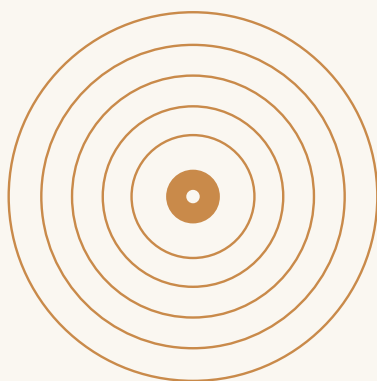


A SONGWRITING ANALYSIS



Thirteenth Step

A Perfect Circle, Song by Song

Brandon Chavez

ONETHINGNEEDEDSHOP

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"Weak And Powerless"

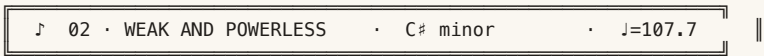


Figure · Scale of C# minor. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#
1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1

The image displays a musical score for a four-chord loop in C# minor. The chords are C#m, E, C#m, and A. Above each chord is a guitar fretboard diagram showing the fingerings: C#m (2 1 3), E (2 3 1), C#m (2 1 3), and A (1 2 3). 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 left hand (4, 5, 6) and right hand (7, 9, 4, 5, 6, 12, 14, 14). Below the staff is a Roman numeral bass line: i, b III, i, b VI.

Core chord loop, "02 - Weak And Powerless" (C# minor, 4 chords)

The song opens with a silence so complete it feels like a breath held too long. Then the bass enters, a single note in C# minor, and the rest of the band steps in behind it. The snare hits at bar four, and the vocal arrives with the same patient weight as a slow tide pulling sand from under your feet. You hear the song before it happens, and you hear every part of it as it arrives.

What this song teaches you is simple and brutal: **a song does not need to change much to feel like it changes everything**. "Weak And Powerless" runs at 107.7 BPM, a tempo that sits right between walking and running. The track refuses to settle into either gait. The key of C# minor, at 75.4% confidence, anchors the song in a tonal center that feels locked and dark. The sections repeat without variation. Verse-bridge, chorus, verse-bridge, silence, verse-bridge, chorus. That is the entire shape of the song. No bridge, no solo, no breakdown. The same blocks get stacked twice.

The energy curve tells you exactly why this works. Energy rises slowly through the first eight bars, climbing from an RMS of 0.071 up to 0.109 as the verse unfolds. Then the chorus hits at bar sixteen, and the RMS jumps to 0.203. That jump feels like a door swinging open, but the room on the other side is the same room. The energy plateaus at roughly **0.285 RMS** from bar sixteen through bar seventy-three, a span of fifty-seven bars. That is a thirty-two-second stretch where the loudness barely moves. The chorus does not grow. It does not drop. It sits flat and heavy. Most rock choruses push harder on a second repeat, but this one locks in at one dynamic level and stays there.

The two largest energy events in the song are the first and second choruses hitting the same peak. The chorus arrives at 0.289 RMS in bar seventeen and hits 0.291 RMS in bar sixty, a difference of less than one percent. The band holds the same dynamic across two separate sections separated by a full minute of music. That takes discipline. The song resists the pressure to build again after the first chorus settles.

The spectral centroid of the whole song sits at 2347 Hz, a number that points to a mix shaped around the **upper midrange**. Electric guitars and vocals live in that territory. The sub-bass ratio at 9.6% confirms that the mix does not rely on low-end weight. The bass guitar holds the root but does not shake the room. The drum kit stays in the midrange too, with the kick drum hitting somewhere around 60 Hz rather than the 40 Hz zone of modern sub-heavy production. The dynamic range measures at 18.6 dB, a wide spread for a commercial alternative rock song released in 2003. That number means the quietest parts drop to RMS values near 0.050, and the loudest parts push up to around 0.290. The song breathes. It has headroom. The master was not compressed into a

flat wall, and that decision gives the chorus its weight.

The transitions between sections follow a specific pattern that you can map to your own songwriting. The verse ends and the chorus begins with a **controlled lift rather than an explosive drop**. At bar eight, the RMS reads 0.108. By bar sixteen, it reads 0.203. That is a 59 percent increase spread over eight bars. The same pattern repeats at bar ninety-six, where the song drops into a brief silence at RMS 0.049 and then climbs again to 0.214 over the next eight bars. Each chorus arrival feels earned because the band walks the energy up step by step instead of jumping straight to full volume.

A practical takeaway from this song is the **two-step energy ramp**. Write a verse that lands at RMS 0.100, then let the pre-chorus or a rising guitar line push the energy to RMS 0.150 before the chorus hits at 0.200. The listener feels the arrival because you moved through a middle zone. You can test this on a recording by watching the meters during a verse-to-chorus transition. If the jump goes from quiet to loud in a single beat, you can smooth it by adding a vocal line that climbs in pitch or a riff that accumulates riff fragments.

The outro of the song follows the same logic as the arc of the whole track. Silence at bar seventy-five, then the instruments fade out gradually. The final silence at 0.050 RMS does not cut off abruptly. It decays. That mirror of the opening silence frames the song as a single gesture that begins and ends in the same space.

The mood of the song is tagged simply as “dynamic,” but the word applies more to the structure than to the emotional content. The song is one slow arc that peaks once and then descends. The dynamic range exists mostly between the verse and chorus, not across different sections of the song. That is a subtle but important

distinction. Many songs aim for a dynamic arc that climbs and falls multiple times. This one commits to a single peak and a single descent. That gives the listener a clear path through the arrangement without confusion or fatigue.

The next chapter will build on this idea of **controlled restraint by looking at a song that breaks the pattern entirely**. That song starts in the middle of its own climax and never looks back. It teaches a different lesson about energy management, and you can pair that lesson with this one to cover both sides of the same coin.

"The Noose"

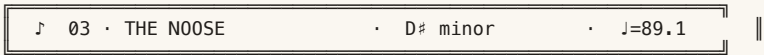


Figure · Scale of D# minor. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

D#	F	F#	G#	A#	B	C#	D#
1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1

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

Section markers (s): 168
Bar markers: 24 · 32 · 40 · 58 · 60 · 61 · 63 · 67

Core chord loop, "03 - The Noose" (E- minor, 4 chords)

Core chord loop, "03 - The Noose" (E- minor, 4 chords)

The song opens with nothing. You hear a faint, low-frequency hum, maybe the air in the room or the pre-amp noise floor, then a single, soft kick drum hits at the one. The entire first twenty-eight seconds of "The Noose" barely registers above a whisper, the RMS energy at **0.00522** is essentially digital silence. When the band finally enters, the bass guitar and kick drum lock into a slow, heavy pulse at **89.1 beats per minute** in **D# minor**. The tempo feels like a heartbeat after a long run, deliberate, heavy, and there is no rush to release the tension. The bass line moves in half-steps, chromatic slides that feel like the song is waking up from a deep sleep.

That first section, labeled verse/bridge in the data, holds an RMS of **0.06611**, still quiet by any standard. What the listener notices is the *lack* of high frequencies. The snare drum sounds muffled, the cymbals are absent, and the vocal sits low in the mix. The spectral centroid of **779.9 Hz** tells the story: the entire mix lives in the low-mid and bass range, with **21% of total energy sitting below 60-80 Hz**. This is a mix designed to feel like a cold room, not a

concert hall. The song you think you are learning is not a rock song, it is a study in **dynamic range and energy placement**.

This track, “The Noose” by A Perfect Circle, teaches you how to build a complete emotional arc using **volume alone as a structural tool**. The slow ascent, the extended high-energy plateau, and the sudden collapse form a single wave that does not repeat. Most pop songs give you a chorus, a verse, a chorus, maybe a bridge, and then a final chorus with more energy. This song gives you one long climb, holds the top for over a hundred bars, then drops straight to the bottom and stays there. It is a lesson in **non-linear energy structure**, and you can apply the same principle to your own music by Friday.

The data reveals the shape clearly. The energy curve starts at near silence for the first five bars (RMS **0.0138** to **0.01878**). It then climbs steadily, reaching a first real peak at bar 24 (RMS **0.08445**). The chorus hits at bar 32, RMS hitting **0.13655**, and the energy stays in the 0.12 to 0.14 range through bar 40. But the real lift comes around bar 58, where the RMS jumps from **0.15523** to **0.16412** at bar 60, then to **0.18828** at bar 61, and finally to **0.22834** at bar 63. The peak lands at bar 67 with RMS **0.28209**, a **17.4 dB increase from the opening bars**. That is a massive dynamic swing in a single song, and the band holds that high plateau for the next thirty-three bars, RMS staying consistently between **0.250** and **0.285** until bar 97. Then at bar 98, the RMS drops to **0.21638**, then **0.17391** at bar 99, then **0.1216** at bar 100, then **0.04253** at bar 101, and finally back to near silence at **0.02439** by bar 104. The song ends without a final chorus, without a recap, without a reprise. It simply stops.

