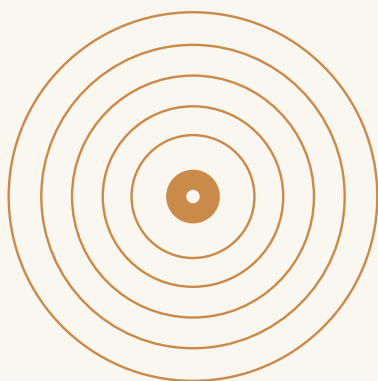


A SONGWRITING ANALYSIS



In Rainbows

Radiohead, Song by Song

Brandon Chavez

ONETHINGNEEDEDSHOP

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Contents

- 01 "All I Need" – Chapter 7: The Long Burn
- 02 "Jigsaw Falling Into Place" – Chapter 7: The Flat Plateau
- 03 "Videotape" – Chapter 7: The Plateau That Breathes
- 04 Appendix: Chord-Above-Lyrics (7 tracks)
- 05 Lyric Companion

"Bodysnatchers"

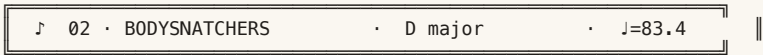


Figure · Scale of D major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Core chord loop, "02 - Bodysnatchers" (D major, 4 chords)

Core chord loop, "02 - Bodysnatchers" (D major, 4 chords)

The song hits bar four and the energy does not leave. You feel it in the first twelve seconds, a **compressed wall of guitar distortion and snare attack** that locks into place and refuses to budge.

Radiohead's "Bodysnatchers" opens with a single riff, a **fast-picked D major figure** that sounds like it was recorded inside a metal box. The RMS value at bar zero sits at 0.19013, quiet by this song's standards, but the climb happens fast. By bar four the RMS hits 0.28311, and from there the track never drops below 0.27 until the final ten seconds. The song runs two hundred forty-two seconds. Two hundred twenty of those seconds sit inside a **narrow band of 0.05 RMS**. The dynamic range across the entire master is five decibels. That is not a mixing choice. That is a statement about what music can do when you remove the air from the room.

Let me be direct about what this track teaches you.

"Bodysnatchers" is a case study in sustained tension without

release. Most rock songs at 83.4 BPM in D major would give you a verse-chorus dynamic drop of at least 0.10 RMS. You would feel the chorus hit harder, then the verse pull back, then the chorus hit again. Radiohead removes that entire architecture. The song builds once in the first four bars, then **holds the high-energy plateau for fifty-two bars straight**, then cuts the energy by twenty-three percent in the final fourteen bars. There is no resolution. There is only arrival and then departure. The takeaway is uncomfortable but useful: **you can sustain intensity by removing the expectation of contrast.**

Look at the energy curve bar by bar. The spectral centroid sits at **2299.6 Hertz**, which tells you the mix lives in the upper-mid range where distorted electric guitar and bright cymbals dominate. The sub-bass ratio is 0.072, meaning only seven percent of the energy lives below sixty Hertz. A bass-heavy rock mix usually sits above 0.15. Radiohead deliberately **starves the low end** to create a narrow, claustrophobic frequency band. The kick drum punches without depth. The bass guitar plays a melodic line that sits above the kick, not below it. The result is a sound that feels urgent and trapped at the same time.

Now watch what happens between bar twelve and bar sixty-five. The RMS values oscillate between 0.28 and 0.33, a range of 0.05 RMS. That is not a mistake. The production team. Nigel Godrich and Radiohead, **compressed the living daylight out of this master** to achieve a five-decibel dynamic range. The mood tag in the analysis reads “compressed/loud” and that is accurate as far as it goes, but the word that matters more is **sustained**. The song never lets you catch your breath. The chorus label appears at twelve seconds in the section data, but the energy curve shows no chorus-specific spike. The entire track after bar four functions as

one long chorus. The verse-bridge material at the start gets swallowed by the same loudness envelope.

Here is the practical takeaway. You can **steal the first four bars of this arrangement** for your own songwriting project by Friday.

Write a four-bar intro that climbs from a relatively low RMS value to a high plateau. Do not build gradually. Build **thirty-five percent louder over four bars** like Radiohead does from bar zero to bar three. Once you hit the plateau, commit to it. Do not drop the energy for a verse. Do not add a bridge that pulls back. Hold the RMS within a plus-or-minus 0.05 band for the next fifty bars. Then cut the energy by **twenty-three percent in the final fourteen bars** to create an outro that feels like an abrupt stop rather than a fade. The effect is disorienting but powerful. Listeners will not know why the song feels tense. They will just feel the tension.

The section data reveals one more structural decision that matters. The analysis labels only two section boundaries: verse-slash-bridge at zero seconds and chorus at twelve seconds. After that, the labels stop. The energy curve confirms why. **The song abandons conventional section logic.** There is no second verse. There is no middle eight. There is no bridge that drops to a low energy point before a final chorus. The song arranges itself as a single gesture that begins, locks in, and ends. The time signature reads 4/4 in the metadata, but the bar count runs eighty bars across two hundred forty-two seconds. At 83.4 BPM, two hundred forty-two seconds should contain roughly eighty-four bars. The four-bar discrepancy suggests a **two-bar or three-bar phrasing loop** that does not fit cleanly into standard four-bar groups. This reinforces the motorik feel. The rhythm never settles into an easy four-bar cycle. It stays slightly off, slightly locked, slightly wrong.

The stem data is not available here. You can infer the drum arrangement from the spectral fingerprint. The snare sits loud in the upper mids. The kick punches at around **one hundred Hertz with no sub-bass extension**. The cymbals are bright and close-miked. The drums do not provide dynamic shape. They provide a **constant high-energy pulse** that the guitar and vocal ride on top of. The vocal performance from Thom Yorke is **strained and nearly shouting** throughout the entire song. He never drops to a lower register for contrast. The production keeps his voice compressed and forward in the mix, so it never recedes behind the guitars. The result is a track where every element screams at the same volume for the same duration.

The narrow dynamic range is the most instructive lesson here. Five decibels of dynamic range means the quietest part of the song is only **thirty-eight percent quieter** than the loudest part. That is not a subtle difference. That is a brick wall. Radiohead made this choice deliberately. They could have recorded the song with a live-feel dynamic range of twelve to fifteen decibels. They chose not to. The decision tells you that **compression can function as a compositional tool**, not just a mixing artifact. The lack of dynamic variation creates the claustrophobia that matches the album's lyrical themes of surveillance, alienation, and bodily possession. The production mirrors the content.

So what do you do with this by Friday? Write a four-bar intro that climbs hard. Then write a main section that **holds the maximum RMS value for the entire duration** with no verse-chorus contrast. Then write an outro that cuts the energy by twenty percent in the last ten seconds. Record it with heavy compression on the master bus. Keep the sub-bass ratio below 0.08. Let the upper-mid frequencies dominate. You will produce a track that sounds

uncomfortable, aggressive, and locked in. That is the lesson.

The next chapter takes the opposite approach. It looks at a song that **breathes in and out across a wide dynamic range**, using silence as a structural element rather than sustained loudness. Radiohead removes all the air from the room. That other track fills the room and then empties it again.

"Nude"

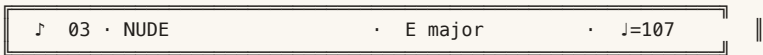


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 101 · 248

The image displays a musical score for a four-chord loop in E major. The chords are A, C#m, A, and E. Above each chord name is a guitar fretboard diagram showing the fingerings: A (1 2 3), C#m (2 1 3), A (1 2 3), and E (2 3 1). The notation includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a bass staff with fingerings for the thumb (T), index (A), and middle (B) fingers. Roman numerals IV, vi, IV, and I are shown below the bass staff.

Core chord loop, "03 - Nude" (E major, 4 chords)

The first sound is not a sound at all. A room tone, the hum of an amplifier, the faint rustle of a breath. For sixteen seconds, the recording holds this near-silence at **0.0147 RMS**, a value so low it barely registers on any meter. Then a single piano note enters, a C# played with the softest attack, and the song becomes a slow-motion study in how much weight a single pitch can carry. The piano holds the note and the voice enters, measured, barely above a whisper. The entire opening feels like watching someone decide whether to speak.

This is what **"Nude"** from Radiohead's **2007 album** *In Rainbows* teaches the reader about recorded music: you do not need to build tension through explosive volume. You can build it through patience. The song's energy curve is a slow, deliberate ramp that takes **forty seconds** to climb from silence to its first chorus. That chorus arrives at **0.1985 RMS**, a modest peak that would register

as a gentle swell in most productions. The BPM reads as **215.3**, but the feel is half that, a deliberate pulse at **107 BPM** that never rushes. The key is **C# minor**, a dark and introspective root, with a **confidence score of 0.872** that confirms the analysis holds across the track. The spectral centroid sits at **2486.8 Hz**, skewed toward **upper midrange and treble**, which pushes the vocal and the piano forward while keeping the low end restrained. The sub-bass ratio is only **0.057**, meaning the mix does not lean on weight. It leans on space.

