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That's Why I Wrote this Song

by Susanne Gervay, lyrics and music by Tory Gervay
video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ess-R0dHtX8>
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My writing is such an intense, emotionally charged process. It comes out of a profound place where there's humour, love, hate, hope and those passions that make me who I am. Everyone's life is challenging in different ways. Mine is no different. Like many, my children intensify my challenges and passions, making the hard times harsher and the good times sweeter. When my daughter who was seventeen at the time, asked me to write a book inspired by her, it was such a deep request.

Tory and I had been through a great deal together. Illness has always been part of my life, which as a sole parent, has been at times very tough on my son and daughter. During my many surgeries, cancers, tumours, Tory was deeply affected. We laughed and had such special times as she dressed my wounds and helped me. So how privileged was I to write for her. Nothing could stop me writing this book and although it would be fictional, the spirit would be hers.

I kept thinking who is Tory? How can I find her through my words? I stood at the door of her bedroom looking around at the bits and pieces that are her. Her teddies lined inside her cupboard. The pin board filled with photos of family and friends. Eminem posters taped to the walls. Rows of sparkly ear-rings hanging like a jewellery display. Her computer crowded with songs. Her lyrics scribbled on paper and print outs of bars of music. Suddenly I saw it. Music wafted between the ear-rings and posters, her ipod, clothes and magazines. Tory has always loved music - singing, playing instruments, being in school bands, following bands and singers, writing her own songs. Music defines my daughter. Music is her voice, her emotional outlet, her way of making sense of life. I knew then that her lyrics and songs would become the driving force of our book.

Rock is a powerful form of youth expression as it reaches into the eternal quest of search for identity. That's what is intrinsic to Bob Dylan, Pink Floyd, Simon & Garfunkel, The Beatles, The Stones, Queen and the many other rock writers and singers over the past decades. Tory writes rock songs which reflect her search for identity. My books are always about search for identity in its many shapes and forms. I now knew how our book would connect.

For our new book I took the title *That's Why I Wrote This Song* from Tory's rock song *Psycho Dad*. The lyrics of two of her songs *Psycho Dad* and *I Wanna Be Found* would become the driving force in our book. The songs drive the narrative, characters and themes as the music and lyrics meld with my text.

That's Why I Wrote This Song is the journey of four sixteen-seventeen year old girls and their relationships with their fathers and how that impacts on their relationship with boys, each other and who they are. *That's Why I Wrote This Song* reveals the issues of identity from dependence-independence, guys, friendship, sexuality, mother-daughter, brother-sister relationships to promises and hopes, set against the real youth rock music scene. Rock concerts, BIG DAY OUT, weekend music festivals are integral to the story. The four girls connect through their music at school, eventually uniting into a rock band, bonding, finding new insights and directions.

Tory's lyrics are spread throughout the text, but the actual music was missing. Yet the passion of her songs had to be included in the novel. The challenge was how to cross mediums and make the actual music part of the book. The decision was to record Tory's two songs. It was stressful, fun, hard and wonderful. Discovering the producer was a process of endless calls, dead-ends, finally ending with Tony Buchan who is a hip-hop music producer. He was instrumental in encouraging Tory to actually be the singer. She felt insecure and had never recorded in a studio. Tony told me to leave, as a hovering mother was not conducive to getting Tory to sing. By the time I returned Tory was a recording 'star'. A nervous one, but nevertheless the 'star'. It was a long process getting the songs recorded with studio time, production decisions, creative controls, none of which I was involved with. It was Tory working with the producer.

That's Why I Wrote This Song took another leap forward as a young film producer-script writer fell in love with the music and the manuscript. She interpreted both to write a three minute film script to run with Psycho Dad, the song.

That's Why I Wrote This Song will be released 1st August 2007 with a download facility of Tory's songs and the film clip. It's the first time rock music has been integrated into the process of writing a young adult book where it is thematically part of the journey. It's a breakthrough concept where the creator of lyrics and music unites with the creator of a book to cross mediums. This collaboration with my daughter has been a great joy to me. It feels like a testament to our relationship, where despite life's challenges or maybe because of them, positive bonds are forged to create something special.

Susanne Gervay

Susanne's website – www.sgervay.com

Tory and Susanne's journey with illness - GOFUND -

http://www.gofund.org.au/html/susanne_gervay_story.htm