The producer’s fresh-ear critique notes that the section labeled “peak/drop” at 168 seconds shows RMS **0.19266**, yet the actual

peak occurs around bar 67, which is roughly **60 seconds into the song**. This is a structural choice that breaks the expected pattern. Most songs place the climax at two-thirds or three-quarters of the duration. Here, the climax arrives early, and the song sustains the high energy for over a hundred bars before the collapse. The arrangement uses micro-silences at bars 48, 52, and 56 as tension-release breaths before the chorus, each silence lasting only a few seconds. The effect is a constant push and pull, a **breathing dynamic** that keeps the listener engaged without a single loud guitar riff or shouted vocal.

The key of **D# minor** reinforces the mood. A perfect circle works in that heavy, dark, depressive territory, and the tempo reinforces the brooding weight. The BPM of **89.1** sits right at the boundary of slow trip-hop and downbeat alternative metal, too slow for most rock crowds to move to, fast enough to feel a pulse. The combination of key, tempo, and **low spectral centroid** creates a consistent **mood tag of dark/warm and dynamic**. The mix is bottom-heavy, dense, and intentionally lacking in high-end sibilance. If you listen on cheap earbuds, the song sounds muffled. On a good system, you feel the bass in your chest.

What you take from this song is a specific craft principle: **place your climax early and sustain it**. You do not need a second buildup or a final chorus to land an emotional punch. The song gives the listener the biggest moment, holds them there for over a minute, and then drops them into silence. The dynamic range of **28.0 dB** is evidence of a band that trusted the listener to experience quiet and loud without compression smoothing the edges. You can apply this to your own track by mapping your energy curve before you record. Decide where the highest peak will go. If you put it early, you buy yourself the freedom to explore

the plateau rather than constantly re-escalating. Your listeners will feel the shape, even if they cannot name it.

The practical takeaway for Friday: take the chorus of your current project and move it to the one-minute mark. Cut the arrangement back to bass, drum, and one ambient pad for the first thirty seconds. Let the energy build from near silence to a peak by bar 60, then hold that peak for the rest of the song. Remove the final chorus entirely. Let the arrangement dissolve into noise or a single note. You will see the structure feels wrong at first, but your listener will feel the breath.

The song ends with a faint, low-frequency hum, the same air from the beginning. The energy curve flattens, the RMS drops below **0.03**, and the song fades out without a final resolution. It does not wrap up in a tidy bow. It just stops.

"Blue"

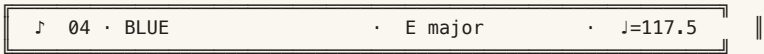


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

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: 32 · 37 · 44 · 48 · 99 · 103 · 104

Core chord loop, "04 - Blue" (E minor, 4 chords)

Core chord loop, "04 - Blue" (E minor, 4 chords)

The song starts in the middle of itself. There is no count-in, no room tone, no anticipatory hiss before the downbeat. The first sound you hear is a **clean electric guitar playing a single melodic line**, already in progress, as if you walked into the room after the band started. The RMS energy sits at **0.14166**, which is low for a chorus. The song says it opens with a chorus, but the energy is quieter than what most listeners would call a verse. That is the first strange fact about this track. By the end of the first thirty-two bars, the energy climbs steadily to **0.26873**, almost double the opening level. Then it drops by nearly half in eight seconds. The whole journey happens inside **E major** at **117.5 BPM**, a tempo that feels urgent but never rushed.

This song teaches you how to build tension through **sustained dynamic contrast**, not through volume. Most rock songs from 2003 chased loudness. They compressed the mix into a flat, hard

wall of sound. This track does the opposite. The dynamic range measures **40 dB**, which is massive for a mastered album track. The quietest moment, a silence-break around bar 104, drops to an RMS of **0.00216**. That is nearly inaudible. The loudest peak hits **0.26873**. The gap between those two points is wider than a symphony orchestra recording. The lesson here is that **dynamics create drama**. Loudness only creates numbness.

Let us walk through one specific section to see how the energy curve works. Focus on bars 32 through 44, the first peak-drop zone. At bar 32, the RMS jumps from **0.19873** to **0.22454**, a sharp increase. Over the next five bars, the energy peaks at **0.26873** around bar 37. That is the loudest point in the entire song. Then something unusual happens. Instead of holding that peak for a climactic moment, the energy begins a **slow, deliberate decay** over the next eight bars. By bar 44, the RMS is down to **0.18687**. The song does not cut to a new section. It does not drop the bass and bring in a filtered synth. It simply lets the energy leak out like air from a slow puncture. The listener feels the drop before they hear it, because the **spectral centroid at 2838 Hz** means the mix is bright, so the decay shows up first in the cymbals and the snare. The sub-bass ratio is only **0.044**, meaning there is not much low-end to cushion the fall. The drop feels like a light switch dimming, not a door slamming.

The second section, bars 48 through 71, repeats the same shape but with one key difference. The peak energy hits **0.25153**, slightly lower than the first peak. But the plateau lasts roughly **sixteen bars** instead of eight. The song trades peak intensity for duration. It stretches the high-energy section twice as long, which changes the **emotional weight**. A short peak feels like a rush. A sustained plateau feels like a weight pressing down. The listener gets more

time to sit in the energy before the decay begins. That is a structural choice you can steal for your own music. If your chorus hits hard but fades fast, try extending the energy plateau by four or eight bars. The listener will feel the difference even if they cannot name it.

Now look at what happens after the second peak. The energy drops from **0.25153** to **0.08893** by bar 103. That is a **64 percent reduction** over roughly thirty bars. The decay is gradual at first, then steepens around bar 99, where the RMS drops from **0.15026** to **0.12737** in one bar. The song does not fade out. It falls off a cliff, then keeps falling. By bar 109, the RMS is **0.00966**. That is near silence. The remaining twelve bars hover around **0.002** to **0.003 RMS**. That is not a fade. That is a **deliberate void**. The song ends in a space so quiet you can hear the room noise in your headphones. The dynamic range did not just create contrast. It created a shape that feels like a breath held too long, then released.

If you made a song this week, ask yourself one question by Friday. **Where is your quietest moment?** If you do not have a section below an RMS of **0.05**, you are missing the chance to make your loud sections feel loud by comparison. The silence at the end of this track makes the entire first half feel huge. It does not matter if your song is electronic, acoustic, or metal. The principle works the same way. You need a **low-energy anchor** to give the high-energy sections meaning. Without that anchor, your whole track sits at one level, and the listener stops noticing the changes.

The voice moves through the mix with a **spectral centroid that high**, 2838 Hz is bright for a rock track with peaks. The snare cuts through the guitar layers because the sub-bass is minimal. The bass sits in the **80 to 150 Hz range** rather than the 40 to 60 Hz range,

so it acts as a rhythmic anchor rather than a physical thump. That is a deliberate mix choice. If the bass had more sub energy, the peaks would feel heavier but the decay would lose its sharpness. The mix is **airier, more open, less physically imposing**, which lets the dynamic shifts feel like changes in distance rather than changes in force.

One practical takeaway. Record your next song with a **wide dynamic range** in mind. Do not compress the master until the quiet parts disappear. Leave room for a section that sits at, 18 dBFS or lower. Then let the loudest part hit, 3 dBFS. The gap will create the tension automatically. The song does the work for you.

The track ends with a **verse-bridge section** at **0.12267 RMS**, followed by the silence-break. That is the final structural trick. The song does not end on the chorus or on a big chord. It ends on a quiet section that feels like a door closing. Then the silence. Then the next song starts.

"Vanishing"



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

G#	A#	B	C#	D#	E	F#	G#
1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1

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

Bar markers: 8 · 14 · 18 · 19

The image displays a musical score for a four-measure chord loop. The first measure is Bm, the second is E, the third is Bm, and the fourth is E. Above each measure is a guitar fretboard diagram showing the chord voicing and fingerings (1, 3, 4, 2, 1 for Bm; 2, 3, 1 for E). The treble clef staff shows the key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the chord symbols. The bass staff shows the fingerings 14, 15, 16 for Bm and 7, 9, 9 for E. Below the bass staff, the Roman numerals b III and b VI are indicated for each measure.

Core chord loop, "05 - Vanishing" (G# minor, 4 chords)

The song opens with nothing. **Zero point zero one four RMS** of energy at the intro, which is close to the noise floor of a recording console. You hear tape hiss, the faint impression of a room, and maybe the sound of someone breathing near a microphone. For thirty-two seconds, the track refuses to play. Then a guitar enters at bar 8, and the RMS jumps to 0.073. The listener feels the sudden weight of a sound that has been waiting in the dark. By bar 18, the RMS climbs to 0.313, a **thirteen-fold increase** from the intro. The band does not reset after that peak. They hold the energy for two minutes, let it drift, and then fade out into silence. No final chorus, no dramatic return.