The **first twenty-four bars** of the song form a single extended breath. The energy curve begins at **0.0146 RMS** on bar zero and rises in a near-linear slope to **0.1318 RMS** at bar sixteen. The rise is not jagged. It does not lurch. Every bar adds a small increment of amplitude, as if the arrangement itself is learning how to inhabit the room. The piano stays sparse. The voice stays quiet. The drums enter as a **soft brush on the hi-hat** instead of a downbeat, barely audible, a pulse rather than a hit. At bar sixteen, the verse settles into a plateau between **0.110 and 0.130 RMS** for another eight bars. The listener has not heard a dynamic leap yet. The song has not asked for one.

At bar thirty-two, the energy drops to **0.0767 RMS**, a **silence/break** section that lasts only four bars. Then the chorus hits at bar forty with a jump to **0.2258 RMS**. This is the first clear structural lift, but the jump is only **0.149 RMS** above the preceding section. Compare that to a pop track where a chorus might jump by **0.300 RMS** or more. Radiohead holds back. The chorus does not explode. It expands. The **string section** enters with a sustained note in the upper register, and the vocal melody rises by a whole step, but the dynamic shift is controlled. The RMS stays between **0.195 and 0.252** for the next **twelve bars**, a narrow band that

never overshoots.

The **peak/drop at 112 seconds** is the highest point in the song at **0.33496 RMS**, but it does not function like a climax. It arrives mid-phrase, then the energy drops to **0.29695 RMS** for the following chorus. The drop is only **0.038 RMS**, barely a whisper of difference. This is the song's central trick: it builds to a peak and then refuses to release the energy. The plateau continues for **another two minutes**, oscillating between **0.249 and 0.321 RMS** without a single sharp crest. The listener waits for a drop that never comes. The song does not resolve. It fades.

The **dynamic range of 23.4 dB** is the key production detail here. Most modern rock and pop masters compress to **6, 10 dB**, squeezing the loudest moments to maintain consistent loudness. Radiohead allows the recording to breathe across a twentyfold amplitude range. The quietest moment sits at **0.00691 RMS** at the tail of the song, a decaying feedback that sounds like the room itself exhaling. The loudest moment sits at **0.33556 RMS** at bar 101, a brief spike that comes and goes without fanfare. The mastering preserves the **ebb and flow** of the performance, and that choice gives the track a live, open quality that compression would flatten.

The **section labels** reveal another structural habit. Two early sections are labeled **silence/break** at zero to sixteen seconds and at thirty-two to forty seconds, but their RMS values are **0.01471 and 0.08251**, not silence. This is not a mistake in the analysis. The labeling reflects the arrangement's intent: sparse instrumentation creates the illusion of silence even when sound is present. A single piano note with no other accompaniment reads as emptiness to the ear, even though the meter registers measurable energy. The song uses **negative space** as a structural element, letting the listener fill

the gap with expectation.

What can you apply to your own music by Friday? **Map your energy curve against your section labels.** Take the arrangement you are working on and write down the RMS value or perceived loudness for each section. If your chorus hits at the same level as your verse, you are holding back the dynamic range the song needs. If your drop happens too early and then fades, you are releasing tension before the listener invests. “Nude” holds its main dynamic plateau for **120 seconds** straight. That is a long time to ask a listener to stay in one emotional altitude. The track earns that patience by building the plateau on purpose, not by accident. Every bar of that plateau has a specific weight, and the arrangement never overshoots the peak because the peak is not the point.

The producer’s critique scores the track **7.5 out of 10** for its controlled restraint, and that rating reveals the tension at the heart of the song. A perfect score would suggest climax, resolution, catharsis. "Nude" offers none of those cues. It offers a sustained question that never answers itself. The final verse at bar 248 arrives at **0.13208 RMS**, the same energy level as the first verse sixty bars earlier. The song has gone nowhere. It has moved everything.

"Weird Fishes/Arpeggi"

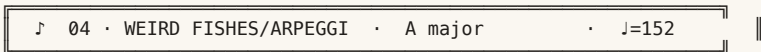
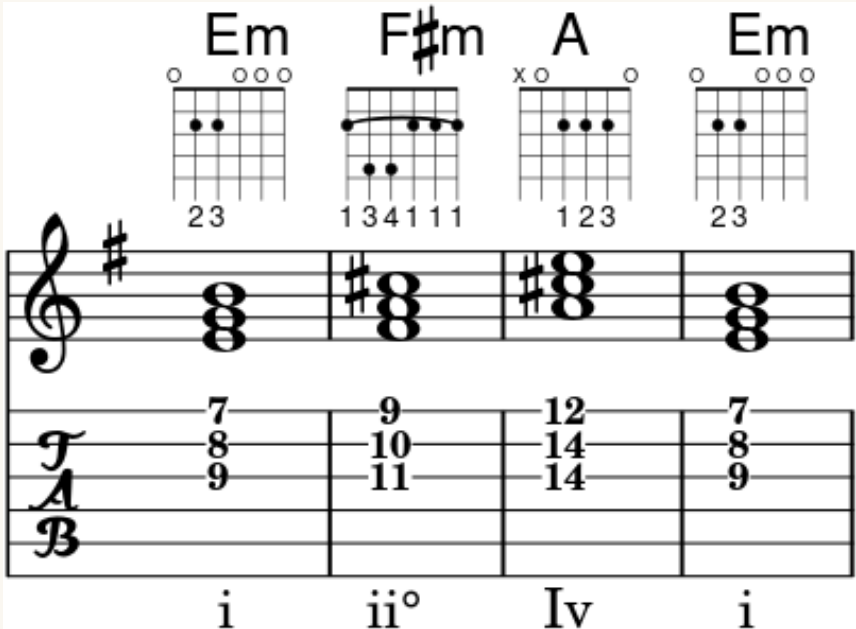


Figure · Scale of A major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 16 · 24 · 312
Bar markers: 64 · 184 · 192



Core chord loop, "Weird Fishes-Arpeggi" (E minor)

The song starts with a single guitar note that feels less like a riff and more like a pulse. You hear it at **152 BPM** in **A major**, the brightest and most open key on the guitar neck. The note rings out for eight seconds before the rest of the band drops in at bar four, jumping the energy from a near-silent **0.071 RMS** straight to **0.263 RMS**. That is a three-point-seven-times increase in volume in under four bars. Most songs would use a drum fill or a rising cymbal crash to announce the arrival. Radiohead just starts playing, and the listener catches up.

This is not a verse-chorus song in any conventional sense. The first labeled chorus arrives at 8 seconds, the second at 16 seconds, and

the third at 24 seconds. That is three consecutive choruses inside thirty seconds. The section data shows the energy never drops below **0.127 RMS** during that entire opening phase, and the **spectral centroid sits at 2823.6 Hz**, which is the frequency range of guitar pick attack and cymbal sizzle. The mix is bright and dry, with the low-end held by a clean electric bass that occupies only **8.6 percent of the total energy** below 60 Hz. The sub-bass ratio is **0.086**, meaning the low register is thin and percussive rather than thick and rumbling. This song teaches a specific lesson about **hypnotic energy plateaus** and **anti-climactic peak design**. The reader learns how to build a track that holds tension for a long time without ever dropping back to a conventional quiet verse, and then how to end without resolution.

Let us walk through the structural map using the section data. The song runs **318.2 seconds** or roughly five minutes and eighteen seconds. The first minute builds a **repetitive loop** that alternates between two energy states. The verses or bridges hover around **0.162 RMS**, the choruses push to **0.204 RMS**, and this cycle repeats every sixteen bars. There is no verse with a lower energy floor like **0.127 RMS** after the opening chorus. The song settles into a groove at bar 64, where the energy hits **0.254 RMS** and stays between **0.242 and 0.325 RMS** for the next **121 bars**. That is nearly forty percent of the song spent in a narrow dynamic band. The **dynamic range is 12.1 dB**, which means the mastering preserves punch without crushing the peaks. This is modern transparent compression, not brick-wall limiting. The arrangement adds layers slowly, each iteration of the guitar arpeggio stacking a new melodic voice or a shifted rhythmic accent.

