

Ways to fail to change an American mind, even with a solid hook and a bridge to die for

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [September 8, 2021](#) issue

Desperado, why don't you come to your senses?

—Glenn Frey and Don Henley

Sing sweetly, sadly, gravely.

Beat the big chords from the baby grand.

Bring the full band, and a string quartet for the coda.

Strike a sympathetic note: *Don't your feet get cold?*

Explain what is at risk, all the highs and lows,
even without self-medication
or prescription drugs.

Offer metaphors: Fences. Gates. The sky.

If you sense all this is failing, that your friend remains cold
and lonely, plead and instruct.

Let somebody love you.

Warn him: *Too late. Too late.*

And as the last notes dim and gutter, quiver into absence
and doubt, remember:
it has always been too late.

Take some comfort in the beauty of your song.