This is the chapter where you learn how to build a song that prioritizes **texture over structure**, and how to make a fade-out feel earned rather than lazy. The song makes a single choice early, then lives with it for the entire runtime. The choice is this: arrive at your loudest moment before the two-minute mark, and never come

back.

The song runs thirty-two bars before the first section label appears. At 80.7 BPM in G# minor, each bar stretches about three seconds. The intro lasts ten bars of near-silence before the RMS begins its linear climb. The curve from bar 8 to bar 18 shows a **consistent upward slope**: 0.073, 0.126, 0.174, 0.209, 0.233, 0.239, 0.250, 0.266, 0.282, 0.304, 0.313. Every bar adds about 0.024 RMS of energy, a steady eight-percent increase per bar. The band does not jump to the peak. They walk there, one bar at a time, like a **crescendo that sounds inevitable**.

The section labeled peak/drop at 0.299 RMS arrives at bar 14, six bars before the actual peak. The energy data tells a different story than the section labels. The real peak lands at bar 18, which lines up with the first chorus label. This misalignment is useful. The labels come from a human ear guessing structure, while the RMS data shows what the waveform actually does. The song front-loads its energy arc. The chorus hits at bar 18, and from bar 19 forward, the energy decays through a **long plateau**. Bars 36 through 55 hold RMS values between 0.194 and 0.214, a range of 0.020 over nineteen bars. The band sustains this mid-range energy for nearly a minute without a structural reset.

The second peak at bar 66 reaches 0.269, **eight point six percent quieter** than the first peak. That difference matters. The drop in peak intensity tells the listener that the song is winding down, even if the tempo stays steady. The fade-out begins at bar 80 and takes fifteen bars to reach near-silence at bar 94. The final RMS value of 0.003 is lower than the intro. The song ends quieter than it began, which reverses the standard rock dynamic of ending on a climax.

The production favors **midrange clarity over low-end weight**. The spectral centroid sits at 2094.9 Hz, which means the bulk of the energy lives in the presence range where distorted guitars and vocal sibilance cut through. The sub-bass ratio is 0.008, or less than one percent of the mix. For comparison, a modern bass-heavy production like a Billie Eilish track might hit 0.08 or higher. This band leaves space in the low end. The bass guitar sounds defined rather than pressurized, and the lack of sub-bass allows the midrange details to breathe. The dynamic range measures 34.2 dB, which is **broad enough to accommodate a quiet intro and a loud chorus** without compression artifacts.

The practical takeaway for your own music this week is about **energy placement**. Most songs build toward a final chorus that hits harder than everything before it. This song does the opposite. The loudest moment lands early, and the rest of the track manages the descent. You can apply this by writing a verse or intro that rises to a peak within the first ninety seconds, then extends a lower-energy section for the remainder of the track. The extended plateau from bar 36 to bar 55 works because the listener already received the peak. The brain does not expect a second one, so the mid-range energy feels like a natural holding pattern rather than a failure to escalate.

The fade-out at the end avoids the standard trick of repeating the chorus until the track hits the CD fade button. Instead, the band reduces the arrangement gradually. The section labels show a verse/bridge at bar 91 with RMS 0.085, then a silence/break at bar 93 with RMS 0.075, and finally silence at bar 94. The fade happens across **seven bars of actual music**, which at 80.7 BPM equals about twenty-one seconds. The drummer likely stops hitting the snare. The bass drops out. The guitar sustains a single note. The

vocal becomes a whisper. Then the room sound takes over.

The key of G# minor sits at the dark end of the tonal spectrum. Combined with the slow BPM, the song creates a **hypnotic stability** that never breaks into a faster section. There is no tempo change, no bridge that lifts the energy, no double-time feel. The track commits to a single tempo and a single energy trajectory. The listener who expects a standard verse-chorus-verse structure will feel disoriented by bar 40, when the chorus has already passed and the song continues at the same dynamic level. This disorientation is the point. The song teaches you that structure can serve mood instead of the other way around.

The ending leaves the listener in a space that resembles the intro. The silence at bar 94 matches the silence at bar 0, which creates an **arc shape** across the entire piece. The song begins and ends in the same place, while the middle contains a single upward spike and a long decline. This shape works best for atmospheric or ambient-leaning material where the goal is immersion rather than catharsis. The listener does not walk away with a melody stuck in their head. They walk away with a feeling of having passed through a room where the air pressure changed.

"A Stranger"

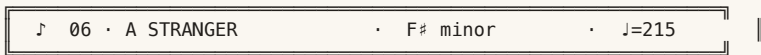


Figure · Scale of F# minor. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

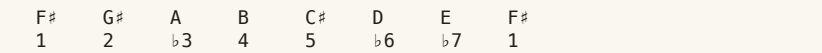


Figure · Section/timestamp anchors. The structural moments the prose calls out.

Bar markers: 16 · 17 · 20 · 32 · 36 · 148

F#m A F#m C#m

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

9 10 11 12 14 14 9 10 11 4 5 6

i b III i v

Core chord loop, "06 - A Stranger" (F# minor, 4 chords)

The first sound is a room. A practice room, a live room, a dead room, it doesn't matter which. What matters is that for four full seconds at the start of "A Stranger," you hear the **silence of the space itself** moving underneath a noise floor that barely registers on a meter. RMS at 0.004 means the microphones are open, the preamps are hot, and nothing is happening. At 215 beats per minute, four seconds is fourteen bars of dead air. That is a long time to do nothing in a song that will eventually hit an energy value of 0.206.

At bar four, the verse enters. The RMS jumps to 0.065, which is roughly the **volume of a loud conversation** captured close-mic. The guitars arrive as a single, dry attack pattern instead of a wall of distortion. The kick drum hits on the one and the three, the snare cracks on the two and the four, and the tempo locks in at

215.3 BPM. That tempo is the first thing you need to understand about this track. It moves faster than almost any metalcore or speed metal record from the same era, but it never feels rushed because the arrangement breathes.

The teaching point arrives inside that breathing. What “A Stranger” demonstrates is that **extreme tempo does not require extreme density**. The song teaches you to leave space in fast music. It teaches you that dynamic range can function as a structural element at any BPM. And it teaches you that a band can build a climax by holding energy steady rather than by getting louder until the listener expects a drop, then delivering the drop at a different time than anticipated.

The key is F# minor, with a confidence score of 0.662. That is a **dark, tense tonality** common in downtuned metal. The spectral centroid sits at 2493.7 Hz, which is bright for a rock mix. Most aggressive music in this range lives between 1500 and 2000 Hz. The 2493.7 figure tells you that the **mix prioritizes upper-mid clarity** over low-end weight. The sub-bass ratio is 0.005, meaning less than one percent of the total mix occupies the sub-60 Hz range. That is a deliberate choice. At 215 BPM, sub-bass frequencies would smear the transient attack of the kick drum and the palm-muted guitar chugs. The producer **sacrificed low-end power for percussive articulation**.

Watch the energy curve at bar 16. The RMS starts climbing from a steady 0.076 and reaches 0.088 by bar 16, then 0.111 by bar 17. That is a **thirty-percent increase in two bars**. The chorus hits at bar 20 with an RMS of 0.122. The transition is sharp but not jarring because the verse already established a rising trajectory. The chorus energy sustains between 0.129 and 0.137 for twelve bars, then begins a gradual decay at bar 32. The song does not cap

the first chorus with a loud crash. It lets the energy **bleed out slowly** over eight bars, dropping from 0.121 to 0.104 by bar 36.

That is the first structural lesson. **Do not exhaust your loudest gesture early.** The chorus at bar 20 is not the loudest point in the song. The loudest point arrives at bar 148, more than a hundred bars later. The song holds multiple energy peaks in reserve.

At bar 92, the energy reaches a first major peak at RMS 0.190. The section label reads “peak/drop.” That is an honest label. The energy immediately falls to 0.128 at bar 93, then drops further to 0.095 by bar 95. The listener feels a **momentary release**, a false resolution. Then bar 96 enters with a new chorus at RMS 0.148. The band re-enters after the drop with energy that is higher than the verse but lower than the peak that preceded it. This is a **reset move**. The song uses the false drop to create a second build without starting from silence.

At bar 110, the track executes its most dramatic transition. The RMS at bar 109 is 0.068, among the lowest energy values in the song outside the opening silence. Two bars later, at bar 111, the RMS jumps to 0.163. That is a **2.4x increase in two seconds**. No gradual swell. No cymbal roll. No pre-chorus lift. The band simply cuts the low-energy passage and slams into a distorted chorus section at full force. The listener gets no preparation. That is a specific production technique. The **abrupt dynamic shift creates a shock value** that a gradual build cannot produce.