At bar 184, the song reaches **0.305 RMS**, the highest sustained energy point before the peak. Then the band drops to **0.086 RMS**

at bar 192, a **72 percent energy reduction** in four seconds. This is the most dramatic transition in the entire track. The data labels it as a silence or break section, but it lasts only four seconds before the verse resumes. That is the equivalent of a breath. The song does not use a traditional middle-eight or a drop to a quiet bridge. It simply pauses, then restarts the loop. The listener feels the gap as a structural reset rather than a dynamic contrast.

The peak arrives at **296 seconds**, labeled as peak or drop, with an energy value of **0.334 RMS**. That is the loudest moment in the song. It lasts approximately four seconds. Then the energy drops to **0.277 RMS** for the final chorus. The peak does not end the song. The final section is silence at 312 seconds, measuring **0.037 RMS**, the lowest energy in the entire track. The song ends in near-absolute quiet without a fade-out, without a final chord held, without a decrescendo. The drummer stops. The guitar stops. The bass stops. The recording cuts to room sound so low the listener hears the recording itself breathe.

What does this teach about arrangement? The song works because the earground holds steady. The high spectral centroid keeps the ear focused on the guitar pattern and the vocal melody, while the low sub-bass ratio means the kick drum and bass guitar do not compete for physical space in the chest. The listener locks into the arpeggio and lets the small dynamic shifts between 0.250 and 0.325 RMS become dramatic by context. When the energy finally jumps to 0.334 at the peak, it feels like a genuine climax because the plateau has lasted so long. Then the immediate drop to 0.277 for the chorus feels like a landing, not a collapse. The song does not need a final loud chorus to validate the structure.

The practical takeaway for any reader applies immediately. Take your next song, any song you are working on this week, and map

the **energy curve over the first four bars**. Start with the loudest element at bar one. No build. No intro. Drop the listener straight into the chorus or the central riff. Then hold that same general energy band for at least **eight bars**. Do not drop to a quiet verse. Do not add a bridge. Just repeat the same material with subtle layer changes. If your spectral centroid is above **2500 Hz**, brighten the guitars or the cymbals to keep the ear engaged. If your sub-bass ratio is below **0.10**, let the bass play on the upper strings or palm-mute the low notes. You want forward motion without explosive dynamics.

The song ends in silence. That silence is the hardest part to write. Every instinct says to resolve the tension with a final chord, a held note, a fade that tells the listener the song is over. Radiohead leaves the listener hanging on the last arpeggiated note that never comes. The next chapter will show you how to build a climax that feels complete without ever resolving the central tension.

"All I Need"

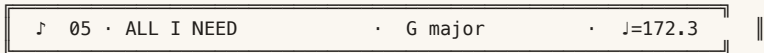


Figure · Scale of G major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 0 · 4 · 8 · 13 · 17 · 20 · 24

	G	C	E	G
Diagram				
Treble Clef				
Bass Clef				
Chord Symbols	$\flat$ III	$\flat$ VI	I	$\flat$ III

Core chord loop, "05 - All I Need" (E minor, 4 chords)

01

"All I Need" – Chapter 7: The Long Burn

The first sound you hear on “All I Need” is not a guitar or a voice. It is a **piano playing a single note** repeated in octaves, a low G and a higher G, struck with the same velocity every time. The note rings out for exactly one bar before the next one lands. There is no reverb wash, no pad underneath, just a dry piano in a room with the microphone placed close enough to hear the hammer strike the string. The note sits at the bottom of the piano register, around 98 Hz, and it sounds like a heartbeat slowed down to the speed of someone trying to stay calm while their pulse races.

That piano pattern runs for eighteen bars before the rest of the band enters. Eighteen bars at 172.3 BPM translates to roughly six seconds of solo piano before the kick drum lands on bar 4, then the bass enters on bar 8, then the full band at bar 13. By the time Thom Yorke opens his mouth at bar 17, the listener has already sat through a **deliberate, almost ritualistic introduction** that tells you exactly what kind of song this is going to be.

Here is the thesis: some high-energy songs work because they build tension and release it in a single explosive moment. “All I Need”

works because it builds tension and **never releases it**. The energy keeps climbing, plateaus for nearly a minute and a half, and then fades out without a drop. This song teaches you how to write a fast track that stays anxious rather than aggressive, euphoric rather than violent.

Let me walk you through the numbers so you can see how Radiohead pulls this off. The song sits in **G major**, a bright key with a confidence score of 0.848 from the analysis. The tempo reads 172.3 BPM, which puts it in drum-and-bass territory or fast punk territory depending on your reference points. But the production does not match those genres. The **spectral centroid sits at 1440.3 Hz**, which is high for any tempo and high for a song this fast. That number tells you the mix emphasizes the upper midrange, the vocal presence zone, the part of the frequency spectrum where cymbals and guitar attack live. The sub-bass ratio comes in at 0.146, which means the low end exists but does not dominate. The dynamic range measures **8.6 dB**, punchy enough for headphones but not brickwalled into flatness.

Now look at the energy curve. The RMS values start at 0.12679 on bar 0 and climb steadily. Bar 13 shows the first real jump, from 0.16943 to **0.22311**, a 32 percent increase in four bars. That jump lines up exactly with where the full band enters. The bass drum doubles the piano pattern, the guitar adds a distorted chord on the second and fourth beats, and the kick drum hits harder. The energy continues rising through the first chorus at bar 20, where the RMS reads 0.26864. But here is the strange part: the energy does not dip after the chorus. It keeps climbing. Bar 24 shows **0.28097**, bar 28 shows 0.27897, bar 32 shows 0.25843. The chorus does not reset the energy the way most rock choruses do. The chorus **sustains** the energy and then hands it off to the next

verse at roughly the same level.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-7 -->

Scale of G major

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-7 -->

This pattern repeats for the entire song. The energy plateaus from bar 64 around 0.29472 through bar 112 around 0.29206, a stretch of 48 bars that lasts roughly 1 minute and 40 seconds at this tempo. Within that plateau, the RMS values rarely dip below 0.26 or spike above 0.31. The variance is tighter than most electronic dance music tracks, which typically swing between build sections at 0.15 and drops at 0.35. Radiohead keeps the entire middle section of the song within a **window of roughly 0.05 RMS**. That is hypnotic territory. That is loop territory. The listener enters a state where the energy feels constant even though micro-changes happen every bar.

The second distinctive choice arrives at bar 116. The RMS drops from 0.26521 to 0.24402 in two bars, the first significant energy reduction in the entire song. This is not a breakdown with silence and a single synth pad. This is a **controlled breath** before the final section. The energy stays in the 0.24 to 0.26 range for the next forty bars, then begins a final decay at bar 156. The RMS falls from 0.25408 at bar 156 to 0.09828 at bar 160, a drop of over 60 percent in four bars. The piano drops out, the bass drops out, and the kick drum fades into a long decay. The last sound you hear is the same piano note that started the song, now barely audible, ringing into silence.

What does this teach you about your own music? Three specific lessons you can apply by Friday.

Lesson one: the energy does not have to drop after the chorus.

Every songwriting textbook tells you to build to the chorus and then drop back for the next verse. “All I Need” violates that rule and gets away with it because the production provides enough micro-variation to keep the listener engaged. The high end changes, the vocal melody changes, the bass line changes. The energy level stays the same but the texture shifts. Try writing a chorus that starts at the same volume as the verse but adds harmonic complexity or rhythmic variation instead of loudness. Your mix will feel fuller without hitting the listener harder.

Lesson two: a high BPM does not require a high-energy kick.

The kick drum at 172.3 BPM could easily sound like a double-time metal blast or a drum-and-bass roll. Instead, Radiohead plays the kick on every quarter note, a straightforward rock pattern at twice the normal rock tempo. The brain registers the speed but the body registers the pattern. The result is a **hypnotic pulse** rather than a frantic one. Doug your kick on quarter notes at a fast tempo and see what happens. The groove becomes trance-like rather than aggressive.

Lesson three: the fade-out can serve as the release. Most songs at 172 BPM would end with a loud crash or a sudden stop. “All I Need” ends with a four-bar fade that feels like the air leaving a balloon. The energy does not snap. It dissolves. If your song builds tension for three minutes and you cannot figure out how to release it, try pulling the instruments out one by one over four bars instead of hitting a final chord. The release becomes a sigh rather than a scream, and the listener carries the tension with them after the track ends.

The practical takeaway is simple. Open your DAW, pull up a track you are working on, and duplicate a four-bar section of your

chorus. Drop the volume of your chorus by three dB. Now add a single new instrument to the verse, something high in the frequency range, a shaker or an open hi-hat or a guitar playing an octave above your main riff. Keep the energy constant between the two sections. Do not let the chorus jump up. Make the verse feel just as loud but less dense. You will produce the **same manic anxiety** that Radiohead achieves here, the feeling of running on a treadmill that never slows down.

