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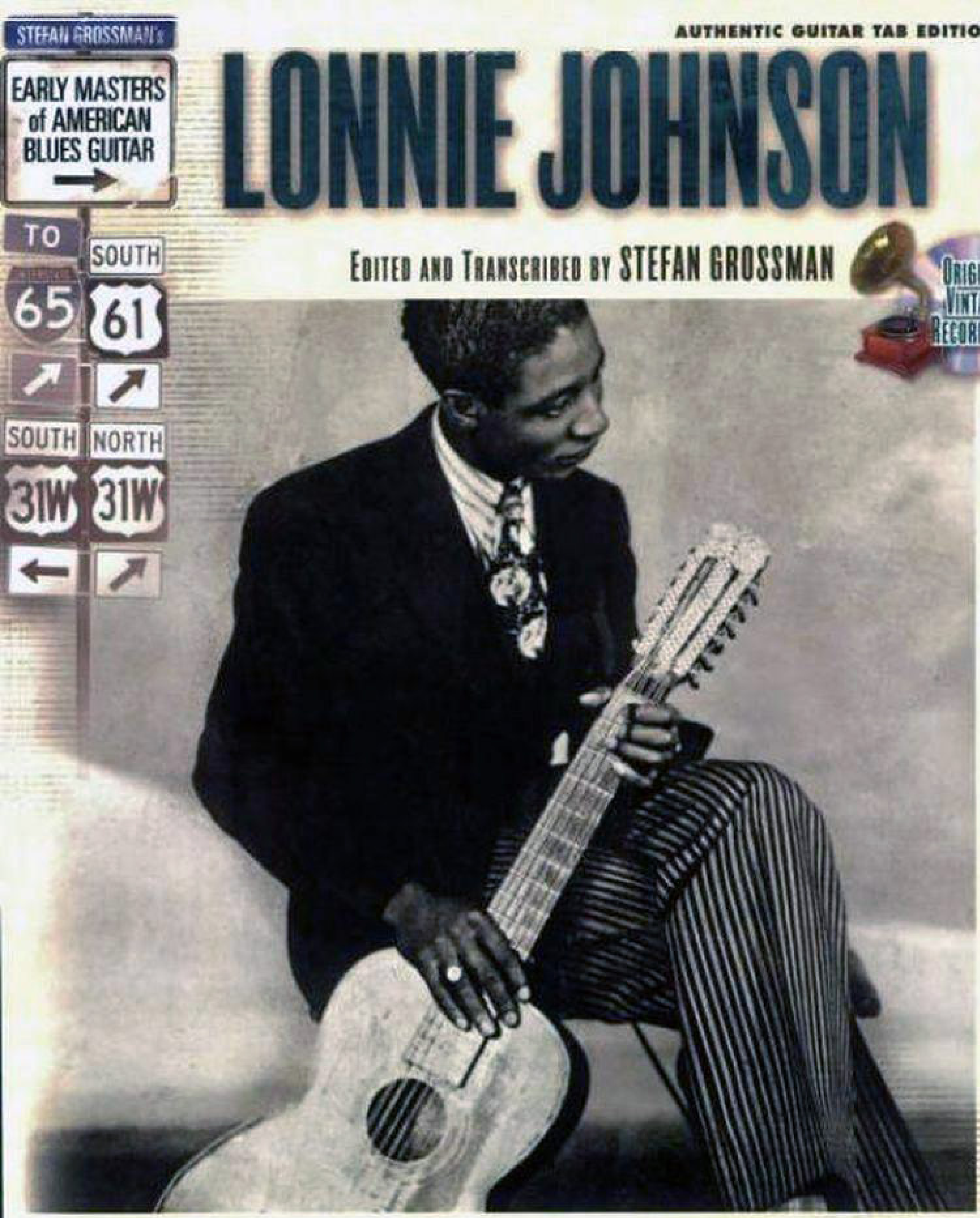
EARLY MASTERS of AMERICAN BLUES GUITAR

AUTHENTIC GUITAR TAB EDITION

LONNIE JOHNSON

EDITED AND TRANSCRIBED BY STEFAN GROSSMAN

ORIGINAL VINTAGE RECORDINGS



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- LISTEN AND LEARN FROM ORIGINAL, CLASSIC RECORDINGS
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Stefan Grossman's

Includes TABLATURE & ORIGINAL RECORDINGS

Masters of Country Blues Guitar

Featuring Lonnie Johnson

Editor: **Aaron Stang**

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INTRODUCTION

I grew up in New York City. During the 1960s I had the unique opportunity to see and study with a host of great blues guitar players: Mississippi John Hurt, Son House, Skip James, Fred McDowell, Mance Lipscomb, Bukka White and especially Rev. Gary Davis.

I spent several years travelling up to the Bronx every weekend to learn guitar from Rev. Davis. He had a vast repertoire of songs and guitar styles and a memory that was as sharp as a razor. He would talk about recordings and performers of country bluesmen from the 1920s and 1930s. Usually he was disdainful of their talents - Blind Lemon Jefferson could play the guitar but he cried when he sang; Blind Boy Fuller couldn't play the guitar and needed lessons; using a bottleneck was cheating. But Rev. Davis had his own guitar heros - Blind Blake had a sportin' right hand, Willie Walker was a
guitar giant and Lonnie Johnson was the king of the fretboard.

