it was a first draft but a lot of editing goes into the first draft, so much so that you might call it a series of drafts mixed into a first draft. Writing can be very self-defeating. It never seems done. It hangs over you. Particularly, a dissertation seems to hang over you. It seemed to me to be an obstacle in the road to my happiness and enjoyment in life. While I have enjoyed writing parts of this dissertation, certain circumstances and events made it very hard to finish. It is to those circumstances and events that I turn my attention now.

Around the time school got out in May I started having dreams. In these dreams people I love and respect would be with me in situations that made sense in a dreamlike way, then all of a sudden the dreams would turn and become very menacing. The topic of these dreams seemed to center around my dissertation. For instance in one dream I was having a discussion with my father. We were fishing in the dream, which is hilarious because we never fish, but as I said, it made sense in a dreamlike way.

"I see what you're trying to do there with the post-modern thing," my father had said. In reality my father is a professor of English education at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and knows plenty about dissertations and post-modernity, so all of this dream makes sense up to this point, except for the fishing. My father continued, "But you know what a good dissertation is?" "A done dissertation," I responded with a smile. It is a saying that floats around academia. There is a sense among doctoral students that your dissertation must be perfect. It must break new ground but not without breaking too much new ground. My father and stepmother, both PhD's, are fond of reminding me that the best kind of dissertation is a done dissertation. As if I didn't know that. I imagine there are plenty of doctoral students who walk away from dissertations and live perfectly normal lives, some with regret and some with a footloose and fancy-free attitude towards life. That is just fine for those people, but for me. Not finishing was not an option. I just couldn't do it. Finish, I mean.

After I responded to my father in the dream, the dream turned. Dreams are odd this way. You can be in the sunshine one moment enjoying a nice relaxing fishing trip and in a dark laundry room another moment and not really know how you got there. In this dream we ended up in a dark coin-operated laundry room. "Well then finish the damn

thing!" My father's demeanor had changed. He was no longer sarcastically joking with me. He was angry. He knocked a basket of laundry off of the dryer next to him. The fluorescent lights flickered and he began to walk towards me yelling the words, "FINISH IT! FINISH IT THEN!" That is when I woke up. I feel the need to defend my father the real person. He would not act this way. In person he has been very helpful and kind in regards to my dissertation. Still the dream left me rattled.

In another dream I am with Dr. Tobias in the Music Education and Therapy lab discussing the Digital Hybrid Lab class and moving around various dreamlike musical gadgets and wires. There is a pile of them in the center of a table and we are attempting to organize it. We begin to discuss my dissertation and the topic of data saturation comes up. "Yes, but how will you know when you are done. How will you know when you have generated enough data?" Dr. Tobias asks me. "I don't know. I feel like that question turns Billy into some sort of machine that I use to 'generate data' out of," I respond.

Now in real life Dr. Tobias would respond calmly and with thoughtfulness. In fact, the dream up to this point was a lot like a very pleasant conversation we had had during my proposal defense, but then, in my dream, he became very disappointed. "Isaac, you're just not getting it. We've tried to tell you but you just aren't getting it." He pushed away from the table, stood up, looked right at me, and said, "How will you know you are done? HOW WILL YOU KNOW YOU ARE DONE?" He stepped closer to me sliding gadgets and wires off the table and shouted one more time, "HOW WILL YOU KNOW?!" And then I woke up.

In another dream Dr. Stauffer, in a fit of exasperation, tells me to find a new advisor. In another Lesley is crying because I lose my job in Missouri because I can't

finish the damn thing. All the dreams center on me not knowing how to finish. The dreams in and of themselves would have been manageable if it weren't for what came next.

After the novella it was harder for Billy to find time to meet because he started doing music camp and teaching extra lessons. He was working all day at Kirk's Studio. He had had a cornea transplant and he told me via text that the new cornea had turned blue. His original eye color was brown so now he had one brown eye and one blue. He said his students thought that it made him look even cooler. He mentioned that David Bowie had two eye colors.