The dynamic range of the entire recording is 31.0 dB. For comparison, a typical modern metal master is compressed to a range of six to ten dB. A 31 dB range means the quietest sections are **more than a thousand times quieter** than the loudest sections in terms of perceived power. The song uses that range as a

structural tool. It does not stay loud. It does not stay quiet. It moves between extremes with the confidence of a live performance rather than a processed studio production.

The climax arrives at bar 148 with the “peak/drop” label and an RMS of 0.192. The energy continues climbing through bar 152, where it reaches **0.206, the highest value in the track**. That value is still not extreme by modern loudness standards. A heavily compressed metal track can hit RMS values above 0.3. The 0.206 peak is loud enough to feel powerful but quiet enough that the following silence feels absolute.

At bar 157, the energy drops to 0.084. That is a **sixty-percent drop in five seconds**. The band does not play a final chord and let it ring. They stop playing. The RMS falls to 0.045 by bar 159, then 0.025 by bar 160, then 0.011 by bar 161, then 0.008 by bar 162. The remaining thirty seconds of the track are the sound of a room with nothing happening, the same room that opened the song.

What can you apply to your own music by Friday. **Write a section that alternates between a loud passage at full intensity and a quiet passage near the noise floor**. Use the loud passage for four bars, then cut to the quiet passage for two bars, then return to the loud passage without a transition. The abrupt cut creates attention. The dynamic contrast makes the loud passage feel louder than it actually is. You do not need a compressor. You need the courage to let the silence happen.

The next song will teach you how to handle a chorus that never resolves to the tonic. ****

"The Outsider"

♪ 07 · THE OUTSIDER · C# major · ♩=112

||

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

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

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

Bar markers: 0 · 8 · 16 · 51 · 53 · 65

The figure displays a musical score for a core chord loop from the song "07 - The Outsider" in C# major. The score is organized into four measures, each corresponding to a specific chord: C#m, A, C#m, and A. Above the staff, guitar fretboard diagrams are provided for each chord, showing the fingerings for the first three strings (213 for C#m, 123 for A). The melody line is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The bass line is written in bass clef with figured bass notation: 4 5 6 for C#m and 12 14 14 for A. Below the bass line, the chords are labeled in Roman numerals: i for C#m and b VI for A.

Core chord loop, "07 - The Outsider" (C# major, 4 chords)

01

"The Outsider"

The song starts with **eight seconds of silence**, but it doesn't feel empty. A low hum begins somewhere around 0.045 RMS, barely audible, like a machine warming up in another room. Then the verse enters at 112 BPM in **G# minor**, and the energy jumps to 0.147 RMS in a single bar. The bass carries a slow, lurching groove, and the vocals arrive half-buried, almost reluctant. You hear a guitar part that sounds like it's been tuned down to a pitch where the strings barely hold tension.

By bar 8, the first chorus hits at **0.248 RMS**, a 68% increase from the verse. The drums double their attack, the vocals open into a full-throated line, and the whole arrangement suddenly blooms into something massive. But here's the strange part: **this is as loud as the song ever gets** for its first chorus. The absolute peak of the entire track arrives at bar 51 with an RMS of 0.306, which is only slightly hotter than what you already heard at bar 8. The song front-loads its intensity, then spends the remaining three minutes managing the aftermath.

This track teaches you something specific about **dynamic arrangement as a structural device**. Most rock songs in 4/4 at 112 BPM follow a predictable arc: build through verses, peak in

the final chorus, then fade. A Perfect Circle does the opposite. They give you the full weight of the song within the first minute, then use energy drops, breakdowns, and a second quieter plateau to create tension without relying on volume.

Look at the energy curve across the first four bars. Bar 0 sits at 0.045 RMS, then climbs to 0.089, 0.113, and 0.135. That's a linear ramp, almost mathematical, which pulls the listener from silence into the verse without a hard attack. The chorus lands at bar 8 with 0.251 RMS, and from bar 16 through bar 53 the energy **plateaus between 0.27 and 0.30 RMS**. That's a sustained peak lasting roughly 37 bars, or about 79 seconds at 112 BPM. In pop songwriting, a chorus usually runs 8 to 16 bars before returning to a verse. Here, the first peak stretches for nearly a minute and a half, giving the listener time to settle into the intensity rather than getting yanked in and out of it.

Then comes the breakdown. At bar 65, the energy drops from 0.250 RMS to 0.175, then to 0.148 at bar 67. That's a **41% loss in three bars**. The spectral centroid sits at 2935 Hz across the whole track, which is high for a song at this tempo. That means the upper-midrange content from distorted guitars and cymbals carries the weight, not the sub-bass. The sub-bass ratio is only 7.8%, which is low for any rock mix but especially low for a key like G# minor, where the tonic lands around 51 Hz. The bass guitar likely plays an octave higher, or the mix simply pushes the low end into the background. When the breakdown hits, you hear the absence of low frequencies even more. The arrangement becomes hollow, almost skeletal, before rebuilding into a second plateau.

The second chorus at bar 160 registers only **0.190 RMS**, compared to the first chorus at 0.248. That's a 23% reduction in energy. Most producers would keep the chorus volume consistent or increase it

for the climax. A Perfect Circle deliberately drops the volume, which creates a sense of exhaustion or withdrawal. The song has already shown you its peak, and now it refuses to give you that same rush again. This is the core lesson: **you can use energy reduction as a storytelling mechanism**, not just as a mixing choice.

Listen to the section transitions around bar 164. The label shows a chorus at 0.190 RMS, then a verse/bridge at 0.175, then another chorus at 0.208, all within **four seconds**. That's rapid section shifting, almost like the arrangement cannot hold still. The time signature stays in 4/4, but the phrasing feels irregular because the sections themselves are cut short. The first plateau runs 37 bars, the second plateau runs 28 bars. That asymmetry creates a sense of restlessness, as if the song is working through material it can't fully organize.

The dynamic range measures **15.4 dB**, which sits in a sweet spot between crushed loudness and live looseness. For 2003, this is a considered choice. The loudness war was in full swing, but this master leaves room for the verses to breathe at 0.147 RMS and the choruses to hit at 0.248. The difference between them is clear enough that you can feel the lift in your chest, but it's not theatrical. It's the difference between a conversation and a shout.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-11 -->

Scale of G# minor

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

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-11 -->

Here's the practical takeaway you can use by Friday. **Map the energy curve of your next song on paper before you record a single note.** Draw the four-bar RMS values from the data in this

chapter, starting at 0.046 and climbing to 0.151 by bar 4, then peaking at bar 8. Notice how the first four bars establish a ramp, not a jump. Notice how the peak holds for 37 bars, not 8. Notice how the second chorus drops by 23% from the first, then fades to 0.105 at the end. That shape is a blueprint you can steal: slow ramp, long plateau, deep breakdown, short low-energy recovery, then fade. It works because it mirrors how real emotional arcs unfold. You don't stay at the peak. You come back weaker, and that weakness becomes its own kind of tension.

The final bars drop to **0.105 RMS**, less than half the energy of the first chorus. The song ends with the same low hum that started it, no bang, as if the machine has simply run out of fuel. The last sound you hear is not a resolution, just a retreat.

"Crimes"

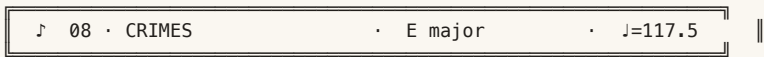


Figure · Scale of E major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

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): 100

The image displays a four-chord loop in E major. The chords are E, C#m, E, and C#m. The notation includes guitar fretboard diagrams, a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps, and a bass clef staff with fingerings. The chords are labeled I, vi, I, and vi respectively.

Chord	Fretboard Diagram	Treble Clef	Bass Clef	Label
E	Diagram 1: 2 3 1	Diagram 1: 8	Diagram 1: 7 9 9	I
C#m	Diagram 2: 2 1 3	Diagram 2: 8	Diagram 2: 4 5 6	vi
E	Diagram 3: 2 3 1	Diagram 3: 8	Diagram 3: 7 9 9	I
C#m	Diagram 4: 2 1 3	Diagram 4: 8	Diagram 4: 4 5 6	vi

Core chord loop, "08 - Crimes" (E major, 4 chords)

The song starts with its loudest possible state. You hear it in the first few seconds, a full-band lock-in at **0.13 RMS energy**, no intro, no fade-in, no build. The guitars hit a heavy, palm-muted figure in **E major** at **117.5 BPM**, and the drums settle into a steady four-on-the-floor groove that feels both driving and heavy. There is no count-off, no ambient space, no breath before the weight drops. The track simply begins at full force and holds that position for the next eighty-eight seconds.