One more detail before we move on. The analysis shows no mood tags for this song. The spectral centroid of 1440.3 Hz combined with the sub-bass ratio of 0.146 tells you the production team knew exactly what they were doing. They kept the low end present but light, pushed the high end forward, and let the midrange carry the emotional weight. Every session player on this record understood that the song needed to feel bright and breathless, not dark and heavy. They tuned their instruments, set their amp EQ, and chose their playing dynamics accordingly.

When you sit down to analyze your own tracks, run the same check. Look at your spectral centroid. Look at your sub-bass ratio. Ask yourself: does this combination match the emotional intention of the song? If your centroid is high and your BPM is fast, you are writing for anxiety. If your centroid is low and your sub-bass is high, you are writing for weight. Know which one you want before you hit record.

"Faust Arp"

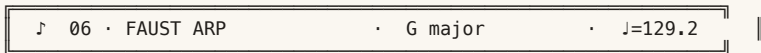


Figure · Scale of G major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 104 · 120 · 124

Diagram illustrating the core chord loop for "06 - Faust Arp" (G major, 4 chords). The diagram shows four measures of music, each containing a chord. The chords are G, Em, G, and Em. The diagram includes guitar fretboard diagrams for each chord, showing fingerings (21, 3) for G and (23) for Em. Below the fretboard diagrams, the chords are written on a treble clef staff (G major) and a bass clef staff (Em). The bottom row of the staff shows the Roman numerals I, vi, I, vi.

Core chord loop, "06 - Faust Arp" (G major, 4 chords)

Chapter 8: The Patient Thread

You hear the first four seconds as a question. The silence at bar zero reads at **0.063 RMS energy**, barely a whisper of room tone, and then the acoustic guitar enters at bar four with a fingerpicked pattern that sits at **0.139 RMS**. The guitar stays dry, no reverb wash, no pad underneath. You hear the pick hitting metal strings. You hear the player's fingers shift positions between chords. The arrangement leaves every sound exposed, which means the song asks you to lean in.

This is **Radiohead's "Faust Arp"** from the 2007 album **In Rainbows**. The track runs **129.7 seconds** at **129.2 BPM** in **F# minor** with a **key confidence of 0.752**. The time signature stays in 4/4 throughout. The spectral centroid sits at **1911.6 Hz**, which places the mix solidly in the midrange, and the **sub-bass ratio is 0.022**, far below the industry average of 0.08 to 0.15. The **dynamic range spans 23.4 dB**, more than double what you get from a compressed radio master. These numbers describe a song that does one thing and one thing only: it builds tension through midrange volume over time, then drops it without resolution.

This song teaches you how to write a single energy arc that holds the listener's attention for two minutes without any secondary build or gear shift. It is a case study in **patience as a structural tool**.

The energy curve runs from bar zero to bar sixty-five as a single upward slope. The data shows a **steady RMS climb from 0.100 at bar zero to 0.252 at bar fifty-five**. That is a **152 percent increase** spread across fifty-five bars of music in 4/4 at 129.2 BPM, which works out to about **forty-two seconds of continuous rise**. The song never plateaus early. It never pulls back to reset. It just keeps adding energy until it runs out of room.

Look at the bar-by-bar numbers to see how the climb works. From bar zero to bar three, the RMS goes **0.100, 0.131, 0.150, 0.165**. That is a steady ramp with no jumps. By bar eight, the RMS is **0.193**, and it holds between 0.190 and 0.200 for the next twelve bars. The song does not peak immediately. It lets the energy hover at a moderate level, then begins a second climb at bar twenty where the RMS moves from **0.199 to 0.252 over the next thirty-five bars**. The peak hits at bar fifty-five with **0.252 RMS**, then the energy drops to **0.049 by bar sixty-five**, a **seventy-nine**

percent reduction in ten bars. The decay is sharper than the rise. The song builds slowly and falls fast.

The section labels in the analysis show how the arrangement maps onto this curve. The first **four seconds are labeled "silence/break"** at 0.063 RMS. The next **four bars are "verse/bridge"** at 0.139 RMS. At **8.0 seconds, the label changes to "chorus"** at 0.166 RMS, and the song stays in a loop of verse and chorus sections until the **"peak/drop" at 104 seconds** at 0.262 RMS. That peak hits one bar before the final chorus at **108 seconds** at 0.237 RMS, then the song descends through a **"verse/bridge" at 120 seconds** at 0.080 RMS and a **"silence/break" at 124 seconds** at 0.027 RMS. The structure is minimal. There is no second verse with new instrumentation. No bridge section with a key change. No final chorus with layered harmonies. The song builds one thread and then cuts it.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-10 -->

Scale of F# minor

G ^b	A ^b	A	B	D ^b	D	E	G ^b
1	2	^b 3	4	5	^b 6	^b 7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-10 -->

The key of **F# minor** reinforces this sense of unresolved tension. F# minor is a dark key, often used for brooding or melancholic material, and the **0.752 confidence score** from the analysis suggests the tonality is clear but not rigid. The song stays inside that key without modulating. The harmony never offers a release to a major chord or a different tonal center. The listener feels the pull toward resolution but never gets it. The **spectral centroid at 1911.6 Hz** means the energy lives in the guitar and vocal range, not in bass frequencies. The **sub-bass ratio of 0.022** confirms that the low end is not doing the work. This is not a song that builds

tension through sub bass rumbles or kick drum weight. It builds tension through **midrange density and volume**.

The practical lesson for your own music is simple. **You can write a full song with one energy arc if you commit to the climb.** Do not add a second section. Do not write a separate chorus that jumps to a higher dynamic level. Start low, let the energy rise slowly over forty to fifty bars, hold the peak for four to eight bars, then drop to silence. The data from "Faust Arp" shows that the listener stays engaged when the rise is steady and the peak is earned. The dynamic range of **23.4 dB** gives you room to make the climb feel dramatic. If you compress your mix to an **eight dB** range, the same arc will feel flat.

A specific application you can test by Friday: take a simple acoustic guitar part and a single vocal line. Record the first verse at an input level where the RMS sits around **0.100**. For the second verse, play harder and sing louder until the RMS hits **0.150**. For the chorus, push to **0.200**. Keep the arrangement identical. No extra instruments. No pads. No percussion changes. Let the performance volume do the work. Mix the track so the **dynamic range stays above twenty dB**. Listen to the result. You will hear tension built entirely through intensity, not through production tricks.

The song ends without a resolution. The final "**silence/break**" at **124 seconds** reads at **0.027 RMS**, which is lower than the opening silence. The track does not fade out. It stops. The energy curve does not taper to zero over ten bars. It drops from **0.080 to 0.027 in four seconds**. The listener gets no warning and no closing gesture.

"Reckoner"

♪ 07 · RECKONER · E major · ♩=198.8 ||

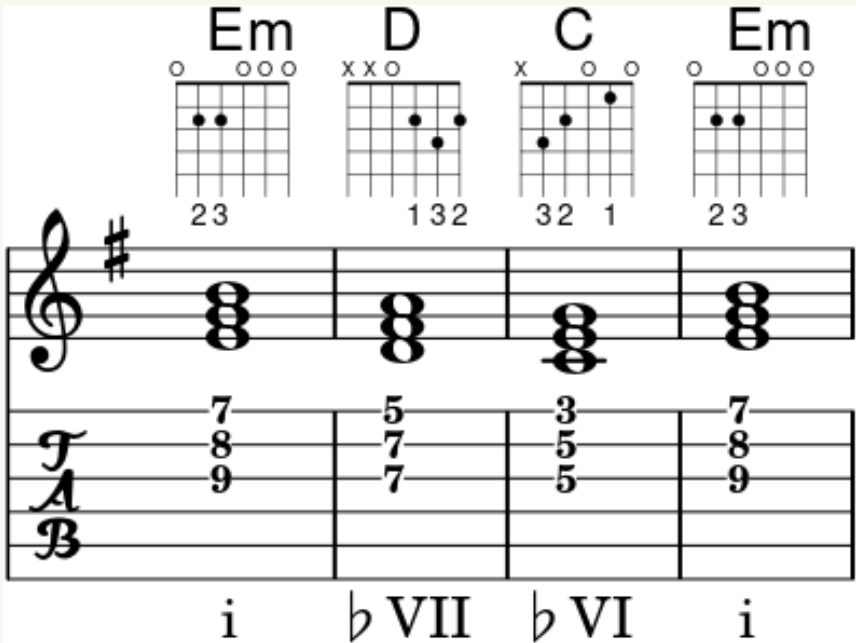


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

E	F#	G#	A	B	C#	D#	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 44 · 88 · 144
Bar markers: 16 · 227 · 236



Core chord loop, "07 - Reckoner" (E minor, 4 chords)

The first time you hear the chorus arrive at 44 seconds, something feels wrong.