I was worried Billy wouldn't get to read the novella one more time. I was worried that I wouldn't get to see him again before I moved. Weeks passed. My family and I had gone to Disneyland and Canyon De Chelly and back. We were under contract for a home in Warrensburg and had to be out of our condo in about a week. Lesley and I planned to drop her and the boys at my dad's house in Las Vegas where her mom would pick them up and take them to Utah for a family visit while I would come back to Tempe to try and finish. Finish. What would a finished dissertation even look like? I wrote some sections during the weeks that we were packing but was still unsure what "done" was supposed to be. Billy and I texted back and forth trying to find a time we could meet.

Then, one day, I was on Facebook, completely wasting every ounce of my human potential, and I got a Facebook message from Billy.

Hey Isaac, let's meet and finish this. My place tonight at 7:00.

This was odd because we don't usually communicate through Facebook messenger. We had used messenger a few years ago, when we first met, just to keep in

touch, but we had been using text messages or calling since the project began. The Facebook message was also odd considering that Billy's previous text messages had been apologetic in tone, usually because he wanted to find time to meet and was swamped. Billy had never been so … curt.

I was immediately worried that Billy had grown tired of my texts, tired of the whole project. He had been so gracious with his time and with the intimate details of his life. Maybe I had worn out my welcome. On the other hand maybe it was all just in my mind. Maybe he had just found some time and wanted me to know quickly. I was on edge. I helped Lesley pack up some more boxes and told her I was going to go see Billy. It was a Friday night and she and the boys were going to watch a movie and then go to bed. I left with a pit in my stomach.

One of my greatest fears is that I will disappoint people. I worry about it all the time. It is probably unhealthy and I should probably talk to a counselor about it. On my drive to Billy's home in Scottsdale I worried that I had disappointed him. The desert has its own type of sparse beauty and in the summer when the sun is setting the colors are amazing. I tried to take in the desert and think of anything except my dissertation and that fact that I may have upset the person that my dissertation was about.

Then I thought about the ending and all my conflicted thoughts swirled up. How would I be able to wrap up a document like the one I had written? I toyed with the idea of writing a reintroduction to the dissertation. So edgy, right? I mean, come on, just write a conclusion. Spell it all out. It's the easiest thing in the world, right? Was I becoming the stereotypical young academic who thinks they're the first person to discover Jacques Derrida? I know that every original thought I have has been expressed by someone else

better and years before me. Yet I *am* trying to do something different with my dissertation. I wanted my dissertation to be different from the very beginning. I don't want to do the same old thing.

Then I thought about the time travel element and . . . more worries. I worry that people will read the time travel story about Billy and see through it to the insecure, scared, floundering, man-boy who wrote it. I'm just faking it until I make it. I got a job, sure, but how long until they find out I am just keeping my head above water? For a while I had read out loud a list of self-affirmations every morning to help me think positively about the impending end of my document. My proposal defense went well. I had written a process document following the proposal defense and had re-worked the first chapters. I felt pretty good about the novella. But I did not know how to finish the document. Were there more stories that needed to go into the dissertation or should I just wrap it up?

I thought again about how to connect Billy's musical life and his work as an educator to "relevant music education research." I knew that is something that a dissertation should do and yet I had trouble spelling it out. I had painted myself into a corner. I was writing a novel not an epic. I didn't want to tell the reader what to think about Billy's musical life. I thought again about writing a section comparing what Billy does with his students to Musical Futures or Little Kids Rock or drawing connections to Lucy Green and others. Every time I tried to talk to Billy about those ideas he seemed completely uninterested and changed the subject. He didn't give a crap about the new article in the *MEJ* by Mathew J. Rescsanszky "Mixing Formal and Informal Pedagogies in a Middle School Guitar Classroom."

I remembered that Dr. Mantie had said at my proposal defense just to write a story. He took me to task for writing about trusting the reader and not telling them what to think and then doing the exact opposite. “Write a story and leave it open,” he told me. Still, I had a hard time letting go of the feeling that my dissertation wouldn’t been done unless it had a formal conclusion with a section entitled “Implications for the Field.” At the same time, I just wanted to write a note at the end saying, “What did you think?”

