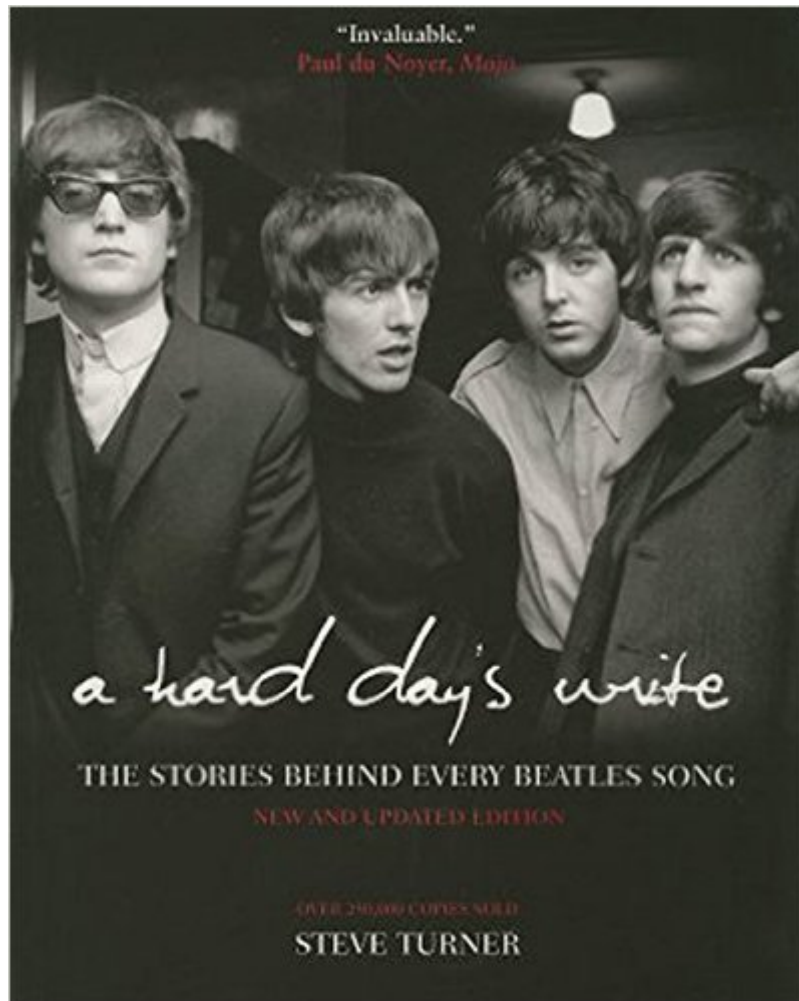


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# A Hard Day's Write: The Stories Behind Every Beatles Song



## Synopsis

A lavishly illustrated, rollicking account of the real people and events that inspired the Beatles' lyrics. Who was "just seventeen" and made Paul's heart go "boom"? Was there really an Eleanor Rigby? Where's Penny Lane? In *A Hard Day's Write*, music journalist Steve Turner shatters many well-worn myths and adds a new dimension to the Fab Four's rich legacy by investigating for the first time the ordinary people and events immortalized in the Beatles' music and now occupying a special niche in popular culture's collective imagination. Arranged chronologically by album, the book breaks new ground by exploring how private incidents influenced the group's writing and how their music evolved. Turner reveals that Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds was really a drawing by Julian Lennon of his childhood friend; Bungalow Bill was an all-American tiger hunter; Doctor Robert was a New York 'speech doctor'; and much more. A longtime Beatles admirer, Turner tracked down and interviewed the real-life subjects of the songs, probed public records and newspaper archives, and spoke in depth to the people closet to the Beatles to unearth tales that have never before been made public. The result is a book that chronicles an untold story of the Beatles themselves. Illustrated with over 200 photographs, *A Hard Day's Write* is a visually alluring and highly entertaining journey to the land stretching just beneath your conscious mind, mapped out with strawberry fields, fool-topped hills, and long and winding roads.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As I bought this book based on all of the very high praise found on this page, I now feel obligated to