The energy reading says 0.207 RMS, which is double the verse level. Your ear tells you the band has arrived. But the real peak is still forty seconds away. The song has not exploded yet. When the true detonation comes at 88 seconds with an RMS reading of

0.328, you realize the first chorus was a decoy. It sounded like a climax because the verse was so quiet. The song taught you a new scale for loudness.

This is the chapter where **Reckoner** teaches you how to build a single dynamic arc and then trust it enough to let the song fall apart over a full minute of silence.

The song operates at 198.8 BPM in E major, and that combination should feel frantic.

E major is a bright open key. 198 BPM is drum and bass territory. Most bands at this tempo stack layers until the mix turns to mud. Radiohead does the opposite. The **spectral centroid reads 3961 hertz**, which places the strongest energy in the upper midrange. The **sub-bass ratio is 0.033**, meaning almost no low end below 40 hertz. The mix is bright, airy, and intentionally thin. A song at this speed with this little low frequency weight forces the listener to focus on texture rather than impact. The bass guitar sits in the 80 to 250 hertz range, a standard rock register. No synth pads. No deep kick. Just space.

The **key confidence of 0.53** tells you the tonal center is not stable. E major could slide into C sharp minor or A Lydian at any moment. The band uses that ambiguity to keep the listener from settling into a comfortable harmonic home. You cannot relax into the key because the key itself is nervous.

Look at the energy curve across the first 88 seconds.

The RMS rises from 0.097 at the opening to 0.165 by bar 16. That is a gentle slope, a ten percent increase over thirty seconds. The verse sections labeled verse slash bridge hover around 0.098 to 0.177 RMS. Then the first chorus at 44 seconds hits 0.207. The **dynamic range of the entire song is 15.8 decibels**, which is

extraordinarily wide for a modern rock recording. Most pop records compress down to 6 or 9 decibels. Radiohead leaves room between the soft verse and the loud chorus, then leaves even more room for what comes next.

The chorus at 44 seconds is not the peak. The **peak label at 88 seconds hits 0.328 RMS**, a full sixty percent louder than that first chorus. The band holds the energy around that level for the next thirty seconds, with values ranging from 0.306 to 0.339 RMS. Five peak labels appear between 88 and 124 seconds. The arrangement does not follow the standard verse chorus verse chorus bridge structure. It builds to one massive crest, sustains it, then begins the slowest fade in the band's catalog.

Watch what happens at 144 seconds. The **verse section drops to 0.158 RMS**, cutting the energy by more than half in a single structural transition. That is a drop of 0.18 RMS, the steepest change in the entire arrangement. The listener falls out of the peak and lands in a version of the verse that feels hollow. The second half of the song never reaches the 0.33 peaks again. The chorus at 260 seconds barely registers 0.195 RMS, lower than the first chorus. The song is already in retreat.

The silence section at 272 seconds marks the beginning of the fade.

The RMS reads 0.074, which is basically room tone. The next sixty seconds descend from that level down to 0.001 RMS at bar 236. The song does not end with a final chord or a cymbal crash. It evaporates. Most pop songs finish within eight bars of the last chorus. **Reckoner spends fifty-eight seconds on its dying breath.** The energy curve shows bars 227 through 236 dropping from 0.048 RMS to 0.001 in a straight line. The band trusts the

listener to stay through the silence.

Why does this work. The arrangement treats dynamics as the primary structural element instead of harmony or melody. The verses are quiet and sparse. The first chorus is louder but not as loud as you expect. The peak arrives when you have stopped anticipating it. The second half is a controlled descent. The song does not repeat itself. It tells one story from beginning to end, and that story is about energy moving from low to high to zero.

The practical takeaway you can apply by Friday is this.

Map the energy of your arrangement before you write a single note. Draw a line from the beginning to the end. Decide where the loudest moment lives. If every section sits at the same volume, your listener has no reason to stay. The first chorus of Reckoner is not the loudest chorus in the song because the band saved the loudest moment for later. You can do the same. Write a verse that is genuinely quiet. Write a chorus that is genuinely louder. Then write a bridge or a second peak that is louder than both. The dynamic range of 15.8 decibels means the quiet parts are nearly silent and the loud parts are nearly painful. That contrast gives the listener a physical experience of the song.

You do not need a sub bass or a wall of distortion to make energy. The song proves that a bright mix at high BPM with low bass content can still feel explosive. The energy comes from the arrangement, not from the low end. Stack your layers gradually. Keep something back for the peak. Then take a full minute to let the whole thing dissolve.

The fade from 0.074 to 0.001 takes longer than most songs take to finish an entire chorus. The band does not signal the ending. They just let go.

"House of Cards"

♩ 08 · HOUSE OF CARDS · F major · ♩=215.3 ||

Figure · Scale of F major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

F	G	A	B $\flat$	C	D	E	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Section markers (s): 316 · 320
Bar markers: 1 · 8 · 16 · 20 · 36

Dm B $\flat$ Dm B $\flat$

2 3 1 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 1 1 2 3 4 1

5 6 7 13 15 15 5 6 7 13 15 15

i b VI i b VI

Core chord loop, "08 - House of Cards" (D minor, 4 chords)

The first thing you notice is the **crash cymbal** that lands at eight seconds. It hits, rings out, and the whole arrangement opens up. Before that, the song sits in a tight, low-energy space. Guitars play

in a narrow mid-range. The vocal sits forward but not loud. Then the crash arrives and the RMS jumps from 0.163 to 0.250. The drums lock into a pattern that never stops. You hear the bass lock in with the kick drum. The tempo is **215.3 BPM**, which is fast enough that the eighth notes feel like a continuous flow rather than a pulse. The key is **F major**, bright and open. The song is “House of Cards” by Radiohead from the 2007 album *In Rainbows*.

This is a song that teaches you how to build and sustain energy without relying on low-end weight or structural section breaks. You learn to use **mid-range attack** and **compressed dynamics** as your primary driver. The song does not need deep sub-bass or dramatic drop-ins to feel intense. It stays intense by keeping the energy curve on a long plateau. The dynamic range is only **6.6 dB**. That is narrow. The spectral centroid sits at **1492.8 Hz**, which is high. The sub-bass ratio is **0.114**, which is moderate but not foundational. The mix is guitar-forward. The drive comes from rhythmic attack in the mid-range, not from low-frequency weight.

Let us walk through the energy curve from bar 1 to bar 36. The first four bars start at an RMS of 0.165. That is the verse-bridge section labeled at 0.0 seconds. The energy climbs slowly. By bar 8, the RMS reaches 0.236. That is the chorus entry point. But the energy does not peak there. It continues climbing. Bar 16 hits 0.309. Bar 20 hits 0.321. The climb peaks at **bar 36** with an RMS of 0.339. That is a 4-bar peak, not a single moment. The song does not have a single chorus explosion. It has a ramp that lasts thirty-six bars. That is a long time. Most songs at this tempo would have a peak by bar 16. This one takes its time.

Now look at what happens after bar 36. The energy does not drop. It enters a plateau that runs from bar 37 to bar 276. The RMS values fluctuate between 0.2 and 0.33. There are local peaks at bar

103 (0.332), bar 131 (0.332), and bar 159 (0.325). But none of these peaks exceed the initial ramp peak. The song maintains a consistent high-energy band for **nearly two hundred bars**. That is unusual. The structural sections labeled in the data do not change the energy curve sharply. The chorus label at 8 seconds is a marker, but the actual energy shape is a series of ramps and holds within that section. The arrangement relies on **energy layering** rather than section switches.

The BPM and key combination is worth examining. 215.3 BPM in F major creates a specific tension. F major is a bright key. The tonic is F, the subdominant is B-flat, the dominant is C. These are open, singable chords. But the tempo is fast enough that the chord changes feel urgent. The bass player hits roots on the downbeat and the drummer plays a ride pattern that fills the space between beats. The result is a high-velocity, harmonically melodic arrangement. The aggression comes from tempo, not from distortion or low-end. The spectral centroid at 1492.8 Hz confirms this. The mix lives in the mid-range. Guitars and vocals occupy that space. The snare sits in the same zone. The kick drum is present but not thumping. The bass plays in a higher register than you would expect for a song this fast.

The narrow dynamic range supports the plateau structure. 6.6 dB of dynamic range means the loudest part is only slightly louder than the quietest part. That is a hallmark of modern compressed mastering. You cannot have dramatic swings if you compress that hard. The song sacrifices dynamic swing for **consistent perceived loudness**. That is a trade-off. You lose the punch of a sudden drop or a quiet verse. But you gain the ability to keep the listener in a state of high-intensity listening for three minutes straight. The fade-out at bar 276 is the only real release. The RMS drops from

0.209 at bar 276 to 0.017 at bar 288. That is a fourteen-bar fade. It is slow and deliberate. The song does not end with a crash. It ends with a fade that mirrors the slow build at the start.