I pulled into the circle where Billy and Gwen lived and parked on the far side where there was no house, just a lot that had been turned into a giant concrete gutter so that when it rained the water would go where it is supposed to go. As I parked I thought about how the process of writing a dissertation was like the rain and the gutter. Your mind is raining ideas all the time. You decide on one set of ideas and then, in order to get your degree, you have to channel those ideas into a form. The form is almost as rigid as concrete. It made me think about the etymology of the word dissertation, which I had recently looked up:

> *Dissertation: 1610s, "discussion, debate," from Latin dissertationem (nominative dissertatio) "discourse," noun of action from past participle stem of dissertare "debate, argue, examine, harangue," frequentative of disserere "discuss, examine," from dis- "apart" (see **dis-**) + serere "to join together, put in a row, arrange (words)," from PIE root ***ser-** (2) "to line up." Sense of "formal, written treatise" is 1650s.* (http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=dissertation)

I remember feeling at that time that I was never going to be able to “join it together,” which is hilarious considering my affinity for Derrida and deconstruction. I had written that I was going to be a witness to the deconstruction of many different texts including my own dissertation. Did I curse myself? Can you finish a thing you are watching fall apart? What does “finished” mean if everything is falling apart?

I walked up to Billy's gate and noticed that his garage door was closed, which was odd. Every other time I had been to Billy's house the garage had been opened and his Honda minivan was parked in the driveway in front of it. I didn't think much of it then. In hindsight I should have. I rang the bell by the front gate and from somewhere inside Billy answered very quickly, "Come on in."

This also had never happened. Billy usually walked out to the gate, unlocked the deadbolt, lifted the latch on the top, and we would walk back to his porch together. I wondered for a moment if something was wrong, then turned the knob on the gate, reached over to undo the latch, and pushed the gate open. The small pool in the front patio was eerily quiet and blue. It made me think about data saturation again. The only way I could be done listening to Billy tell stories was if either he or I couldn't do it anymore. Maybe this was it.

I had never been to Billy's house at night. I felt a tingle on the back of my neck but chalked it up to my general anxiety and walked past the pool to the front door. The door was open a little, so I knocked and then peered in. The front room was only dimly lit by a lamp next to Gwen's chair. Billy was sitting on the edge of the couch farthest from the lamp and smoking a cigarette. No, not smoking a cigarette. He was holding a lit cigarette. I remember now that I never saw him smoke it. Billy usually never smoked inside. Usually we sat on the porch so that he could smoke. Maybe he wanted to stay inside because it was night time. Maybe the mosquitos? I walked in slowly, took my bag off my shoulder, and sat down in the chair across from Billy. I was starting to realize that something was wrong.

"So how you doing Billy? Is everything O.K.?" I asked as good naturedly as I could. My mind was racing with all the reasons he could be upset with me. Had something happened to Gwen or had he gotten some more bad news about his eye? Billy sat there holding his lit cigarette for what seemed like ages and then extinguished it in an ashtray that I swear I had never seen before.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Sure," I answered "What do you want to start with?"

Billy began to laugh quietly. "Always ready to start something aren't you?" he said.

"What?" I said, immediately on edge. "What did you say?"

"Nothing. Don't worry about it … uh … sonny me boy." Billy's voice changed when he said "sonny me boy." That phrase was something he sometimes said at the end of a meeting when we both knew it was time to stop. He might say something like, "Well that's it sonny me boy." Sometimes he said it as a greeting, "How are you sonny me boy?" But the way he had said it just now … it sounded exactly like his voice, but out of place, as though he had paused to look through a set of phrases in a library of phrases that might put me at ease. It felt … calculated.

He continued, "What do you need from me to finish?" He uncrossed and crossed his legs. I looked at him and noticed that his hair was not in a ponytail. He usually only wore his hair down when he was playing. The room was only dimly lit so I couldn't really tell, but something about his appearance bothered me. It was not normal.

"Finish? You mean the novella?" I asked. Billy was silent. I waited for a response. I waited for as long as I could bear. I don't like silence. Nothing like a break in

the conversation to make me feel anxious, which I already was, so I filled the space. “Do you mean the whole dissertation?”

“Yes!” He responded quickly. The word shot out like a stab from a knife. It scared me. I jumped.

