

## EVERYBODY HURTS

Everybody Hurts is a song about those things we all feel, but are too cool, too nervous, or too distant to admit to one another. And, because there's so little real communication, so, so many people think they're alone and they let themselves slip away. Everybody Hurts was made solely to comfort these people. Although drummer Bill Berry composed much of the music, there is little percussion, and the most prominent musical elements are a sedate organ and Peter Buck's all-time gentlest jangle. It has the intimacy and cadence of a lullaby. Mostly it's just Michael Stipe at his most nakedly emotive, empathizing, repeating no, no, no you're not alone as a tilting, Beatles-esque string accompaniment winds its way around him.

I remember driving through town with my mom one day when this song came on the radio and she just started crying. Maybe she was having a bad day or she was afraid she'd never find another man or she was worried about money or she suddenly thought really deeply about the true tragedy of Amazon deforestation. I don't know. But it got something out of her, and she seemed happier after. It was like the reminder of the universal and temporary nature of misery was enough to summon and dismiss it.

It's a really [...] bold thing to make a song to stop people from killing themselves, given the great likelihood that your presumption will be roundly mocked. But laughing at this song is likely just an attempt to pretend that you aren't subject to the same emotional reality as the rest of us, acting as though you're not part of the everyone who hurt because you're ashamed to be reminded of it. Chances are Everybody Hurts hasn't caught you at that right/wrong time, and maybe it never will. But it'll still be there for you, just in case you ever need it.

I've seen some people criticize this song because it's too naive, too cliché, and doesn't really get what depression is like. They might say "sure, everybody hurts, but not everybody hurts like this" and, if living pretty much half\* /maybe more of my life with clinical depression and anxiety has taught me anything, it's that they're right. It's a hard thing to explain if you've never experienced it yourself. But I also don't want to separate myself from the "everybody" in this song- if anything, Everybody Hurts is like an invitation towards depressed people to feel normal, not alone, or some kind of societal outcast, and to rejoin the ranks . Which is sometimes exactly what I need. It's Michael Stipe offering the listener a hug, and who am I to turn down a hug?

This isn't necessarily a go to song for me when I feel low but it's nice to know it exists. The sentiment is important. The song itself is decent , maybe a bit on the bland side, but Stipe carries it with his vocals. Other good songs in this similar style are Waiting For Superman by The Flaming Lips and Let Down by Radiohead. Oh and maybe a Coldplay song but I can't remember the name.

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