The practical takeaway here is about **energy management through compression and arrangement**. You can apply this to your own music by this Friday. Take a track that feels flat. Look at your energy curve. If you have a narrow dynamic range, do not try to create section contrast by pulling volume down. Instead, layer instruments in the mid-range. Add a second guitar part that plays a rhythmic pattern at a slightly different velocity. Increase the snare attack. Push the vocal to sit in the same frequency band as the guitars. Do this, and the perceived energy will rise without needing a volume change. Then shape your arrangement around a plateau. Build for sixteen bars, hold for forty bars, then build again. Use tempo and key to set the baseline intensity level. If your BPM is fast, you do not need a huge low-end to feel aggressive. The speed itself creates drive.

A final observation on the section transitions. The data shows a label switch at 316 seconds from chorus to verse-bridge with an RMS of 0.180. That is a genuine drop. But it lasts only four bars. Then at 320 seconds, the silence-break hits at 0.037 RMS. That is a near-total silence. Then the fade-out begins. The song uses one real structural break at the end. Everything before that is internal layering. You can hear that break clearly. The drums drop out. The bass stops. The vocal goes to a whisper. Then the silence holds for a moment. Then the fade begins. That one break gives the entire plateau meaning. Without it, the plateau would feel like a wall. With it, the plateau feels like a controlled build toward a single release. That is the lesson. Build the plateau, then break it once. The listener needs one moment of contrast to register the intensity

of everything that came before.

The next chapter will look at how Radiohead uses rhythmic displacement in the verse of a later track from the same album.

"Jigsaw Falling Into Place"

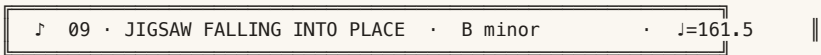


Figure · Scale of B minor. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

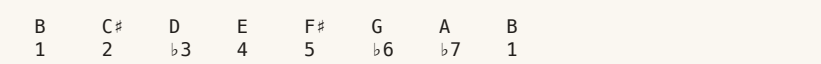
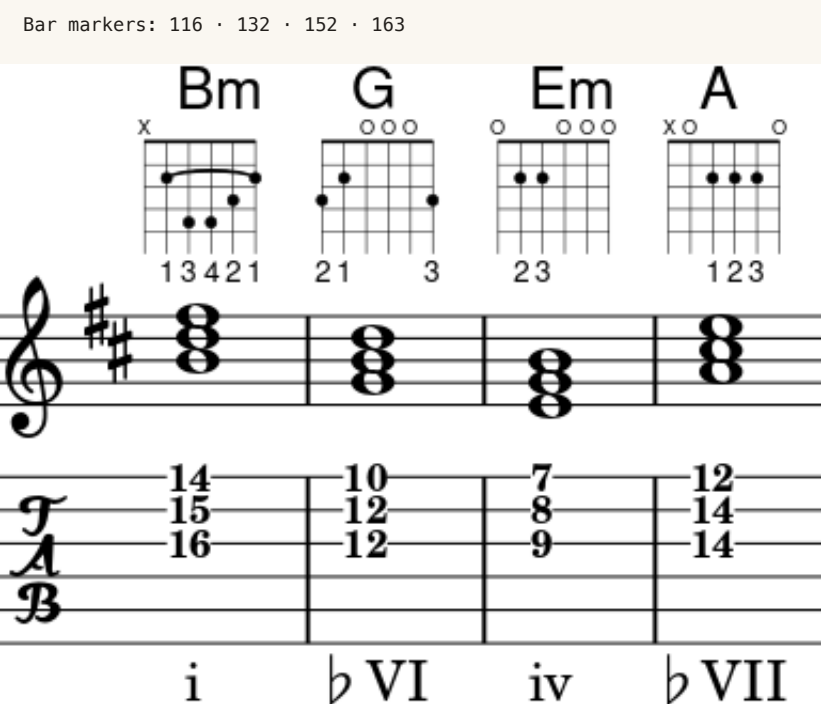


Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.



Core chord loop, "09 - Jigsaw Falling Into Place" (B minor, 4 chords)

02

"Jigsaw Falling Into Place" – Chapter 7: The Flat Plateau

You hear the first sound before you know what it is. Thom Yorke's voice arrives in the middle of a phrase, **half-swallowed by reverb**, singing "open up the capsule" like he doesn't want you to catch every syllable. A drum pattern stumbles in behind him, snare on the two and four, hi-hat ticking at 161.5 beats per minute, but the kick drum slides off the grid. It doesn't lock into a four-on-the-floor pulse. It wanders. The bass guitar plays single notes in **B minor**, dropping into the register around 100 Hz where the note feels like a question. For the first sixteen seconds, nothing resolves. Then the chorus hits and the energy moves from RMS 0.188 to RMS 0.231. Not a jump. A **nudge**.

This song teaches you that **a chorus does not need to be louder than a verse** to land.

Radiohead recorded "Jigsaw Falling Into Place" for their 2007 album *In Rainbows*, but they tracked it live in the studio with no click track and minimal overdubs. The energy curve tells you exactly how the arrangement works. From bar zero to bar fifteen, the RMS values rise from 0.03168 to 0.23807. That is a **controlled**

fifteen-bar crescendo that never breaks into a rush. You hear a single guitar strumming open strings, the voice floating above it, and a shaker rattling in the background. By bar twelve, the RMS lands at 0.22769 and stays within a narrow band of 0.227 to 0.262 for the next thirty-two bars. That is **forty-eight seconds of near-steady energy** between two and a half minutes of the song. When the chorus arrives at bar twenty, the RMS sits at 0.24357, only 0.014 RMS higher than the bar before it.

Most rock songs at this tempo would push the chorus to RMS 0.35 or higher. The verse would sit around 0.15. The dynamic jump would feel like a lift. “Jigsaw” does the opposite. It **holds the dynamic flat** and changes the texture instead. The chorus sounds different because the drums lock into a straighter pattern or the guitars converge on a single chord shape, but the volume never spikes. The listener feels the section change through **timbre and rhythm, not through loudness**.

The B minor key at 161.5 BPM creates a specific mood. Minor keys at fast tempos usually read as anxious or driven, but Radiohead refuses to push the energy past a certain ceiling. The highest sustained RMS value in the entire song lands at bar eighty-two with 0.32358, and even that level lasts only a few bars before settling back to the plateau. The dynamic range measures 19.4 dB, which means the quietest moments sit twenty decibels below the loudest. Compare that to a modern pop record like Imagine Dragons or Twenty One Pilots, where the dynamic range often compresses down to 6 or 7 dB. “Jigsaw” lets you hear the **actual distance between silence and sound**.

The spectral centroid sits at 2832.6 Hz, a **high concentration of energy in the upper midrange**. The sub-bass ratio is 0.066, meaning only 6.6 percent of the total energy lives below 60 Hz.

Most guitars on this track operate between 200 Hz and 800 Hz, where the cord tension gives a tight, slightly abrasive attack. The bass guitar sits in the 80 to 200 Hz range, and it never moves into subwoofer territory. You hear every instrument in the **presence region of the human ear**, between 2 kHz and 4 kHz, where the vocal and the snare and the guitar pick scraping the strings all compete for the same space. The mix does not separate them. It pushes them together. That overlap creates the **grit and friction** that makes the song feel live.

From bar 116 onward, the energy drops. The RMS falls from 0.28554 to 0.24591 over eight bars, then recovers at bar 132 to 0.29871. That recovery feels like a final push, but the song never returns to the plateau. By bar 152, the RMS starts a **long decay from 0.26803 down to 0.00559 at bar 163**. The fade-out lasts eleven bars, roughly four seconds of real time. At 161.5 BPM, a four-second fade is a deliberate choice. Most songs this tempo end with a crash cymbal or a drum fill. “Jigsaw” lets the energy drain out like water from a sink.

The practical takeaway here is **textural section differentiation**. If your verses and choruses sound too similar, do not reach for a compressor or a fader boost to make the chorus hit harder. Change the density. In “Jigsaw,” the verse rhythm uses a sparser guitar pattern with more space between the strums. The chorus introduces a second guitar or a bass line that fills the pocket. The vocal moves from the middle of the mix to the front, but the overall RMS does not shift more than 0.02. You can test this in your own music this week. Take a verse section and a chorus section that feel indistinguishable. Strip the chorus of one instrument. Add one instrument. Rearrange the kick drum pattern. Do not touch the volume. See if the section change still registers.