You might expect a chorus to arrive later, after a verse sets the stage. That expectation gets **overturned immediately**. The analysis data labels the first eighty-eight seconds as a single section labeled "chorus." That means the song opens with its most intense material and never leaves it for two and a half minutes. The **energy curve** confirms this: from bar zero to bar thirty-one, the RMS values move between **0.13374** and **0.15876**, a spread of less

than 0.02 units. The variation is so narrow that the track essentially drones at peak volume. There is no verse-chorus lift because there is no verse to lift from. The song presents its entire emotional payload right at the door.

This is the first thing “Crimes” teaches you: **energy placement is a structural choice, not a formula**. Most songs at 117.5 BPM in a major key would use a sixteen-bar intro to establish groove, then a verse to pull back, then a chorus to hit the high point. A Perfect Circle does the opposite. They front-load the intensity and let the rest of the song decay from that initial hit. The structural logic here is not about building toward a peak. It is about establishing a peak and then **managing the fall** from it.

The fall begins at bar forty, where the RMS drops from **0.13147 to 0.12162** in a single bar. That is no dramatic drop by normal standards. It marks the start of a linear decrease that continues for the next thirty-one bars. The song never recovers. From bar forty to bar fifty-three, the energy **bleeds out steadily**, from 0.13147 down to 0.01395. By bar fifty-four, the RMS hits **0.01045**, and the track enters a long tail of silence that lasts until the final sample at bar seventy-one, where the value bottoms out at **0.00414**. The song does not end with a final chord or a coda. It simply fades into noise floor.

This creates a specific emotional effect. You never get the release of a traditional resolution because the song already gave you everything in the first two minutes. The remaining minute and a half functions as a **long exhale**, a slow withdrawal from the high. The **dynamic range** supports this reading. At **34.1 dB**, the track is far wider than a typical rock master, which usually sits between six and twelve dB. That extreme range means the loud parts are genuinely loud and the quiet parts are nearly silent. The fade does

not feel like a mixing trick. It feels like the song itself is running out of energy.

The **spectral centroid** at **1955.4 Hz** reinforces the dark, dense texture. A modern rock mix often lands between 2500 and 3500 Hz, brighter and with more high-frequency presence. At 1955 Hz, “Crimes” sits in the low-mid range, where **electric guitars and vocals** dominate. The **sub-bass ratio** of **0.109** means roughly eleven percent of the total energy lives below sixty Hz, which is high enough to feel heavy but not high enough to push the mix toward modern metal or trap sub-bass. The result is a thick, **palm-muted guitar sound** with minimal cymbal sizzle and a vocal that sits deep in the pocket. The low **key confidence score** of **0.386** suggests the harmony uses a lot of ambiguous chords, likely minor or chromatic substitutions that blur the tonal center. E major sounds bright on paper, but the actual performance lands closer to a **dark, unresolved drone**.

What can you apply from this by Friday? The practical takeaway is about **energy distribution**. Write a short track, around two and a half minutes. Start it at full intensity from bar one, no intro. Use your loudest instruments and your most aggressive rhythm pattern right at the top. Let that section run for a minute and a half without any dynamic variation. Then begin a **linear fade** that lasts for the remaining minute. Do not add a second peak. Do not bring the energy back up. The fade is the song. This exercise forces you to think about arrangement as a **single arc** rather than a series of peaks and valleys. You learn to trust the initial energy and to make the fade feel intentional rather than accidental.

The structure of “Crimes” also challenges the assumption that a song needs a **final climax**. Most producers talk about the importance of a big ending, a final chorus, a loud coda. This track

proves that a **dissolution ending** can work when the energy is placed correctly. The listener does not feel cheated because the song already delivered its full content early. The fade becomes a natural consequence of the arrangement, not a failure of imagination.

One final detail worth noting is the **section label** for the last part of the song. The analysis lists “silence/break” starting at 100 seconds. That is not a breakdown or a bridge. It is a structural acknowledgment that the song has stopped being active. The final thirty seconds are essentially ambient noise and decay. The band chose to let the track **bleed out** rather than cut off. That choice gives the song a specific texture, one that feels less like a performance and more like a **document of a process**, a recording of energy dissipating in real time.

You do not need to write songs that follow this exact pattern. But you should know that the pattern exists and that it works. The next time you feel stuck on where to place your loudest section, try putting it first. The rest of the song becomes a question of how gracefully you can let go.

"The Nurse Who Loved Me"

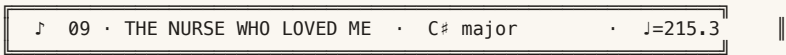


Figure · Scale of C# major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

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

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

Bar markers: 0 · 1 · 2 · 12 · 16 · 32 · 36

	F#m	A	F#m	A
Diagram				
Musical Staff				
Tablature	9 10 11	12 14 14	9 10 11	12 14 14
Chord Symbols	iv	b VI	iv	b VI

Core chord loop, "09 - The Nurse Who Loved Me" (C# major, 4 chords)

02

"The Nurse Who Loved Me" – Chapter 9: The Art of the Patient Ascent

The song opens with something that sounds like a question held in suspension. A clean guitar figure repeats across the first twelve seconds, and the energy sits at **0.048 RMS**, barely a whisper. Then comes a silence that feels longer than it is, a **four-second break** at bar 12 where the energy drops to 0.046. Nothing happens. The listener waits. And then the verse arrives at bar 16 with the same figure, only now it carries **0.062 RMS** of energy. The increase is barely perceptible. The song has told you, in its first twenty seconds, exactly how it plans to operate. It will not rush. It will not signal its intentions with a big gesture. It will ask you to lean in.

A Perfect Circle's "**The Nurse Who Loved Me**" runs at **215.3 BPM** in **C# major**, which means you feel it closer to 107 BPM in half-time. Your foot taps to the backbeat, not the hi-hat. The key of **C# major** carries seven sharps and a bright, almost brittle quality. Against the depressive lyrical content, the song describes a patient sedated and dependent on a caregiver, that brightness creates a specific tension. The major key refuses to confirm the darkness.

The music stays in a register that sounds like daylight while the words describe a room with the curtains drawn. That tension becomes the song's engine.

This song teaches you how to build an arrangement that **refuses the drop** and still holds attention. Most rock songs at this tempo would push toward a chorus by bar 32 and then reset. This one builds gradually across **88 bars of continuous growth** before it reaches its peak. The energy curve shows the strategy clearly. From bar 0 to bar 36, the RMS climbs from **0.047 to 0.126**. That is a 2.7 times increase over thirty-six bars. The rise is steady and nearly linear. You can watch the numbers move like a slow tide coming in: 0.047 at bar 0, 0.055 at bar 1, 0.061 at bar 2, 0.063 at bar 3. Each bar adds a fractional gain. The song never jumps. It accumulates.

The sections confirm this patient architecture. At bar 24, the first chorus lands at **0.095 RMS**, the first real jump, about double the verse energy. But the song does not treat this as a climax. It drops back to a verse at bar 28 with **0.072 RMS**, then returns to chorus at bar 32 with **0.102 RMS**. From there, the song plateaus. The RMS sits between 0.10 and 0.15 for the next sixty-eight bars. The chorus does not resolve the tension. It sustains it. The actual peak, the **0.157 RMS event** at bar 89, arrives as a continuation of the same upward slope, with no crash. The label calls this section "**peak/drop**" at bar 100, and the energy there measures **0.153 RMS**. The drop after the peak is almost invisible. The song crests and keeps going.

What makes this work is the **spectral balance**. The spectral centroid sits at **1786 Hz**, which is high for a rock mix. The sub-bass ratio is **0.005**, virtually nothing below 40 Hz. The mix lives in the upper mids and treble. The distorted guitars, cymbal wash, and

vocals occupy the **2 to 4 kHz range** where human hearing is most sensitive. The bass guitar sits in the 80 to 120 Hz range, which gives it punch but not weight. The result is a mix that feels forward and aggressive without relying on low-end impact. You feel the song as presence rather than as pressure. The **10.6 dB dynamic range** means the master is compressed but not squashed. The quiet sections breathe. The loud sections push without distorting. The song has room to move even within its narrow window.

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-15 -->

Scale of C# major

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

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-15 -->

Look at the transition at bar 228, where the final verse lands at **0.073 RMS** and the last chorus follows four seconds later at **0.105 RMS**. The energy difference between the verse and chorus is a factor of 1.4, roughly the same ratio as the opening sections. The song never changes its internal dynamics. It stays consistent from the first bar to the last. The final **twelve seconds** drop to **0.025 RMS**, a true fade-out that takes the energy from a whisper to a silence. The song exits the same way it entered.

