The rhythm of many of Social Distortion’s songs is, compared to punk Pioneers like the Ramones and the Sex Pistols, positively glacial. While other punk bands explode, Social Distortion seethes lyrically and musically, and nowhere is this clearer than in one of their early songs, “Story of my Life” off their self-titled 1990 album *Social Distortion*. The song feels vaguely like a slower folk tune rather than a punk song. A good part of this is due to the rhythm and tempo; however, a lot of it is also due to the lyrics. The song starts with the verse:

> High school seemed like such a blur,
> I didn’t have much interest in sports or school elections.
> And in class I dreamed all day,
> Of a rock ‘n roll weekend. (*Social Distortion*)

The song moves, if you scan the meter, iambically—with lengthy breaks thrown in between what is roughly, very roughly, an iambic meter. This slow, if powerful, semi-iambic rhythm allows for a sadder, darker tone to come through in the lyrics and music to “Story of my Life.” If this song were played at 180 beats per minute, rather than its slower pace, the lyrics (which are central to the feel and emotional heft of the song) would be lost.