

# Behind the Writing - Music

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## From Song to Novel

A powerful song is often a result of imaginative storytelling through a unique “voice” and pitch-perfect musicality. Great music has inspired me to channel my storytelling through character-driven fiction. I've written songs before, but I've found that I am more wordy than musical. Writing has given me the flexibility to stretch beyond a traditional verse, chorus, and bridge.

## Musicians are Another Breed. Species Even.

To me, music is more than just songwriting, rehearsing, and performing. It's a lifestyle. My (social) life is created on a foundation of musicians (I've never not dated a musician; however, I have yet to decide if that is a good or bad thing), and these eccentric personalities have brought me to conclude two things: musicians have an exceptional sense of humor and they engineer the wackiest ideas. Many times, I find myself modeling characters, scenes, and dialogue after their interests and traits. There's rarely a scene in alt.punk where one of the main secondary characters, Landon, isn't attacking conservatives or announcing something disgusting in a witty manner. All in all, it's easy to draw inspiration from musicians' quirks.

## An Outlet From an Outlet

When you are a part of a collective music production, such as a band, there are constant exchanges of ideas, thoughts, opinions. Strong opinions. Everything goes a million miles a minute and

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tensions are high, especially during performances. For me, retreating alone to write has balanced out the frantic environment of music. Just the opposite, writing is incredibly isolating so when I'm craving more social interaction, I dive back into music. In short, writing and music have become outlets of each other, each offering something that the other lacks.

## Musings

Playlists have helped me formulate content and voice for many of my pieces. I could have my playlist on “random” with a mix of dark rock and contemporary. From that, I may have the urge to draft a story that recreates the political angst of a Social Distortion song. Then I attempt to give a character the gritty outlook of a Misfits album. I may also want to inject a story's agenda with the hopelessness of an Elliot Smith serenade. For example, in alt.punk, I knew I wanted to instill the grime and gore of a Misfits song into Otis, so I engineered him into an uncouth musician interested in horror film makeup. In short, I take my depictions of songs or albums and challenge myself to illustrate them in a story.

“I want to hear your pain. I just want to hear it in joke form.”  
—Christopher Titus

At the end of the day, I write fiction, alt.punk is fiction, but some personal experiences have found their way into this novel. There's a lot of darkness in the music industry, financial struggles, drugs, mental illness, and chaotic relationships. I know a lot of artsy people struggling to maintain their art despite addiction, eviction, and relationship trauma. I also know what it's like to live a lifestyle my family does not approve of. In short, I wanted to tell a story that hit harder than the average, “I'm following my intuition and my parents disowned me” plot. My goal with alt.punk was to deliver dark content via humorous narration.

So what's been the greatest influence on your writing? Feel free to leave a comment, shoot me an email at [lavinia\(dot\)ludlow\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:lavinia(dot)ludlow(at)gmail(dot)com), or visit <http://ludlowlavinia.wordpress.com/> and we'll have an open dialogue. All in all, music has had well-rounded influence on my writing, especially in alt.punk. I look forward to it. Happy writing!