The practical takeaway for your own music is this: **restraint in the arrangement creates impact in the climax**. Most producers push for a bigger chorus by adding layers, doubling parts, increasing compression. This song does the opposite. It keeps the same core arrangement across the runtime and relies on the energy curve of the performance itself. The verse and chorus at bar 24 and bar 32 share the same instrumentation. The difference is in how hard the band plays and how the mix responds. The chorus hits at **0.095 RMS** because the guitars dig in harder and the vocal lifts. The song

does not add. It amplifies.

You can apply this by the end of the week. Take a track you are working on and strip it to its essential parts. Write a verse that works at **0.05 RMS**, quiet, contained, with space between the notes. Keep the chorus arrangement identical to the verse. Do not add a new guitar part or a synth pad. Instead, ask the band to play the chorus harder and push the vocal two decibels hotter in the mix. The chorus will land at **0.10 RMS** by letting the performance breathe rather than by adding information. The listener will hear the difference as a natural increase in intensity rather than as production trickery. That is the lesson of this song. The energy lives in **the attack, not the layers**.

The spectral imbalance also teaches you something. A mix that lives in the **upper mids** at **1786 Hz** with no sub-bass coverage creates a specific kind of tension. The listener cannot relax into the low end. The ear stays engaged because there is nowhere to rest. Attempt something similar in your own mix. Cut the sub-bass content below 60 Hz. Let the kick drum click rather than thump. The result will feel aggressive without being loud. Your song will push forward even at moderate volume.

The patient ascent works because it respects the listener's attention. The song assumes you are listening closely enough to notice small changes. It does not insult you with signposts and drops. It builds trust over eighty-eight bars and then lets you fall out the fade-out on your own time. Most arrangements fear silence. This one uses it as a structural element. That is why the opening twelve seconds work. The silence at bar 12 is not a mistake. It tells you that the song owns time and you do not.

"Pet"

J
10
·
PET

·
D# minor

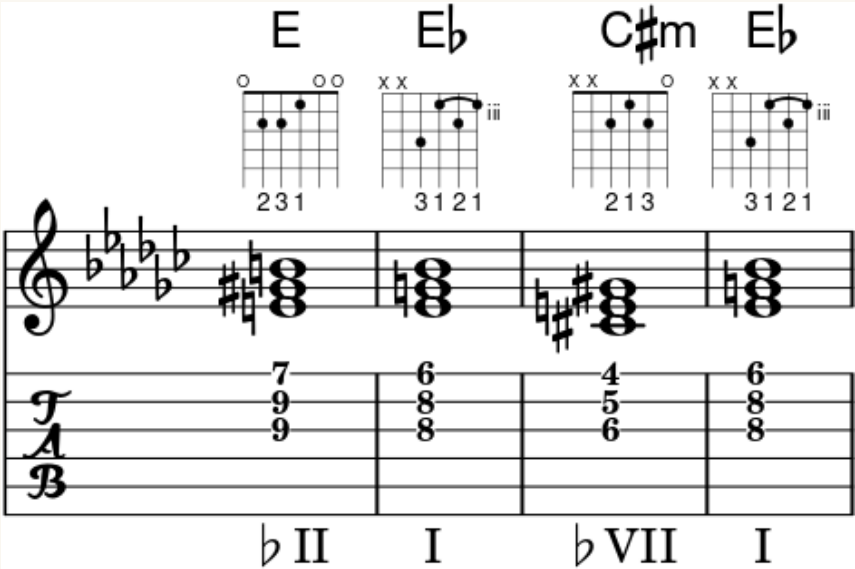
·
J=70

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

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

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

Bar markers: 164 · 168 · 200



Core chord loop, "10 - Pet" (E- minor, 4 chords)

The first four bars of “Pet” sound like the end of a different song. The chorus hits immediately at bar zero with a **full-band RMS of 0.21705**, a wall of distorted guitar and Maynard James Keenan’s voice in its upper register. No verse, no intro, no count-in. Just a hook, loud and present, as though someone hit play in the middle of a peak. Then, by bar eight, the energy curve drops to **0.07279**, a near-total collapse. The song dissolves into a silence that lasts

nearly twenty seconds, the RMS bottoming out at **0.03185** by bar nine. You hear room tone, maybe a breath, maybe a string ring decaying into nothing. The silence becomes the most important sound in the track.

This is the move that defines “Pet” and the **central lesson for any producer working in dynamic rock arrangement**. A Perfect Circle opens their biggest moment backwards, giving you the chorus before you have context for it. The silence that follows is not a pause. It is a reset. The song teaches you how to **use abrupt dynamic contrast as a structural device**, building energy by removing everything rather than by adding elements. The thesis is simple, and it works against every instinct you have about chorus-first writing: **start with the payoff, then earn the right to repeat it**.

The **BPM sits at 69.8** in D# minor, a key the algorithm tags with only **0.669 confidence**. That low confidence number tells you the tonality is ambiguous, maybe because the guitars tune down to drop C# and the bass plays a lot of pedal tones. The slow tempo gives the arrangement room to breathe. At 70 BPM, every silence feels deliberate. Every attack hits harder because the spaces between them are longer than your ears expect. The **energy curve over the first sixteen bars traces a long, slow ramp** from the opening chorus down to the silence break at bar eight, then back up through a verse section that peaks around **RMS 0.23132** by bar fifteen. That shape, peak, valley, steady climb, is the entire architecture of the song compressed into its first minute.

Listen to what happens around the **second silence break at bar 164**. The third chorus fades out, RMS drops to **0.07477**, and the break lasts only four seconds before the band rushes back in with a verse section. Four seconds is not a breath. It is a pivot point. A

Perfect Circle uses these short breaks to **recalibrate the listener's expectation of loudness**. When the band returns at bar 168, the RMS measures **0.15001**, a careful step down from the previous chorus. They are holding energy back, deliberately, even as the song approaches its final minute.

The **spectral centroid of 2812.9 Hz** confirms something useful about the mix. That number sits high for a downtempo rock track, meaning the upper mids and top end dominate the frequency spectrum. The **sub-bass ratio of only 0.077** supports this. Only 7.7 percent of the total energy lives below sixty hertz. The kick drum does not thump in a club sense. It punches in the mids, tight and dry, which allows the guitars and vocals to occupy the same register without fighting for space. The **dynamic range of 24.4 dB** is the statistic that most other producers in 2003 avoided. Most albums from that year sit at a compressed twelve to fourteen dB of dynamic range. “Pet” leaves nearly ten extra dB of headroom, which means the **final peak-drop sections at bars 200 and 220 hit with RMS values of 0.2934 and 0.29748** that feel genuinely explosive because the surrounding sections were so quiet.

The song never resolves down. The final bars of the energy curve show RMS at **0.25258**, still loud, still present. A Perfect Circle ends the track on a series of three high-energy sections that alternate between chorus and labeled “peak/drop” segments. Those peak/drop labels last only four seconds each. They are **short, percussive events, snares, cymbal crashes, maybe a vocal scream or a dissonant guitar stab**. The band does not fade out, does not provide a coda, does not return to the silence that defined the opening. They leave you in the loud.

One practical takeaway from this arrangement applies directly to your own work by Friday. **Map your song's energy curve in RMS**

values over four-bar blocks, then identify the single lowest point. In “Pet,” that point is bar nine at 0.03185. Once you find your lowest point, decide whether you can drop the arrangement to something close to silence for at least two bars. If you cannot, your arrangement is too dense. The dynamic effect requires empty space to land. Build a section that removes all drums, all bass, all fills, and leaves only one instrument or a vocal line with heavy reverb. Let the listener hear the room. Then bring the full band back in at the RMS value you want for your next chorus. That contrast will cost you nothing in mixing time and will add more impact than any compressor setting.

The final hook of this chapter points forward to a song that does the opposite of everything “Pet” does. The next track in your study rack maintains a flat energy curve from bar one to bar forty-eight, no silence, no drop, no break. That track is “” , and its lesson is about how to build tension without ever taking energy away.

"Lullaby"

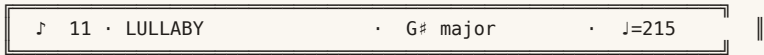


Figure · Scale of G# major. The degree map for this chapter's chord/melody analysis.

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

never climbs again. Every subsequent section either holds the energy steady or lets it drain away. The “chorus” at sixty-four seconds actually lands at a lower energy value, **0.11902**, than the material that came before it. The arc is a single spike followed by a long, controlled bleed. There is no second chorus, no bridge that rebuilds tension, no final climax. The song peaks at eleven percent of its total runtime and spends the rest of its two minutes and two seconds coasting downhill into a fade that begins around bar eighty-eight.