warn future potential buyers that this book is nowhere near all it's cracked up to be. First of all, if you've read at least a few other Beatles books before, a lot of the information in this book purported to be "revelatory" is actually old news, and well-known even by casual fans. Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds was a drawing by Julian Lennon? Well, I'll be. Strawberry Fields Forever was a reference to John Lennon's special, childhood hideaway? No way! Penny Lane is a district in Liverpool? These are the kinds of shockers that just keep coming and coming. Of course, as someone who truly does obsess over the Beatles, I was expecting to reread lots of things I already knew. The problem is the things I didn't know. There was, in fact, all kinds of information that I had never before come across. To the point that I would almost be impressed. If I could believe a word of it. And sadly, I can't. The book is riddled, just riddled, with ridiculous typos and factual errors. There seems to have been no copy editing done in this book outside of computerized spell checking. And so all kinds of typos remain, because the words they spell are in the dictionary. One of my favorites is when the author seriously refers to previous Beatles films as "Help! and Hard Day's Write." Yes, the author got the Beatles film confused with his own book, and no one managed to catch it. A mere few paragraphs later, he claims that the song added to Let It Be... Naked is I've Got a Feeling. Which it is not. He also claims that George Martin came up with the idea for the Sgt.

In the music unit my Popular Culture class we look at the songs of the Beatles, specifically those collected on their "Beatles 1" album. Students write a paper looking at the stages of the group as defined by the songs on that album and sometimes they find things on the Internet that talk about how John Lennon and Paul McCartney (and George Harrison for "Something") came to write their songs. Unfortunately that has little to do with putting these songs into distinct chronological stages, but after reading "A Hard Day's Write" you can see where they would be fascinated by some of these stories and forget to just listen to the songs and decide for themselves what they are about and what makes them work. Steve Turner provides the stories behind every one of the Beatles songs, including "Free As a Bird" and all the songs from "Anthology" and "Live at the BBC" that would not be covered by the other albums. The book is divided into 14 chapters representing 17 albums ("Magical Mystery Tour" and "Yellow Submarine" are combined, as are the three "Anthology" albums). Turner is following the British albums and including those songs that ended up on the two "Masterworks" collections with the albums that were being recorded (e.g., "I Want to Hold Your Hand" and "With the Beatles," "Penny Lane" and "Strawberry Field Forever" with "Sgt. Pepper"). It does not include the songs by other writers that the Beatles covered during their early years. Turner makes the point that this is not a book that is attempting to explain what the Beatles

"were really trying to say," but tells us about the ideas and inspirations behind these songs, as well as dispelling some of the popular myths connected to some of these songs.

This book is very valuable for people who haven't read many Beatle books and don't know much about them or their music. If you fall into that category you will find this book indispensable. It gives an accurate outline of the stories behind every Beatle song, and what interesting stories they are. The people who inadvertently influenced their writing, the events that inspired them to write a particular song, (sometimes a TV commercial or innocuous statement made by someone in the room or in their recent past.) A wonderful insight into their creative process and into their minds as well. Unfortunately for me, I've read so many Beatle books, that I have heard all of these stories before, so by the time I came across this book, it was kind of anticlimactic. Even so, there were still some things I didn't know like, Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except for Me and My Monkee is actually referring to Yoko Ono, (she's John's monkee) and is not about having a heroin habit, like I had assumed. I won't give anymore away though because if you are reading this, I recommend that you read A Hard Day's Write and find out for yourself. The only thing I found mildly annoying, is the author's slight over analysis of Lennon's songs. Maybe he is right about most of them, he certainly doesn't seem off the mark when he talks about Lennon's abandonment issues. However his editorialising about John's, And Your Bird Can Sing really got under my skin. He seems to have the idea that John is singing about Paul in this song, and trying to say that Paul isn't as cool as he is, when he sings, "Tell me that you've heard every sound there is" etc. According to Turner, when he sings, "You say you've seen seven wonders," he's referring to Paul's "seven levels" remark when they first got high together. (huh?)

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