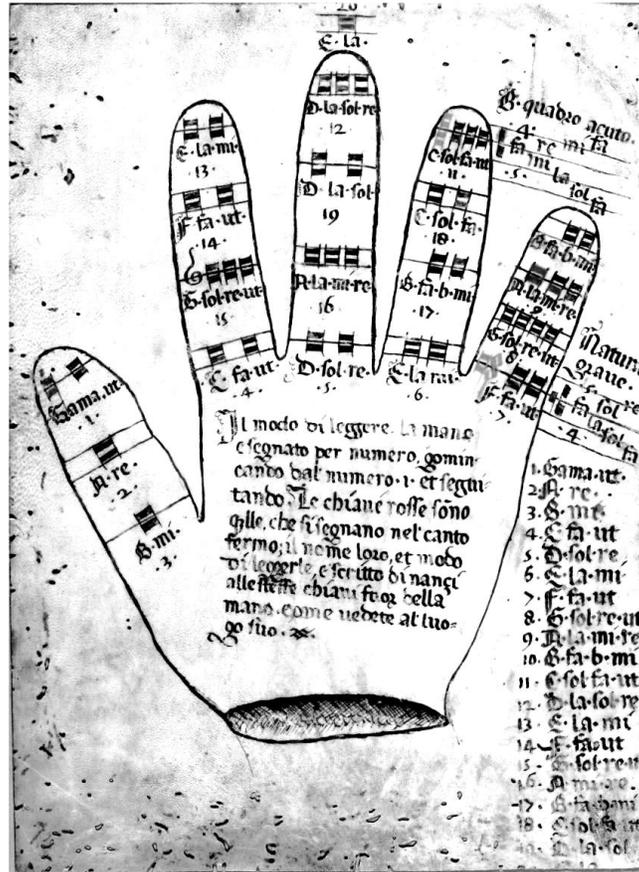


## THE MUSIC EXERCISE



1. Play some music (ideally, without vocals) and listen with headphones. Since this is about 20 minutes, set the piece to repeat.
2. "Watch" the imagery in your mind and simply DESCRIBE it as quickly as you can.
3. DO NOT: Willfully compose your writing; pause to select words; edit; or try to tell a story. This is simply DESCRIBING what you see/feel/think in whatever vocabulary emerges. You are not writing a story or composing a scene, just quickly DESCRIBING.
4. When you're done, fix typos and basic grammar/punctuation and give it a title.

## EXAMPLE OF RESULTS

*Katie Faughnan*

### Community Teardrop

It starts with a buzz, a crinkly noise, and a hum. The height of the tractor outshines the height of the mobile home. Concrete surrounds the driveway but flounders into acres of untrimmed weeds and dandelions. The grass on the neighbor's lawn is oppressively green in comparison to the brown decay of the mobile home's front yard. Dandelions cry in the midst of impending destruction; the gray clouds overhang like the grim reaper's scythe leaning against the bathroom door as death takes a shower. Where do you go to hide from something that cannot be seen? Invisible? Maybe. How about cups—the liquid—it's clear. The sky itself— it's clear. What is this foggy menace? Crinkle Crinkle Crinkle, a shoe disrupts the arrangement of grassy blades; it conforms to a new mold made by the fresh imprint, holding its pose for generations to come. Snow falls; it crashes silently on the breezy window panes. Many flakes face the same fate. The wind carries them toward places unknown; it meets its end with whatever and whomever it crashes against. It makes no loud complaints, only silent ones which stifle in the tears of its own meltdown, forever carrying within them the power to leave a trail in just a drop.

It drops in the eye. One tear meets another in cold astonishment—one travels along the cheek while the other is rubbed against. It strides toward new horizons, only to reach its climax in a wading pool of other soaked travelers, coalescing in a single puddle: the community teardrop. It reflects their emotions, it reflects a passerby's emotions; it even reflects the solemn statue of windows and doors arranged in an ever-scaling tower. Those who look down from one of the reflected windows

may not see themselves directly; just as an idea. The stains from fingerprints and other trickling water drops shield the vision from seeing the whole picture. A sigh against the glass later, content with this brief moment of silence, the passerby walks away from the windows, away to whatever of paper lay atop the inbox, waiting to be demolished. At the desk, a screensaver which reads “home sweet home” followed by a vintage photograph of a single-level house, rich in gardens of black and white, instills a memory of those that may or may not have been loved. It’s been through a lot. We’re all in this together, as they say, whether we are all seen in the picture or not. Whatever pollen flutters away in the dust cannot be seen, or ever even appreciated for its existence, but it’s there. You don’t see it, but it’s there. No one sees everyone, yet everyone is here, dandelions and all.

