

# Cutting up the collaboration:

## *Don't kill the goose*

We often get questions from songwriters who are quibbling over how to split up percentages of credit in a collaboration. These collaborations are usually doomed by this kind of bickering. Creativity cannot happen in an atmosphere of distrust. Our recommendation is always that all writers are equal on the song, even if it seems that one did more than the other. Next time, the tables may turn and hopefully we're talking about a long-term relationship. It's best to have an open talk with a prospective collaborator BEFORE you start writing together and make sure you agree on basic things like this.

We write songs, lyrics and melodies, with 9 people in our workshops and we can't tell who did what because the creativity flows so freely. When it's just us two, Pete & I always split the percentage for words & music, even though Pete writes most of the music and I write most of the words, and even in cases where I've written all the words and he's written all the music. It's 50% w&m for him and 50% w&m for me. (Or, 12.5% w&m each if there are 8 of us!) This policy also avoids problems of who gets what when the lyrics are translated into another language.