

SWEET HOME CHICAGO

MELODY ANALYSIS

E major

STYLE

12-bar blues / Chicago blues

The main vocal hook and first verse phrase analyzed note-by-note using the Emotional Map framework

KEY SETUP — E MAJOR SOLMIZATION

In the key of **E major**: E=DO, F#=RE, G#=MI, A=FA, B=SO, C#=LA, D#=TI. The blue note (b7 = D natural) acts as a passing tone between LA and SO, borrowing from the minor/blues scale. This gives the melody its characteristic blues tension over a major key backing.

DO=E

RE=F#

MI=G#

FA=A

SO=B

LA=C#

TI=D#

b7=D

PHRASE-BY-PHRASE ANALYSIS

"Oh, baby don't you want to go"

Z1 Z2 Z4

E7 chord SO SO LA b7 LA SO MI DO dashed = NCT/blue note

ZONE ANALYSIS

Phrase opens on **SO over E7** — Zone 1 (Sweet). The pentatonic descent through LA → b7 (blue note passing tone) → LA → SO creates characteristic blues tension. The b7 over E7 is a non-chord tone in Zone 4 — but it's brief and passing, not a landing point. Final descent to MI → DO lands solidly in Zone 1. **Classic blues resolution: tension then arrival.**

"Back to the land of California"

Z2 Z4

A7 chord (FA chord) MI LA LA b7 LA MI over the IV chord

ZONE SHIFT — IV CHORD

Now over the A7 chord (the IV, which we call the FA chord). **MI over A7** = non-chord tone → Zone 3 (Floating). **LA over A7** = chord tone (root) → Zone 2 (Tense/Supported). The phrase oscillates between floating and grounded tension, landing on MI (Zone 3 over A7). This is why the IV chord verse sounds expressive and slightly unsettled.

"Sweet home Chicago" (the hook)

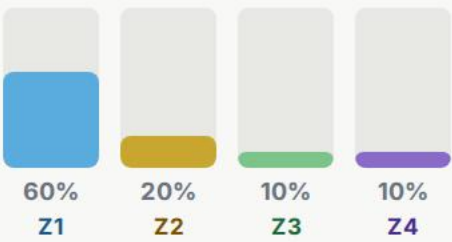
Z1

E7 chord (back to I) SO DO SO the signature landing

THE HOOK RESOLUTION

SO-DO-SO over E7: Both SO and DO are chord tones of E7 — Zone 1. After the tension of the IV chord phrases, this landing feels like exhaling. The hook phrase resolves to stable chord tones, which is why the words "Sweet home Chicago" feel like *arrival*. The three-note phrase is almost entirely Zone 1 — that's what makes it feel like coming home.

ZONE DISTRIBUTION — FULL FIRST VERSE



Heavily weighted toward Zone 1 — the hallmark of a memorable, singable blues hook. Zone 4 tension (blue notes) is brief and always passing, never landing. This ratio explains why the song feels both *emotionally expressive* (the blue note tension) and *easy to sing along with* (the Zone 1 landings).

PILLAR NOTE STRATEGY

- Opening note: SO (B)** — Zone 1 chord tone over E7.
 - Confident, direct entry that immediately establishes the key's home tonality.
- Tension point: b7 (D)** — the blue note. Brief Zone 4 passing tone that adds blues character without disrupting the overall sweetness.
- IV chord anchor: LA (A)** — root of A7, Zone 2. Grounds the IV chord while maintaining expressive tension.
- Hook landing: DO (E)** — root over E7, Zone 1. Maximum resolution. The two-syllable "Chi-CA-go" lands on DO-SO — a triumphant arrival at home.

WHAT MAKES THIS MELODY MEMORABLE — AMF ANALYSIS

ZONE BALANCE

60% Zone 1 gives it singability. The 10% Zone 4 (blue notes) gives it blues authenticity. The brief tension makes the Zone 1 landings feel earned rather than bland.

THE HOOK NOTE

The word "Chicago" lands on SO → DO — both Zone 1 chord tones. The title phrase is maximally resolved, which is why it sticks. The hook = the most grounded phrase in the song.

CONTRAST SHAPE

Tension in the verse phrases (b7 blue notes, IV chord floating) resolves to the hook. The emotional arc is: question → question → answer. Every phrase builds the need for "Chicago."