

*Did you ever read about a frog  
Who dreamed of bein' a king  
And then became one  
Well, except for the names  
And a few other changes  
If you talk about me  
The story's the same one*

"I Am ... I Said" took four months to complete. I knew it had great potential and I was unwilling to accept anything but the raw truth in the lyric. It was a daily battle to put this song and those sentiments on paper, but when it was done, it turned out to be one of the most satisfying songs I had ever written. It was nominated for a Grammy and still gives me chills when I perform it. - ND

THE CHAIR: The chair is a reference to the psychiatrist's chair. Diamond battled with this song for 4 months following a near-breakdown after divorce and a move from NY to LA. His failure to land the part of Lenny Bruce in the movie Lenny left him close to breaking point and Diamond was depressed. Diamond eventually took a 4 year sabbatical from performing after his landmark appearance at the Greek Theater in LA in 1972. 'I Am ... I Said' has a far deeper meaning than most casual listeners imagine. The song is a masterpiece by a great songwriter. By his own admission, Diamond spent months in psychotherapy and this song explains wonderfully his thoughts and feelings at the time. In Gestalt therapy, a patient projects his thoughts into an empty chair while a counselor looks on making notes. This may well explain the meaning of the word chair. It is too easy to dismiss the 'chair' as a trite attempt to make a rhyme, but Diamond is nothing but meticulous in his lyric writing and he has said that 'I Am ... I Said' underwent countless rewrites until it said exactly what he wanted it to say. Diamond no doubt felt so alone and alienated that he must have felt that no-one was listening to his tortured cries ... not even the (psychoanalyst's) chair.

"I Am ... I Said, this is the most difficult song Neil has ever written because of its deeply personal emotions. It was a daily battle for Neil to write this song and his sentiments on paper. It is a very complicated song, which tells of feelings lost, full of questions, doubts and insecurities. The lyrics reflect a need to return home, to return to one's roots and original security of life, while realizing that one can never go back because time changes things. Neil considers this song as the best song he has ever written. And myriads of devotees around the world would agree with his opinion. It took Neil 4 months to complete this song although he spent many hours each day, seven days a week on it, writing essays about his feelings to finally form each line of lyrics describing loneliness. Song writing was a compulsion for young Neil. As with any creative endeavor, songwriting is a personal reflection of the writer. Neil Diamond was alone because he wanted to be alone, he was afraid of having people come too close to him as he didn't have much self-confidence at the time when he wrote I Am ... I Said". - Karin Thieme

I AM ... I SAID  
NEIL DIAMOND

L.A.'s fine, the sun shines most the time  
And the feeling is "lay back"  
Palm trees grow and rents are low  
But you know I keep thinkin' about  
Making my way back

Well, I'm New York City born and raised  
But nowadays,  
I'm lost between two shores  
L.A.'s fine, but it ain't home  
New York's home,  
But it ain't mine no more

I am ... I said  
To no one there  
And no one heard at all  
Not even the chair  
I am ... I cried, I am ... said I  
And I am lost and I can't  
Even say why  
Leavin' me lonely still

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Who dreamed of bein' a king  
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And a few other changes  
If you talk about me  
The story's the same one

But I got an emptiness deep inside  
And I've tried  
But it won't let me go  
And I'm not a man who likes to swear  
But I never cared  
For the sound of being alone

I am ... I said  
To no one there  
And no one heard at all  
Not even the chair  
I am ... I cried  
I am ... said I  
And I am lost and I can't  
Even say why  
I am ... I said  
I am ... I cried  
I am ... I said

Neil Diamond 1971  
Album: Stones