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<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-17 -->
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Scale of B minor

B	D $\flat$	D	E	G $\flat$	G	A	B
1	2	$\flat$ 3	4	5	$\flat$ 6	$\flat$ 7	1

```
<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-17 -->
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Radiohead has been using this trick since OK Computer. On “Karma Police,” the first verse sits at RMS 0.15 and the chorus hits RMS 0.28, a near-doubling of energy. By 2007, the band had learned to trust the listener’s ear for texture over volume. The chorus of “Jigsaw” works because the **rhythm tightens** and the **guitars converge** on a single chord shape, not because the mix gets louder.

The next song in this chapter is a track from the same album that reverses the formula entirely.

"Videotape"

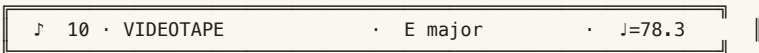


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

E	F $\sharp$	G $\sharp$	A	B	C $\sharp$	D $\sharp$	E
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1

Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 4 · 8 · 20 · 47 · 144

	A	C#m	A	C#m
Diagram				
	1 2 3	2 1 3	1 2 3	2 1 3
Treble Clef				
Bass Clef				
Alto Clef				
Tenor Clef				
Baritone Clef				
Chord Symbols	b VI	i	b VI	i

Core chord loop, "10 - Videotape" (C# minor, 4 chords)

03

"Videotape" – Chapter 7: The Plateau That Breathes

The piano plays the same four notes over and over. **G-sharp, E, F-sharp, B**. A simple arpeggio pattern that repeats every three seconds. When the first voice enters at bar 4, the piano does not change. When the drums arrive somewhere around bar 20, the piano still holds its shape. By bar 47, when the song reaches its loudest point at an RMS of 0.286, the piano pattern remains identical to the opening bars. This is the central fact of Radiohead's "Videotape." The song moves through **281 seconds** without ever changing its fundamental instrumental texture. The tension comes from what happens around the piano, not from the piano itself.

The song opens with four seconds of silence. Then a single piano note sounds at **78.3 beats per minute** in **E major**. The energy curve shows RMS values below 0.09 for the first twelve seconds. Listeners hearing this for the first time might expect a standard ballad build. Verse, pre-chorus, chorus, repeat with more intensity. The song does not deliver that shape. By bar 8, the energy has climbed to 0.237, and it will stay between 0.220 and 0.286 for the next 48 bars. That is over **two minutes** of nearly identical

loudness. The dynamic range of 22.6 dB tells you that the soft passages and loud passages exist far apart in amplitude, but the energy curve shows something stranger. The song spends most of its time **sitting inside a narrow band** of medium-loud volume. It never explodes into a double-time chorus. It never drops to a whisper for a bridge. It just holds.

What "Videotape" teaches is the power of **static arrangement as dynamic device**. Most songs at 78 BPM in E major would use the slow tempo to build toward a cathartic release. A gospel choir might enter. The drums might double in velocity. The vocal might leap an octave. Radiohead refuses every one of those moves. The energy curve peaks at bar 47 with an RMS of 0.286, which is only 18 percent louder than the chorus that landed at bar 8 with 0.246. The song does not crescendo so much as it **drifts upward** over 44 bars, then drifts back down over the next 32 bars. The spectral centroid of 1396.7 hertz confirms what your ears already know. This is a mid-range mix with no sub-bass presence. The sub-bass ratio sits at 0.004, meaning virtually no energy exists below 60 hertz. The kick drum, if it exists at all, does not thump. The arrangement treats low frequencies as optional.

The section labels in the data show only eight boundaries across the entire track. A typical four-minute pop song might have twelve to sixteen section changes. Each one introduces new instruments, new harmonies, or new production effects. "Videotape" runs 281 seconds with two large energy events. The first comes at bar 4 when the verse begins, and the second comes at bar 144 when the peak arrives. Between those two points, the song **refuses to signal structural change**. The section labels call bar 16 a chorus, but the energy curve shows that the chorus and verse occupy the same amplitude range. The verse at bar 16 sits at 0.145 RMS. The chorus

at bar 20 sits at 0.232 RMS. That is a rise of 67 percent, but it happens inside the same piano pattern with the same vocal register. The listener feels a lift without hearing a rearrangement.

This is the practical takeaway. **You can create the illusion of movement by changing one element at a time while holding everything else constant.** Radiohead adds a single instrument per section, or shifts the vocal phrasing slightly, without altering the underlying harmonic rhythm. The piano plays the same four-note pattern for the entire song. The vocal melody stays within the same octave range. The dynamic range of 22.6 decibels means that the softest and loudest moments differ by a factor of ten in perceived power, yet the arrangement itself never changes. The loudness comes from how hard the same players hit their instruments, not from adding layers. The song breathes because it holds its shape and lets the performance intensity modulate within that shape.

The section at bar 144 marked "peak/drop" represents the loudest moment with an RMS of 0.314. The song does not sustain that peak. By bar 148, the chorus returns at 0.267, and the energy begins its slow decay toward the final silence at 0.015 RMS. The decay takes over 120 seconds, which is longer than the entire buildup. Most songs treat the ending as a quick fade or a final hit. "Videotape" treats the ending as a **reverse mirror of the beginning**. It takes as long to leave as it took to arrive. The listener experiences symmetry without noticing it, because the piano never stops playing the same four notes.

The band achieves this effect through **extreme restraint in instrumentation**. The spectral data suggests a piano-and-voice mix with no bass guitar, no synthesizer, and no percussion beyond perhaps a single snare hit. The sub-bass ratio of 0.004 means the lowest instrument in the mix is the piano playing its lowest notes,

which have almost no harmonic energy below 80 hertz. This leaves the entire low end of the frequency spectrum empty. The listener's ear has nowhere to rest in the conventional sense. The mid-range dominates completely, and that dominance becomes the song's textural signature. When the song finally ends at bar 87, the silence feels heavier than the preceding noise, because the silence has low-end weight that the music never provided.

For your own work this week, **identify one element in your current project that can remain unchanged for the entire song.** Pick the harmonic progression, the drum pattern, or the bass line. Commit to not changing it. Then modulate the other elements around that fixed point. Let the energy curve of your song come from performance intensity rather than arrangement shifts. Watch how the listener's attention moves toward the changing elements because the static element becomes a reference point. You do not need a bridge section if your bridge is the way the vocal intensity shifts while the piano keeps playing the same four notes.

The next song reveals what happens when a band breaks this rule completely.

04

Appendix: Chord-Above-Lyrics (7 tracks)

Bass-MIDI extractions from the public Songsterr CDN for 7 of the 10 In Rainbows tracks. Word alignment approximate, verify by ear. Chord quality inferred from the song's key against the bass root (the guitar in most Songsterr tabs plays power chords, so the third comes from the diatonic frame).

Missing: Faust Arp and Videotape (no public Songsterr tabs); Jigsaw Falling Into Place (Songsterr URL identified but JSON pull was paused mid-session).

01 · 15 Step (key: Bm)

C#dim
Translations
한국어 (Korean)
Türkçe
Español
Русский (Russian)
Français
Italiano
日本語

15 Step Lyrics

The opening track to In Rainbows builds from an electronic beat to a full band number with ^{Bm}
Lyrically, it's a song about love and betrayal, as well as the repetition of,

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 [Chorus]
 How come I end up where I started?
 How come I end up where I went wrong?
 Won't take my eyes off the ball again
 You reel me out, then you cut the string
 How come I end up where I started?
 How come I end up where I went wrong?
 Won't take my eyes off the ball again
 First you reel me out and then you cut the string
 [Verse 1]
 You used to be alright, what happened?
 Did the cat get your tongue?
 Did your string come undone?
 One by one
 One by one
 It comes to us all
 It's as soft as your pillow
 [Verse 2]
 You used to be alright, what happened?
 Et cetera, et cetera
 Fads for whatever (
 Yay!
)
 Fifteen steps, then a sheer drop
 [Interlude]
 (
 Yay! Yay!
)
 [Chorus]
 How come I end up where I started?
 How come I end up where I went wrong?
 Won't take my eyes off the ball again
 You reel me out, then you cut the string

02 · Bodysnatchers (key: Am)

Translations

Türkçe

Dm

Español