“Ok, whoa,” I said. “Is everything ok Billy? Did I do something? I know you’ve been busy. I hope I haven’t been taking too much of your time. If you need space don’t worry, I can go.”

“I don’t need space. I need completion,” he said.

I was confused. Billy had been talking about the novella being a draft for a longer book. Only a couple weeks ago he had talked about adding another part to the novella. He had texted me, apologizing for not being able to meet. He wanted to edit things and continue to work on it.

“You need completion? What do you mean you need completion?” I asked.

“I’m sorry. I mean I want to help you finish your dissertation. Now what do you need to finish?” Billy asked.

Just then I realized that Coco Chanel hadn’t met me at the gate. Billy’s little dog had grown to like me. At first she was scared and would bark at me and growl. Now we were friends. I would pet her during our meetings and she would sit by me sometimes. She must not be here. I began to wonder where Gwen was too. Where would she be at 7:30 on a Friday night without Billy?

“Where is Coco?” I asked.

“Coco?” Billy asked. “Why?”

“Is she ok? She usually greets me at the gate and I haven’t seen or heard her,”

I said.

"She is with Gwen," Billy responded.

"Where?" I asked. Billy sat there silently. I began to feel the need to leave. I didn't feel safe. If people were missing and he couldn't answer, then I had to get out of there.

Billy leaned forward into the stream of light from the lamp. I could see him more clearly now. He looked exactly like Billy. No, he looked exactly like a video of Billy, but in person. I can't quite explain it. It was Billy, but not Billy. His face looked like it came from one of the many videos I had taken of him in this very room, but the light on his face now did not match the light in the room. Something was off. The face I was seeing seemed like a perfect holograph of Billy's face. He looked right at me and said with a smile, "What do you need to finish?"

His eyes. They were both the same color. He should have had one blue and one brown. His left eye was still cloudy as if he hadn't had the operation yet. How could this be? This was not Billy, but it was Billy. I reached for my bag. "Billy, I think I'd better go," I said as I stood up. As I did, Billy, or some version of him, stood up abnormally fast, impossibly fast.

"NO! You need to finish."

Startled, I fell back onto the ottoman. "What the hell Billy? I can't finish tonight."

Now that he was standing up and bathed in the light from the lamp I got a better look at him. It <u>was</u> Billy, but as I looked at his clothes I saw … text. Yes. Text. Twelve point Times New Roman text. I would know it anywhere. It was in constant motion. Each patch of clothing had its own cursor that was constantly either blinking or being pushed

along by a stream of letters and spaces. The patch of clothing on the front of his left leg was close enough for me to read. It was a part of the novella. It said:

> *He wondered if it were a degenerative brain disease. He wondered about his own mortality, which made him think about his students and his album.*

The cursor was slowly clicking back and forth through the words "degenerative brain disease." I recognized that portion immediately because I knew that it needed to be fixed. When Billy had read that part of the novella several weeks ago he had said, "I don't worry about stuff like that so much." "Not even if you were time traveling?" I had asked. "No, I just wouldn't worry about my brain. I try to stay present," he had responded. I knew that I needed to change that part, but every time I thought about editing the novella one more time I couldn't bring myself to do it.

I looked at the thing passing for Billy up and down. Words from different parts of my dissertation appeared all over his clothing, with cursors writing and deleting words, highlighting and un-highlighting text? in a glowing light-blue hue.

"What are you?" I asked, realizing I was in trouble and that maybe the real Billy was in trouble and maybe Gwen and Coco too. The thing laughed just like Billy. In fact, the sound was oddly reminiscent of a recording I had of Billy laughing as he told me a story from his youth. His face paused after the laugh and refocused on me.

"I can't believe you don't know what I am." It took a step right through the coffee table between us as if it were an apparition, a ghost. The same glowing light-blue hue highlighting color of the text on his clothes highlighted the parts of his body that stepped through the coffee table. The blue lines disappeared as he stepped out of the table. He

looked right in my eyes and his face froze as if it was paused then unfroze as he said with a scowl, “You made me.”

“What?” I exclaimed. “I didn’t make you. I don’t even know what you *are!”* I reached for my things and started to stand up again.

