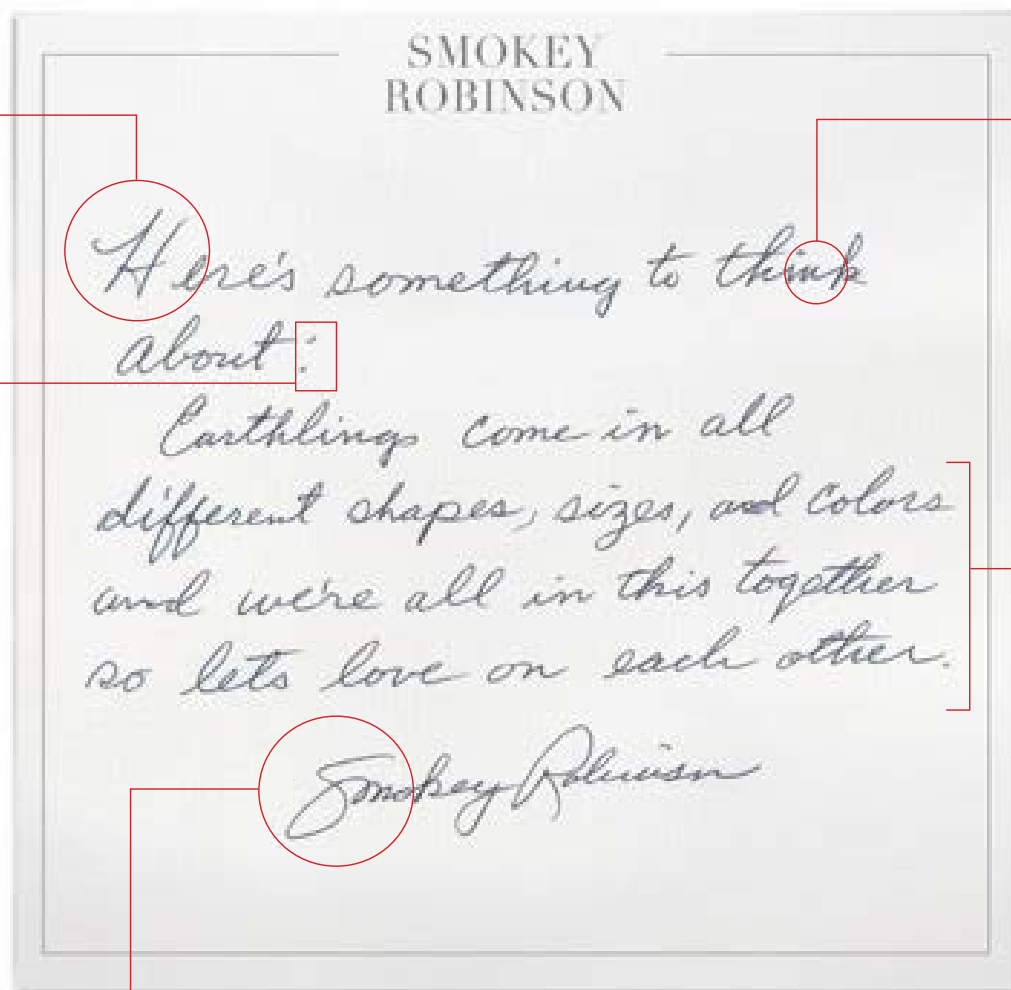


# FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Smokey Robinson has been penning iconic songs for over half a century, but his handwriting gives us a deeper glimpse into his soul

Note his large capital letters. Robinson has a sense of dignity and poise, and pays special attention to how he appears.

Take a look at the letter *n* and some of the sharp letters in other words. This angularity shows another side to his personality—mental toughness and assertiveness.



He is conscientious about details: Note all of the proper punctuation, carefully placed.

He writes closer to the right margin than the left. The right margin is associated with the outer world and engagement with it. He's active—interested in doing things and meeting new people.

The first initial of his name is simplified writing, showing good physical coordination and above-average intelligence. His script is steady, and doesn't show the effects of aging. He's resilient.

Anyone who has ever found the words, “I don’t like you, but I love you,” spinning like a record through their mind probably wouldn’t be surprised to hear Smokey Robinson say, “I write poetry all the time.” Credited with penning more than 4,000 songs, Robinson, 74, is undeniably one of Motown’s most prolific songwriters and performers—a man Bob Dylan once referred to as “America’s greatest living poet.” His lyrical sentiments flow so naturally, in fact, that the thought he jotted down above was merely a passing rumination. “It’s something that I wrote off the top of my head,” he explains. “It’s what I feel. It’s a general thought for the world. I

wish we all knew that we’re all the same, except for color. Bigotry is probably the most uncalled-for emotion that we have as people.”

In her analysis of Robinson’s statement, Toronto-based graphologist Annette Poizner suggests that Robinson sees himself as “being of service to society.” Furthermore, she points out that Robinson writes in “copybook” style. “This means that he doesn’t deviate from the handwriting he learned in elementary school. He shows willingness to comply with social norms, prefers cooperation to conflict and has conventional tastes—his music, too, could be called ‘middle of the road.’”

It’s true that, over the course of his 59-year career, Robinson’s melodies have consistently appealed to the masses, and his latest album is no different. *Smokey & Friends*, released in late August, boasts duets with artists like Elton John and James Taylor. His ability to line up such a star-studded roster of guests matches another of Poizner’s observations—as does his successful 27-year tenure as vice-president of Motown Records: “Occasionally he makes these really sharp strokes, highly angular,” she says. “Angles show us that he’s sharp, analytical and has the ability to be assertive and dynamic. He’s not a pushover.”—FRANCES DODDS