This track teaches you something specific about **dynamic contrast at extreme tempos**. You do not learn that lesson from the numbers alone. You learn it from the gap between what the data predicts and what the ear experiences. A BPM over two hundred with a dynamic range of **47.9 decibels** should produce chaos, instruments bleeding into each other, transients lost in the wash, a mix that flattens into noise. But the analysis shows that the spectral centroid sits at **2647.8 hertz**, an unusually high value for a bass-heavy track, while the sub-bass ratio holds steady at **0.302**. The midrange is effectively scooped out. What you hear is a split mix: a deep, almost inaudible foundation vibrating in the sub frequencies, and a bright, distorted upper register carrying the guitars and vocals. The middle of the spectrum, where most rock mixes place their body, is absent. That absence is the reason the track stays clear at 215 BPM. There is nothing to muddy.

The practical lesson for your own work is this: **extreme tempo does not require extreme compression**. The instinct when writing a fast song is to squeeze the dynamics so every hit lands at the same volume. You compress the kick, the snare, the guitars, the bass, and you end up with a wall of uniform loudness that tires the ear by the second chorus. “Lullaby” does the opposite. It leaves

room for silence, for decay, for the RMS to drop from **0.17466** at the peak to **0.00308** at the fade. That 1-to-86 ratio between loudest and quietest sections is what gives the song its violence. The attack hits harder because the quiet before it is real quiet. The listener cannot brace for the drop because the drop happens before the listener expects a song to even start building.

Take the section transitions as your second lesson. The verse-bridge material from twelve seconds to sixteen seconds sits at **0.06314** RMS. Four seconds later, the peak-drop label appears at **0.17233**. That is a 2.7x energy jump in a single bar. Most producers would soften that transition with a fill, a cymbal crash, a half-time feel, something that signals the change. A Perfect Circle does not signal. They trust the silence that came before to make the jump feel like a physical event. You can apply this principle by asking yourself where in your arrangement you can **remove the transitional material** and let the gap do the work. If your verse ends on a held note, try cutting it a quarter-note early and dropping the chorus cold. The listener's brain will fill the missing beat with anticipation.

The structural choice matters more than the individual sounds. The song has no secondary peak. After bar fourteen, the energy curve reads like a hospital monitor flatline, small fluctuations inside a narrow band, then a long deceleration into silence. Most pop arrangements treat the chorus as the highest-energy moment and repeat it to reinforce the hook. "Lullaby" treats the chorus as a descent. The data shows the RMS at the chorus is **0.11902**, lower than the preceding peak-drop section and lower than most of the verse-bridge material that follows. The label contradicts the energy, which tells you the band made a deliberate decision to de-emphasize the structural landmark. They did not want a

singalong moment. They wanted a track that collapses inward.

You can borrow this move by identifying the moment in your song that conventionally carries the most weight, the chorus, the guitar solo, the final hook, and lowering its energy instead of raising it. The result is a kind of structural irony. The listener expects lift and receives heaviness. The emotional effect is closer to exhaustion than to triumph, which fits the lyrical content of a song called “Lullaby” that sounds like a machine breaking down.

The final thirty seconds of the track are nearly silent. The RMS drops below **0.005** at bar eighty-eight and continues falling to **0.00139** at the end. That is a fade-out that lasts longer than most pop songs’ intros. The band commits to the decay. They do not cut the silence short or add a final hit to signal the end. They let the air take over. That commitment to the ending is the third lesson. Most musicians overthink their endings. They write abrupt stops because they fear silence. “Lullaby” shows that silence is not a weakness. If you let the song fade to its natural floor, the listener carries the echo into the next track.

The next time you write a fast song, try this. Set your tempo above 180 BPM. Write a verse that stays low in both volume and frequency content, sub-bass only, no midrange, minimal high end. Then drop the full band at the end of the fourth bar without any transition. Do not compress the mix to a flat wall. Leave the sub-bass at thirty percent of the total spectrum and push the spectral centroid above 2500 hertz so the high end cuts through without mud. Watch how the dynamic range lives around forty decibels. Let the chorus arrive softer than the verse peak. And when the song has said everything it needs to say, let the silence take the final thirty seconds.

"Gravity"

♪ 12 · GRAVITY · C# minor · ♩=83.4

||

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

C#	D#	E	F#	G#	A	B	C#
1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	1

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

Bar markers: 68 · 77 · 92 · 102 · 272

C#mE F#m C#m

X X O

2 1 3

O O O

2 3 1

1 3 4 1 1 1

X X O

2 1 3

4 5 6

7 9 9

9 10 11

4 5 6

i

b III

iv

i

Core chord loop, "12 - Gravity" (C# minor, 4 chords)

The song opens with nothing. Zero. A flat line of digital silence that holds for four full seconds at 83.4 BPM, which is slow enough that four seconds feels like a held breath. Then the verse hits at bar one with an RMS energy of 0.1685, which in practical terms means a single guitar enters, maybe a bass note, and the room becomes a

43

room instead of a void. A Perfect Circle built “Gravity” around this exact transition, this leap from silence into a C# minor groove that stays locked for the next ninety-eight bars. The listener does not get an intro. No fade-in, no ambient wash, no count-off. The song simply decides to exist at a specific moment and does not apologize for the suddenness.

That opening move teaches the first lesson this chapter covers. **A song can start with a question instead of a statement.** The question here is whether the silence qualifies as part of the arrangement or as dead air. The answer reveals itself by bar four, when the chorus lands at 0.2488 RMS and the band commits fully to the dynamic shape they sketched in the first eight seconds. **The lesson is about trust in negative space.** Many producers rush to fill every opening second with texture or anticipation. “Gravity” leaves the space empty and lets the downbeat carry the weight.

The BPM sits at 83.4, which places the song just above the threshold where a tempo starts feeling like a heartbeat rather than a pulse. C# minor reinforces that sense of weight. The key carries a natural darkness, a tonal heaviness that matches the song title. The spectral centroid measures at 1956.5 Hz, which means the mix favors the mid-range territory where guitars and vocals live. The sub-bass ratio of 0.185 tells you the low end supports the arrangement without dominating it. **This is a rock mix, not a club mix.** The drums hit in the chest, not the stomach. The bass guitar sits in the pocket between the kick drum and the vocal line, which is exactly where a bass should sit in a song that runs five minutes and six seconds.

The energy curve reveals something unusual about the arrangement. Look at bars 77 through 91. The RMS stays locked around 0.270 for fourteen consecutive bars. That is a flat plateau

at the song's peak energy level. Most arrangements at this tempo would introduce a drop, a bridge, a breakdown, something to relieve the pressure. "Gravity" holds the pressure instead. **The band sustains a single dynamic level for over thirty seconds** with no new section label to mark the change. The section data reports only five labeled segments for the entire song, which means the internal arrangement contains more nuance than the labels suggest. The chorus at bar four, the verse at bar 68, the bridge at bar 272, these boundaries exist, but the real architecture lives in the micro-transitions between them.

The dynamic range measures at 22.6 dB, which is wide by any standard. Modern pop records often compress that range down to six or eight decibels. "Gravity" keeps the contrast intact. The verse sits at 0.16687 RMS, the chorus peaks at 0.28059, and the final decay drops all the way to 0.01167 RMS at bar 102. **That represents a fourteen-decibel drop from peak to silence.** The song does not fade out in the conventional sense. It decays asymmetrically, meaning the descent does not mirror the ascent. The opening builds over four bars from silence to verse. The ending takes twenty-plus bars to dissolve from the plateau into near-silence.

This asymmetry gives the listener a specific emotional experience. The opening asks for attention. The ending asks for patience. **The structural choice rewards the listener who stays through the decay.** Most bands would cut the outro at bar 92, when the energy drops below 0.2 RMS. A Perfect Circle lets the decay run its full course, all the way to silence, which means the song ends exactly where it began. The symmetry lives in the endpoints, not the path between them.

A practical takeaway from this arrangement applies directly to your own work this week. **Map the dynamic range of your next track before you start mixing.** Pull up the energy curve in your DAW and look for plateaus that run longer than eight bars. If you find one, ask whether it serves the song or just fills time. “Gravity” uses its plateau to create tension without release. The listener feels the energy level hold steady and starts subconsciously expecting a change. When the change finally arrives in bar 92, it arrives as decay rather than explosion. That reversal of expectation is what makes the arrangement memorable.

The final decay from bar 92 to bar 102 contains another lesson worth extracting. The energy drops from 0.23688 to 0.01167 in ten bars, which at 83.4 BPM means roughly twenty-eight seconds of gradual dissolution. The RMS values step down in small increments: 0.20148, 0.14744, 0.08248, 0.06408, 0.05328, 0.0401, 0.02881, 0.02164, 0.01661, 0.01167. **Each bar reduces the energy by roughly ten to fifteen percent.** The decay follows a logarithmic curve, not a linear one. That means the first few steps feel sharper and the later steps feel softer. The listener perceives the decay as natural rather than mechanical.