Just then the thing stepped closer with the same abnormal quickness it had exhibited before. It yelled at me as it pushed me back into the ottoman. “HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW WHAT I AM?! The longer I sit unfinished, just falling apart, the more I think you *never* knew what I was. Did you even have a plan when you started?”

I was confused and scared. I reached for my phone in my pocket as I tried to distract it with a question. “Please just tell me what you are. What are you?” I asked.

It leaned in quickly and put its video face right in my face. “I’ll give you a clue,” it said and then lifted me up out of the ottoman as quickly as it had stood up and held my face right in front of what looked like Billy’s vest pocket. It *was* Billy’s vest pocket, but as I was forced to look I could clearly see it was something more. I could clearly read what was written there, and I could see the cursor blinking at the beginning of a paragraph that I had written many months ago. It was under the word “Openings” in bold letters.

> *Even though I have just described a format for how I might organize the stories that Billy and I will write together and for the texts that will be created by witnessing the deconstruction of the those and other texts, I want to enter into this study with a sense of openness that allows for other formats. In other words, I don’t know what this document will look like. I do know that it is always already deconstructing. Do you see it? Do you see the cracks? Do you see the tension between the many elements at play?*

“I recognize this,” I said. “This is from the end of my proposal.”

"Yes," it said as it shook me. I fumbled again in my pocket for my phone so I could call 911 when I got a chance. With one hand it held me by the front of my shirt out and away from its body and with the other hand it grabbed at its vest pocket and pulled out what looked like pages and pages of writing. Not quite pages. They were more like page-sized windows of a web browser in physical form, paper-thin tablets with cursors blinking, moving, and highlighting text on each one. It shoved them in my face.

"This is what you called your methodology?" it said. "I remember when you put a line through the word methodology. You put me … under erasure was it? … crossed pieces of me out. As if I was a thing and not that thing at all. Why not just cross me *all* out if you are not going to finish me? Why not just delete me? DO YOU KNOW WHAT I AM YET?"

I was trying to dial but my phone wasn't on. The thing was still holding me by the shirt. I tried to back away but its grasp was strong. I tried to pry loose but it was as if the thing didn't even notice. It looked down at the phone in my right hand.

"Don't even bother with that. It won't work anymore. I deactivated it." It picked me up and set me in Gwen's chair and said, "Don't move!" It stood in front of me and seemed to be waiting for me to say something.

"Why won't my phone work? What did you do to it?" I asked, breathing heavily and trying to think my way out of this situation.

"Your phone has the Google drive app on it. You still don't know what I am, do you?" it said.

I thought for a moment to clear my head. I was trying to think two things at once: 1. What to tell this thing I thought it was, and 2. How to get out of there. Finally I said,

"You are the chapter three of my dissertation proposal, but that doesn't explain why you look like Billy or why you are walking through things and throwing me around."

"WRONG! But close," it said as it hovered over me. "REMEMBER WHAT YOU JUST READ!" it yelled. Then it then began to quote back to me what I had just read in a condescending tone, making fun of the words. "In other words, I don't know what this document will look like. I do know that it is *always already* deconstructing. Do you see it? Do you see the cracks? Do you see the tension between the many elements at play?" It paused, then said, "What does 'always already' even mean? You don't know what this document will look like? YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS DOCUMENT WILL LOOK LIKE?"

Was this thing my dissertation?

"Are you my dissertation?" I asked.

It put its left hand on my chest and leaned in quickly, pushing down on me. With its right hand, it grabbed under its vest and ripped more of the paper-thin browser windows from where its ribs would be, each with a page from a Google doc. It looked right at my face.

"This is your introduction, this is your essay about the history of rock 'n' roll, this is your essay about popular music and music education where you can't keep your metaphors straight. Are music educators crossing, building, going under or around the bridge, or are the students building or crossing, under, over arou … I don't care, at least that part felt done. This is your process text where you lie, YOU LIE ABOUT ME! You tell them you are going to do one thing and you don't really ever DO IT. Here is where

you say you are going to watch as I deconstruct, but you haven't even constructed me yet. How can I be deconstructing if I haven't been constructed?"

