

Variations on a Theme: I Want a Ticket to Anywhere

written by Guest Contributor | October 14, 2016



My Discman only stays closed with either a rubber band or a piece of duct tape, but it's still my most prized possession. That, and a CD case that holds 12 CDs at a time – good for being on the road, although it forces me to select my desired travel companions with care. They come with me everywhere, and everywhere is a lot of places. It's 2006 – I'm 20 years old, serving the second of two excruciating years in the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces). I'm bone tired.

I spend countless hours on the road in that second year, traversing the hills of the Galilee on my educational missions (I'm in the Education Corps), waiting interminably at bus stops, staring out windows at the roads snaking through the mountains. My musical companions invariably include Tracy Chapman, whose 1988 self titled album I can pretty much sing and play, word for word, chord for chord, from memory.

When I put on Tracy now, ten years into the future, I can feel the texture of the cloth on the seats of the busses. I see the rain trickling on the glass panes and feel that deep down exhaustion. *"You got a fast car / I want a ticket to anywhere"* she croons in my ear, and I pray that my batteries will last me to my army-issue apartment that I share with seven other soldiers, my friends. *"No one should try to stop her / persuade her with their power / she says that her mind is made up"* she sings on and I know that she's talking about me, to me. How else could she know exactly how I feel, as I urge the bus onwards, homewards?

One more image is conjured by Tracy's voice. It's carried over the radio airwaves at two a.m. in a guardhouse outside Akko. My friend (a fellow soldier) and I are sitting out our shift at the base where we're stationed. The radio's tinny voice starts to play Tracy, *"You got a fast car / I got a*

plan to get us out of here". We look at each other, comrades in arms in this strange night, drink our chocolate milk, and sing along quietly. Dawn will break soon enough.

Music can hold enormous power in memories and experiences, transporting us instantly to an age, location, or person. What sonic joys, mysteries, disbelief, and clarity have you experienced? Identify songs of influence in your life and explore them like variations on a theme, melding syntax and song structure, recalling the seriousness or levity that accompanies. Whether it's an account of when a specific song first entered your life, the process of learning to play a song, teaching someone a song, experiencing the same song in different places as it weaves through your life, unbelievable radio timing, sharing songs with those in need, tracking the passing down of songs, creative song analysis, music as politics, etc, I am interested in those ineffable moments and welcoming submissions of your own variations on a theme, as drawn from your life's soundtrack. Please email submissions to meganentropy@gmail.com and keep an eye out for others' [Variations](#).

("song" is a broad phrase: could be a pop song, a traditional tune, a symphony, commercial jingles, a hummed lullaby, 2nd grade recorder class horror stories, etc)



Mikhal Weiner writes stories that are songs and songs that are stories. Raised in Jerusalem, Israel, she now lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She began studying composition and songwriting at Rimon College in Tel Aviv, completing her degree at Berklee College of Music in 2014 with honors. Her works are deeply influenced by her experiences as a middle-eastern gay woman and her love of poetry and folk music. She is currently co-producing events for Salomé ArtHaus, a community centered art-sharing venue in Brooklyn, as well as completing her debut album, to be released this fall.