

The Pop Fiction Series

Broad Outline

Due for publication in time for summer 2026, this is a series of four books - each an anthology of stories inspired by the music – or the music scene - of the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. There will be one book for each decade, plus an omnibus edition with all four collections in one big hardback.

Your story should be set in the relevant decade and can be inspired by a song, or could simply be set against the musical backdrop of the decade, or focus around a particular musical event or genre. The objective is to evoke nostalgia, via music.

Important Rules

Remember that a song is somebody else's creative work and intellectual property – there are laws around how you can and can't reference it.

Your story can be based around the general concept of a song, and you can use the title – for example you could write a story about someone whose life revolves around dancing and call it *Dancing Queen* – however you must NEVER quote any lyrics without permission. Please note the points below, and please run your story idea past us before you start writing if you are unsure.

- **Inspiration vs. Plagiarism:** Taking general inspiration from a song's mood or a vague concept is safe. If the song tells a highly specific, unique story, copying it beat-for-beat could be considered a "derivative work," which usually requires permission from the copyright holder.
- **Song Lyrics:** Directly quoting even a single line of lyrics is often considered a copyright violation. Lyrics are so short that quoting even a small portion can be seen as using a "substantial" part of the work, often making the "fair use" defence difficult to prove.
- **Titles and Artist Names:** You can generally use song titles and mention artist names in your story without permission, as titles are not typically copyrightable.
- **Character Names:** Using unique character names from a song (e.g., "Eleanor Rigby") can be risky, as it might lead to claims of trademark or intellectual property infringement.

Genre & Setting

- Your story can be ANY genre you like.
- The story should be set in the relevant decade for the book – we are looking to evoke nostalgia in the reader.
- It doesn't have to be inspired by a song, it could also be set against the musical backdrop of the decade.

General

- You should use the template provided and follow the style shown. If you cannot use Microsoft Word you can use other software but please try to lay the text out as it will appear on the page of the book.
- Do not use double spacing – please set your story out EXACTLY as it would appear in a book.
- The story should be 3000 – 6000 words
- Your story must be fictional although it can be set around actual historical events and include references to real people. If in doubt, please contact us.

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Submission Details

The deadline for submissions to the 60s and 70s books is 30th April 2026. Publication date is June 1st 2026. The deadline for submissions to the 80s and 90s volumes is 31st May, and publication date is July 1st 2026.

Please send your story as a Word document (unless otherwise agreed) to Ruth and Tim on hello@sonderbooks.co.uk along with your author entry form – it is essential to include this form as it includes key information that we need to put the book together.