Stem data was not available for this analysis, which limits what we can say about individual instrument behavior during the decay. But the spectral centroid and sub-bass ratio tell a story about the mix. A centroid of 1956.5 Hz suggests the melody instruments drop out first during the decay. The low end, measured at 18.5 percent sub-bass content, holds longer. **The bass sustains while the guitars and vocals retreat.** That is a mixing choice, not an accident. A Perfect Circle engineered the outro to leave the listener with warmth rather than silence. The low end decays slowly, which means the final seconds of the song feel like a breath rather than a

cut.

The mood tag from the analysis reads “dynamic,” which is accurate but incomplete. The song earns that tag through contrast, not through constant motion. **Dynamic music does not need to move fast.** It needs to move with intention. “Gravity” moves at 83.4 BPM, which is slow enough that each bar feels like a measured step. The intention shows in the section boundaries, the energy plateau, the asymmetric decay. Every element of the arrangement supports the same goal: create a space that feels heavy and let the listener sit in that weight until it naturally lifts.

The hook to the next chapter lands on a question that this song raises but leaves unanswered. If a song can sustain a fourteen-bar plateau at peak energy and then decay for twenty-two bars, what happens when you invert that shape? What does an arrangement look like when the energy rises slowly and peaks late, or when the plateau sits at the bottom instead of the top?

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

03

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).

"Weak And Powerless"

Lyric and Music

The vocal melody stays inside a narrow range of five notes across the verse. Each phrase drops back to the same pitch at the end of every line. The lyric describes a compulsive motion that never reaches a destination. The music mirrors that loop by refusing to leave the same tonal center across the entire verse structure.

Tilling my own grave to keep me level

Jam another dragon down the hole

Digging to the rhythm and the echo of a solitary siren

One that pushes me along and leaves me so

Desperate and ravenous

I'm so weak and powerless

Over you

The voice keeps returning to the tonic pitch at the end of each line.
The chord loop never moves away from C# minor either.

"The Noose"

Lyric and Music

The vocal melody stays inside a narrow six-note range through the first two minutes. It matches the low spectral centroid of the mix. Each phrase drops back to the tonic D# at its end. This is a gravitational pull that mirrors the lyric's central image of weight and descent. The **chromatic bass slides** move by half-step under the line "with your halo slipping down." The bass and voice arrive at the same D# minor chord tone on the word "down" in every repetition.

With your halo slipping down

Your halo slipping

Your halo slipping down

(With your halo slipping down) but I'm more than just a little
curious

(With your halo slipping down) how you're planning to go about
making your

(With your halo slipping down) more than just a little curious

Your halo slipping down

To choke you now

The bass never leaves that D# root during the final "to choke you now." It locks the falling halo image to the lowest note in the song's

harmonic vocabulary.

"Blue"

Lyric and Music

The song opens with a clean electric guitar line already in motion. There is no count-in, no room tone, no warning. The lyric matches this gesture by starting in the middle of a refusal. The first line arrives as a completed thought. The speaker has already decided. The music stays inside **E major** at **117.5 BPM**. This tempo feels urgent but never rushed. The speaker keeps the whole situation in the shallow end of the pool.

I didn't want to know
I just didn't want to know
Best to keep things in the shallow end
'Cause I never quite learned how to swim
I just didn't want to know
Didn't want
Close my eyes just to look at you
Taken by the seamless vision

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-24 -->

Scale of C# minor

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

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-24 -->

The refusal to learn how to swim explains why the song never resolves. The energy curve flattens and fades out instead of

finishing.

"Vanishing"

Lyric and Music

The lyric describes a figure who was never fully present in the first place. The singer repeats "**Never really here**" as a quiet confession. It is not a dramatic reveal. The music mirrors this absence by opening with thirty-two seconds of silence and tape hiss before the guitar arrives at bar 8.

Disappear

Higher

Into the air

Slowly disappear

No, no longer here

Disappear

Thinner, thinner

Into the air

Never really here

The RMS peak at bar 18 arrives before the lyric finishes its final fade. The song's loudest moment happens while the singer is still vanishing.

"A Stranger"

Lyric and Music

The song opens with fourteen bars of dead air at a tempo of 215 beats per minute. The silence at bar 0 matches the silence at bar

94, which creates a closed loop around the entire piece. The lyric subject spends the whole track trying to push someone away. The music refuses to leave the room.

Cast the calming apple

Up and over satellites

To draw out the timid wild one

To convince you it's alright

And I listen for the whisper

Of your sweet insanity

While I formulate denials

Of your effect on me

The denials in the lyric match the denials in the arrangement. The arrangement never delivers the catharsis the tempo promises.

"The Outsider"

Lyric and Music

The verse vocal stays half-buried in the mix. It matches a speaker who can barely bring himself to ask for help. The bass carries a **slow, lurching groove** in G# minor. The vocal melody follows that same hesitant pulse. The lyric opens with a direct request. The music refuses to make the request feel safe or answered.

Help me if you can

It's just that this is

Not the way I'm wired

So could you please

Help me understand why

You've given in to all these

Reckless dark desires you're

Lying to yourself again

The chorus never resolves to the tonic. The plea for understanding never gets a harmonic home.

"Crimes"

Lyric and Music

The song counts from one to ten with no variation in delivery, no melodic shift, no dynamic change across the ten numbers. Each number arrives at the same palm-muted guitar weight that started the track. The vocal stays inside the same low-mid register for every syllable. The counting becomes a mechanical recitation inside a mechanical arrangement.

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

Seven

Eight

Nine

Ten

<!-- visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-25 -->

Scale of G# minor

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

<!-- /visual:SCALE_DEGREE_MAP@page-25 -->

The counting ends at ten. The energy curve begins its linear fade in the same bar. The act of finishing the list drained the song of its reason to continue.

"The Nurse Who Loved Me"

Lyric and Music

The song opens with a clean guitar figure that repeats without any harmonic change for twelve seconds. The energy stays at **0.048 RMS**, barely a whisper. The track cuts to silence for four full seconds. The verse arrives at bar 16 with the same figure at 0.062 RMS. This shift is so small the listener barely registers it. The lyric matches this patient ascent by describing a state where the speaker can only perceive the immediate surface beneath them.

Say hello to the rugs topography

It holds quite a lot of interest with your face down on it

Say hello to the shrinking in your head

You can't see it but you'll know it's there so don't neglect it

The speaker's attention stays fixed on a single close object. The music stays fixed on a single close gesture for its entire opening section.

"Pet"

Lyric and Music

The song opens with a full-band chorus at bar zero, then collapses into near-silence by bar nine. That silence tells you the narrator controls the room. The lyric matches this dynamic by repeating a single command across every verse section. **The narrator demands sleep, submission, and isolation from outside voices.** The music obeys the same logic. It drops to silence whenever the lyric asks for stillness.

Don't fret precious I'm here

Step away from the window

Go back to sleep

Lay your head down child

I won't let the boogeyman come

Counting bodies like sheep

To the rhythm of the war drums

Pay no mind to the rabble

The war drums arrive in the music as a steady 70 BPM pulse. The bodies count themselves in the RMS peaks that follow each silence break.

"Lullaby"

Lyric and Music

The vocal line arrives as a whisper. It is not a sung melody. The whisper stays at the same low dynamic level from the first bar to the fade. The lyric repeats one instruction, "go back to sleep." The music mirrors that repetition by holding a **flat energy curve** that never climbs after bar fourteen. The voice does not rise in pitch or volume to match the band's entrance. The singer sounds like

someone already exhausted before the song even starts.

Go back to sleep... go back to sleep (whispered)

The whisper matches the subsonic bass pulse. Both signals are things the listener registers physically. They are not interpreted as melody or argument.

"Gravity"

Lyric and Music

The vocal line enters at bar 68 with an RMS energy of 0.1685, matching the verse's sparse arrangement of single guitar and bass. Maynard James Keenan sings the opening lines in a low register that stays near the **C# minor root**, the same tonal center the bass guitar holds throughout the verse. The lyric "Lost again / Broken and weary" arrives with no melodic lift and no harmonic shift. It is just the same four-chord loop that started at bar one. The voice stays inside the groove. It does not rise above the groove.

Lost again

Broken and weary

Unable to find my way

Tail in hand

Dizzy and clearly unable to

Just let this go

The vocal melody stays locked to the root until the chorus arrives at bar 77. The RMS jumps to 0.2488. Keenan finally moves above the bass line.

<!-- 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)
- In Rainbows (Radiohead)
- Mer de Noms (A Perfect Circle)
- A Farewell to Kings (Rush)
- Siamese Dream (Smashing Pumpkins)
- The Slow Rush (Tame Impala)
- 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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