

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.