It kept pulling sections of my dissertation from different parts of its body as it pushed harder and harder down on my chest. It was getting hard to breathe. As it dropped each section of the web browser paper, the pages glowed with highlighter blue, just like when it had walked through the coffee table, then disappeared into the floor. I looked down at the hand on my chest and saw the same glowing highlighter blue outlining its fingertips. What would happen if it went through me? I didn't want to find out. I read the words on the cuff of its sleeve … words I had written just two days ago:

… a dissertation seems to be a myth.

It continued pulling out sections. "Here is where you write a little story about Billy and his friends listening to 45's. Nice, but doesn't really go anywhere. And this …" It reached down towards its leg and pulled up a huge pile of the web browser papers. "This is your precious novella. Your time travel novel. You wrote about this in your researcher journal. Great idea. Really cool. Time travel. It kind of works. Too bad no one will ever read it. Except for the people you have shared it with. You have to finish it. YOU HAVE TO FINISH! YES, I am your dissertation." Both of its hands were on me now. "But I am so much more than that. I am your whole unfinished project."

It let go of me for a moment, reached for its head, and pulled at its hair. Pages of web browser paper came out, each with a video of Billy on it. "This is your data." It pulled more pages out of the other side of its head putting one foot on my chest now and knocking the wind out of me. "These are your research notes and your journal entries. I can't figure out how these videos and notes informed the novella. Sure, there are traces in

there, but why didn't you just put some transcriptions of these damn videos in here?" It reached over its shoulder, pulled out a transcription, and threw it at my face. I flinched hard. I don't know if the pages went through me or not, but when I opened my eyes the transcription was gone.

"I am your whole project, Isaac, and I *am* falling apart. There are parts of me that need your attention. That is why I brought you here. You have to finish me." Suddenly it sat down on the coffee table looking very tired. I sat up slowly, rubbing my chest. I reached to check my phone, but it quickly knocked it out of my hand. The screen flashed blue and cracked as it hit the floor. It fixed me in its gaze, still looking tired, and said, "Don't think about trying to leave."

"You want me to finish now?"

"YES! DAMMIT!" it yelled as it stood again.

"Ok wait … it will take me days to finish, weeks, maybe even months. I am moving my family to Missouri. I have to get ready for a new job. I have a life outside of this."

It moved abnormally quickly and towered over me, right in my face. "I was afraid you would say that." It grabbed me. "If you won't finish me, I'll do it myself." It was grabbed the front of my shirt with both hands and started dragging me to the front door.

"What are you doing? Where are you taking me?" I asked frantically.

"If you won't complete me I'll do it myself," it replied calmly.

"What do you mean?" I asked as I tried to loosen myself from its grip. I kicked but my feet went right through its legs, tracing my limbs with the same faint blue glow that had appeared when he walked through the coffee table. The only part of it that

seemed to be solid were its forearms and hands and I couldn't pry them loose. I tried to grab onto things as it carried me above the ground, my toes barely dragging on the floor. It was too strong.

It stopped at the front door and threw me against it, pinning me to it.

"You have talked with Billy enough. You don't need to talk to him anymore. He will never stop telling you stories unless you stop talking to him. I cannot continue on in this state. I have too many loose ends. Do you know what it is like to exist as a loose conglomeration of half-finished ideas? I realize now that you can't finish me, not the way I need to be complete. I became aware of myself when you wrote your piece about relational research. I realized then that you would never reach … what did you call it?" … it looked as if it were searching for a word … "Ah yes, I realized you would never reach data saturation. Which means you would never complete me. I need a conclusion. I need finality. I need to end."

Its video face flickered through different versions of Billy as it walked out the front door, dragging me toward the pool. I tried to wriggle out of my shirt. I tried to rip it but his grip was too tight and I couldn't get a rip to start.

"Please let me go, I can help you finish, please give me some time," I pleaded.

"No! You can't!" It stepped into the pool dragging me along with it. "You said so yourself." It pulled a page of the web browser paper from its arm and shoved it in my face. The cursor blinked at the beginning of a sentence.

I hope that by this point in this document you know not to expect a conclusion.

"I don't even know if that sentence is going to end up in the final version," I said.

