



Can't You Look Deeper Than My Greatest Hit?

by Don McLean

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First things first, let me say that “American Pie” is a great song. It really captures the loss of the “day the music died,” as well as some other things that have gone wrong with rock and roll over the years and, if I can say so without bragging, it has one hell of a catchy chorus.

The reason I feel I can say that without feeling immodest is that you’ve shown me you feel the same way by the three million-some radio plays it’s gotten over the years, plus all the times I’ve had its name shouted at me in concert when I’ve tried to play another tune. It’s a classic, I’m grateful for that, and I’m just as proud of it today as when I wrote it in 1971.

Having said that, I have to ask if you don’t think maybe “American Pie” has gotten a bit *too* much attention? I mean, I have written other songs over the years. Some of them were quite popular—I’ve had six songs in the Top Ten of the Adult Contemporary charts, five of which weren’t “American Pie.” But does anyone ever stop me on the street to tell me how much they appreciated “Dreidel?” Does anyone call into their local radio station requesting “Castles In The Air?” If they do, I sure haven’t heard it.

I don’t want this to come off as sour grapes. A lot of people out there reading this are probably thinking, “Don, you’ve made a pretty good life off of ‘American Pie,’” and I have to agree with them. Still, anyone thinking “American Pie” is all there is to Don McLean isn’t getting the full picture. Did you know that I inspired the writing of “Killing Me Softly With His Song?” That’s right, me, Don McLean, *killing them softly with my song!* Does that sound like a one-hit wonder to you?

I guess what I’m saying is that if you like “American Pie” so much, why not give one of my other songs a try? Who knows, maybe you’d like it better? And if not, you can just go back to listening to “American Pie” on the radio, like you’ve heard it three million times before.

Chevy to the levee, blah blah blah,

Don McLean