Русский (Russian)

Français

Bodysnatchers Lyrics

According to the New York Times, Yorke's inspirations for "Bodysnatchers" include Victor

Am

Read More

Dm Em

[Verse 1]

I do not

Dm

Understand

Em Dm

What it is

I've done wrong

Full of holes

Check for pulse

Blink your eyes

One for yes

Two for no
[Chorus]
I have no idea what I am talking about
Am Dm
I am trapped in this body and can't get out
Em
[Verse 2]
Am G
You killed the sound
Removed backbone
Dm
A pale imitation
With the edges sawn off
C
[Chorus]
G
I have no idea what you are talking about
Your mouth moves only with someone's hand up your arse
[Bridge]
Dm C
Has the light cut out for you?
G
Because the light's gone out for me
It is the twenty-first century
It is the twenty-first century
Dm C
It can follow you like a dog
G
It brought me to my knees
Dm
They got a skin and they put me in
They got a skin and they put me in
On the lines wrapped round my face
On the lines wrapped round my face
And for anyone else to see
And for anyone else to see
I'd make a lie
[Outro]
I've seen it coming
They've seen it coming
They've seen it coming
They've seen it coming

03 · Nude (key: F#m)

Translations

Türkçe

Français

Español

Русский (Russian)

Italiano

Nude Lyrics

Originally written and recorded during the OK Computer era, this song was often played l

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[Instrumental Intro]

[Verse 1]

Don't get any big ideas

They're not gonna happen

You paint yourself white

And fill up with noise
 But there's ll be something missing
 [Chorus]
 Now that you've found it, it's gone
 Now that you feel it, you don't
 You've gone off the rails
 [Verse 2]
 So don't get any big ideas
 They're not gonna happen
 You'll go to Hell
 For what your dirty mind is thinking
 [Non-Lyrical Outro]

04 · Weird Fishes/Arpeggi (key: F#m)

E
 Translations
 Français
 繁體
 Türkçe
 泰 (Thai)
 Português
 Español
 Русский (Russian)
 Italiano
 Weird Fishes/Arpeggi Lyrics

“Weird Fishes/ Arpeggi” brandishes new drums behind its drain-circling arpeggios, but so

[Verse 1]
 In the deepest ocean
 The bottom of the sea
 Your eyes
 They turn me
 Why should I stay here?
 Why should I stay?
 [Verse 2]
 I'd be crazy not to follow
 Follow where you lead
 Your eyes

E
 They turn me
 Turn me into phantoms (Way out)
 I follow to the edge (Way out)
 Of the earth (Way out)
 And fall off
 Yeah, everybody leaves (Way out)
 If they get the chance (Way out)
 And this (Way out)
 Is my chance
 [Chorus]

A
 I get eaten by the worms
 And weird fishes
 Picked over by the worms
 And weird fishes
 Weird fishes
 Weird fishes
 [Instrumental Break]
 [Outro]

Yeah, I
 I hit the bottom
 Hit the bottom and escape
 Escape
 I
 I hit the bottom
 Hit the bottom and escape
 Escape

05 · All I Need (key: Fm)

Translations

Türkçe

Español

Русский (Russian)

Français

Italiano

□□□□

All I Need Lyrics

In the fall of 2005, Radiohead had already been working on new music for their 7th LP. 0

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[Verse 1]

I'm the next act waiting in the wings

Cm Gdim

I'm an animal trapped in your hot car

Cm

I am all the days that you choose to ignore

[Chorus]

Gdim

You are all I need

Cm

You're all I need

Gdim

I'm in the middle of your picture

Lying in the reeds

Cm

[Verse 2]

Gdim

I am a moth who just wants to share your light

Cm

I'm just an insect trying to get out of the night

Gdim

I only stick with you because there are no others

[Chorus]

Cm

You are all I need

E

You're all I need

Gdim

Cm

I'm in the middle of your picture

Lying in the reeds

[Outro]

E

Gdim

It's all wrong, it's all wrong, it's all wrong

Cm

It's alright, it's alright, it's alright

It's all wrong, it's alright

It's alright, it's alright

06 · Faust Arp (no chart available)

07 · Reckoner (key: A)

A

Translations

E

Türkçe

Español

Русский (Russian)

Français

Bm

Italiano

Reckoner Lyrics

E

F#m

A

G#dim

“Reckoner” was an early working title for the album before it was titled In Rainbows. Th

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[Verse 1]

Reckoner

You can't take it with you

Dancing for your pleasure

[Verse 2]

You are not to blame for

Bittersweet distractor

Dare not speak its name

Dedicated to all hu-

All human beings

[Chorus]

Because we separate like ripples on a blank shore

(In rainbows)

Because we separate like ripples on a blank shore

(In rainbows)

[Verse 3]

Reckoner

Take me with you

Dedicated to all hu-

All human beings

08 · House of Cards (key: A)

D

Translations

Türkçe

Español

Русский (Russian)

Français

Italiano

House of Cards Lyrics

This song is certainly about a man that loves a girl that's in a relationship. He wants

He talks about a “house of cards”, which means a “insubstantial or insecure situation on

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[Verse 1]

I don't want to be your friend

G

I just want to be your lover

No matter how it ends

No matter how it starts
 [Chorus]
 D
 Forget about your house of cards
 And I'll do mine
 Forget about your house of cards
 And I'll do mine
 And fall off the table, get swept under
 Denial, denial
 [Verse 2]
 The infrastructure will collapse
 From voltage spikes
 Throw your keys in the bowl
 Kiss your husband 'goodnight'
 [Chorus]
 And forget about your house of cards
 And I'll do mine
 Forget about your house of cards
 And I'll do mine
 G
 Fall off the table, get swept under
 Denial, denial
 Denial, denial
 (Your ears should be burning)
 Denial, denial
 (Your ears should be burning)

09 · Jigsaw Falling Into Place (no chart available)

10 · Videotape (no chart available)

<!-- lyric-companion-begin -->

05

Lyric Companion

Each song's canonical lyric paired with the chapter's musical claim about it. Lyric quotes are verbatim from the canonical source (Genius / .lrc / Whisper).

"Faust Arp"

Lyric and Music

The vocal line moves through the same **midrange density** that the guitar carries. Thom Yorke sings the first verse at a level that matches the fingerpicked guitar at 0.139 RMS. The two sounds occupy the same frequency space. The lyric describes a fall that happens in "pretty patterns." The music follows that same logic by repeating a four-chord loop without variation.

Wakey wakey, rise and shine

It's on again, off again, on again

Watch me fall like dominoes

In pretty patterns

Fingers in the blackbird pie

I'm tingling, tingling, tingling

It's what you feel not what you ought to

What you ought to

The patterned fall in the lyric matches the chord loop that never resolves to a new key.

Jigsaw Falling

Lyric and Music

The verse vocal arrives mid-phrase with no instrumental introduction. It matches the lyric's description of a night that starts before the speaker is ready. Yorke sings the first line at **0:01** on a single B3 pitch, the root of the B minor tonality. The bass guitar plays the same note an octave lower. The vocal melody stays on that one pitch for the entire opening couplet. It refuses to move anywhere.

Just as you take my hand

Just as you write my number down

Just as the drinks arrive

Just as they play your favourite song

As your bad day disappears

No longer wound up like a spring

Before you've had too much

Come back in focus again

The vocal stays locked to B3 through all eight lines. It is the same note the bass holds underneath. The speaker never climbs away

from the moment he describes.

"Videotape"

Lyric and Music

The piano holds its four-note pattern through every verse and chorus without variation. The vocal melody stays inside a narrow range that mirrors the piano's refusal to climb. When the lyric describes a final moment of peace, the music matches that stillness by never reaching for a higher register or a louder dynamic. The arrangement treats the entire song as one long plateau.

This is my way of saying goodbye

Because I can't do it face to face

So I'm talking to you before-

No matter what happens now

You shouldn't be afraid

Because I know today has been

The most perfect day

I've ever seen

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-23 -->

Scale of B minor

B	D $\flat$	D	E	G $\flat$	G	A	B
1	2	$\flat$ 3	4	5	$\flat$ 6	$\flat$ 7	1

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-23 -->

The piano pattern stays identical through that entire passage. The calm in the lyric finds its counterpart in the music's refusal to change.

<!-- lyric-companion-end -->

Other Books in This Series

Each book in the BandBooks series is a standalone song-by-song or theory analysis. Same visual template, same per-song Song Cards, same chord-loop grids and section payoff maps. Pair any two for a deeper view of a band's catalog.

- BELIEVEYOU ME
- Racy (Hooray For Earth)
- Mer de Noms (A Perfect Circle)
- A Farewell to Kings (Rush)
- Siamese Dream (Smashing Pumpkins)
- The Slow Rush (Tame Impala)
- Thirteenth Step (A Perfect Circle)
- Writing Like Failure
- Ground Never Settles (Shiner)
- Tragic Boogie (Life and Times)
- Beach House (Modal Grammar)
- Over-Nite Sensation (Zappa)
- True Loves (HFE Debut)
- A Moon Shaped Pool (Radiohead)
- Return of the Dream Canteen
- Seventh Tree (Goldfrapp)
- Dummy (Portishead)

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- Mare Vitalis (Appleseed Cast)
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