

# American Pie

Words & Music by Don McLean

## Intro

| G D/F# | Em Am C  
A long, long time ago I can still remember  
Em D  
How that music used to make me smile.  
| G D/F# | Em Am C  
And I knew if I had my chance that I could make those people dance  
Em C D D  
And maybe they'd be happy for a while.  
Em Am Em Am  
But February made me shiver with ev'ry paper I'd deliver,  
| C G/B | Am C D  
Bad news on the doorstep, I couldn't take one more step.  
| G D/F# | Em C D  
I can't remember if I cried when I read about his widowed bride.  
| G D/F# | Em C D G G  
And something touched me deep inside the day the music died. So....

## Chorus 1

G C | G D  
Bye-bye, Miss American Pie,  
| G C | G D  
Drove my Chevy to the levee but the levee was dry.  
| G C | G D  
And them good old boys were drinkin' whiskey and rye,  
| Em A7  
Singin' this'll be the day that I die.  
Em D7 D7  
This'll be the day that I die.

## Verse 1

G Am  
Did you write the book of love  
C Am Em D D  
And do you have faith in God above, if the Bible tells you so?  
| G D/F# | Em Am C  
Now do you believe in rock and roll, can music save your mortal soul,  
Em A7 D D  
And can you teach me how to dance real slow?  
Em D Em D  
Well I know that you're in love with him 'cause I saw you dancin' in the gym.  
| C G/B | Am C D7  
You both kicked off your shoes, man I dig those rhythm and blues.  
| G D/F# | Em Am C  
I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck with a pink carnation and a pickup truck.  
| G D/F# | Em C D7 | G C |  
But I knew I was out of luck the day the music died.  
G D  
I started singing....

## Verse 2

Now, for ten years we've been on our own  
And moss grows fat on a rolling stone  
But that's not how it used to be.  
When the jester sang for the King and Queen  
In a coat he borrowed from James Dean,  
And a voice that came from you and me.  
Oh, and while the King was looking down  
The jester stole his thorny crown,  
The courtroom was adjourned,  
No verdict was returned.  
And while Lennon read a book on Marx  
The quartet practiced in the park,  
And we sang dirges in the dark  
The day the music died. We were singing....

## Verse 3

Helter-skelter in a summer swelter,  
The Byrds flew off with a fallout shelter.  
Eight miles high and fallin' fast,  
It landed foul out on the grass,  
The players tried for a forward pass  
With the jester on the sidelines in a cast.  
Now the half-time air was sweet perfume  
While the sergeants played a marching tune.  
We all got up to dance, oh,  
But we never got the chance.  
'Cause the players tried to take the field,  
The marching band refused to yield,  
Do you recall what was revealed  
The day the music died? We started singin'....

## Verse 4

Oh, and there we were all in one place,  
A generation lost in space  
With no time left to start again.  
So come on, Jack be nimble, Jack be quick,  
Jack Flash sat on a candlestick,  
'Cause fire is the devil's only friend.  
Oh, and as I watched him on the stage  
My hands were clenched in fists of rage.  
No angel born in hell  
Could break that Satan's spell.  
And as the flames climbed high into the night  
To light the sacrificial rite,  
I saw Satan laughing with delight,  
The day the music died. He was singin'....

## Verse 5

I met a girl who sang the blues  
And I asked her for some happy news,  
But she just smiled and turned away.  
I went down to the sacred store  
Where I'd heard the music years before  
But the man there said the music wouldn't play.  
And in the streets the children screamed,  
The lovers cried and the poets dreamed  
But not a word was spoken,  
The church bells all were broken.  
And the three men I admire most,  
The Father, Son and the Holy Ghost,  
They caught the last train for the coast,  
The day the music died. And they were singin'....



## Introduction

Originally released in 1971 on the album of the same name, this song is full of cryptic allusions to figures and events of the time.



## Strumming

The first part of this song is played quite freely, where you strum the chords relative to the singing and you don't really have to worry about it being in time. Once you hit the chorus though it should have a steady beat for the rest of the tune.