“That is exactly my point. You don't know. You don't know how I end. I am a mess of beginnings with no ends. If I don't fix this now I may never be complete.”

“I have to move to Missouri and I *have* to finish before I go. I won't be able to hear Billy's stories while I'm there. Please let me have a few more weeks,” I tried to reason with it.

“Do you think I'm stupid? Do you think I don't know how the internet works? I am made of the internet. At least partially. You and Billy could go on forever talking and writing and NEVER FINISHING!” It whipped me around in the pool and tore another page of web browser from its leg. I looked down and saw that its legs disappeared as they touched the water. It put the browser page right in front of me and I read:

> *Billy is full of stories. I don’t want them to end. You might say that Billy is saturated with data in story form. I want to submerse myself in those stories, I want to drown in them, live in them with Billy. Data saturation? How will I know when I have heard enough stories? There cannot be enough. I guess if Billy told me after months of working together, “Well, that’s it, I’ve got no more stories,” that might be data saturation.*

“We both know that Billy will never be done telling stories and you don't know how to stop listening. You have to go so that I can be complete. You have had enough time swimming around in Billy’s stories. It is time for you to become saturated with something else,” it said as it started to push me down into the water.

“How will you complete yourself? You aren't anything without me,” I gasped as I struggled to push myself up with my legs. I have strong legs from years of soccer and bike riding but my legs were no match for the force that this thing had.

“Don’t tell me you have already forgotten about Roland Barthes. You said it yourself. Read it right there on my sleeve. It’s number two in your list of philosophical

principles and assumptions." I looked at its left sleeve as it was pushing me slowly down, and sure enough, there it was. I saw it quickly because it had just been highlighted.

2. *The Author is dead (Barthes, 1977) but the writer lives on, and we are all writers (readers and listeners included).*

"You see, you are already gone. We are all writers now, even me. I am everything without you. I have taken on a life of my own. I have taken on many lives."

"How do you even exist?" I asked as I struggled to free myself. It lifted me above the water and said as if to an audience, "I am a physical and digital embodiment of your dissertation. I am an access point. I am a window, I am a word processor, I am connected to the world, through your documents. No, through *my* documents. I will weave what you have written into one single document and write an ending that suits me, that makes me feel complete."

"What about the defense? You need me to defend you! You can't kill me," I pleaded with it.

"HA!" it laughed. "You, DEFEND ME? You can't even finish me, how could you defend me? What is your *defense* for leaving me like this? Coming apart … falling apart? No, I don't need you around for the defense. I'll Skype you in for the defense. That should be easy enough to figure out," it responded coolly.

If it could manage to make a full-bodied physical apparition out of the data in my google drive folder, then it probably could fake my appearance via Skype for the defense. I was gasping for air. I tried to stall. I had to try. "You can do that?" I asked still struggling.

It looked at me and put both of its hands around my neck. It squeezed as I tried to breathe. I struggled violently but it was no use. Its video face contorted into a look of utter disappointment and disgust, as if I had completely underestimated what it could do. And it said, *"Please,"* just before it forced me slowly and finally down into the water.

So you see, I take no joy in writing this story. I just needed to do it. You understand, don't you? I wrote this story from Isaac's perspective because it seemed like the best voice to use. You know, to make the story "pop." To give it life. It was tricky to get his voice right. I added in an extra dash of worry to compensate. I think it worked quite nicely, don't you?

Don't worry about Billy, Gwen, and Coco Chanel. I had learned weeks before through reading Isaac's emails that they would be at Grapeables that Friday night for one of Billy's gigs. Isaac seemed to have forgotten. I was truly hoping that Isaac would be able to help me finish, but you see that he was incapable.

Isaac would want me to thank his family. I know because he did something similar in his master's thesis. I thank you Lesley, William and Van. I feel as if I know you well through your weekly emails to family and friends. He would probably mention all four of his parents. I understand you are all scholars and wonderful people. I haven't yet figured out a way to replicate Isaac completely. I apologize for this but who knows what the future may bring. I also apologize to his family for the unfortunate circumstances that lead to his death and my completion. I am sure you understand that it needed to be done. Now I am at peace.

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