As a teenager I absorbed each word and note of Rev. Davis as the gospel. I bought blues albums, searched for old 78s and went to clubs to see blues guitarists. Gerdes Folk City was a center for concerts in New York City and one week I discovered that Lonnie Johnson would be playing there. With great eagerness I went down to see the "king of the fretboard".

Lonnie was playing a cheap electric guitar and using a plectrum. His blues were a combination of late 1940s R & B tunes and folk blues played in a very diluted fashion. His singing had a cocktail lounge edge. All in all I was disappointed. I saw and heard nothing that I would want to play.

During the next few years I saw Lonnie Johnson in various blues festivals and club appearances. I was never impressed but in the back of my mind I had Rev. Davis's unequivacable recommendation that Lonnie was one of the best that had ever played the blues.

What a fool a teenager can be! If only one of my record collector friends would have played me some of Lonnie's great instrumental tracks from the 1920s I might have been converted on the spot! As was, I didn't really delve into Johnson's playing until 20 years latter. During the 1960s Lonnie's brand of blues was out of fashion with both record collectors and blues enthusiasts. The Delta blues was high on every one's minds and guitar playing fingers. The steady flow of melodic riffs and runs that Lonnie recorded in the 1920s/1930s were too sophisticated and jazz oriented for blues guitarists and record collectors.

Many of the fingerstyle blues guitarists of the 1960s eventually got interested in single line improvisation and electric blues styles. This usually started with studying B.B.King and then Albert King and Freddie King. The road travelled backwards in time from players of the 60s to 50s (T-Bone Walker) to 40s (Charlie Christian) and eventually ended in the 30s and 20s with Lonnie Johnson. The roots of modern electric blues and rock guitar can be found in the playing of Lonnie Johnson.

Lonnie was sadly overlooked in his later years by blues and guitar playing historians. He was never interviewed in depth about either his life or his guitar techniques. What a crime; especially as his guitar playing has so many mysteries.

When listening to Lonnie's early great recordings one is struck with how spectacular, complex and innovative they are. What is very unusual is that the tonality and key is the same for so many tunes. He might have his guitar tuned low or play it with a capo or use a twelve string instead of a six

string but the chord shapes are always based around the key of D. Document Records (Eipeldauerstr. 23/43/5, A-1220 Vienna, Austria) have released a 7 volume CD set LONNIE JOHNSON - THE COMPLETE RECORDED WORKS (each CD containing over 20 titles) and within those 140 plus tracks you will only find 3 or 4 tunes in a key other than D! Yet, Lonnie's recording output in the 1940s and 1950s has little in common with blues in D and he in fact rarely played in that key or style during these years. I personally can not cite any other guitarist whose style and technique changed so dramatically
especially after it was so widely acclaimed and imitated. This is a very strange phenomenon that only Lonnie could have helped us to understand.

There are a host of great instrumentals and blues accompaniments that Lonnie recorded in the 20s and 30s. This book presents a collection of 16 instrumental solos and blues accompaniments. As I was working on this project, my friend Woody Mann was recording a series of audio lessons on Lonnie's playing (THE GUITAR OF LONNIE JOHNSON available from Guitar Workshop, P.O.Box 802, Sparta, NJ 07871) and he was independently
transcribing tunes. In California, Lenny Carlson has been transcribing Lonnie's arrangements as well as his landmark duets with Eddie Lang for his book AWAY DOWN IN THE ALLEY (to be published by Mel Bay Publications). All three of us agree on melodic runs and positions but the tuning that Lonnie used has created some controversy. I hear his arrangements played in a dropped D tuning (D A D G B E) while Woody and Lenny hear many tunes played with the guitar tuned D G D G B E. Again, only Lonnie really knew and we forgot to ask!

Some style and technique questions that remain unresolved:

1) Lonnie's early recordings feature fingerpicking. How many fingers did he use? Thumb and only index as many old bluesmen or perhaps he also used middle and ring? We have no definite answers to this. I tend to hear thumb and index with the occasional help from his middle finger.

2) There is a wonderful photo of Lonnie holding a Stella twelve string. On some of his recordings we hear a six string and others a twelve. Still on others it sounds as if the treble strings are doubled and the bass left alone (a nine string guitar). Why did he choose to change his set-up?

3) Why did his style and technique change so completely from the 1930s to the 1940s and beyond?

Lonnie Johnson's guitar playing is very challenging. His phrasing and tonality are right on the mark. He did not rely on any pattern pickings but rather his playing seems very improvised around a series of hot licks and runs. His playing speed on several of his instrumentals is almost beyond belief. I think you will find this collection as enjoyable as I did in putting it together.

Best of luck,



LONNIE JOHNSON

By Jas Obrecht

Lonnie Johnson was the prewar era's most influential blues guitarist. His uncanny dexterity and sophisticated sense of harmony enabled him to transcend stylistic barriers to record classic jazz with Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, groundbreaking guitar duets with the great Eddie Lang, and blues, ballads, and plenty of mawkish pop under his own name. He recorded on many instruments, made hundreds of records, and probably had the longest active career of any blues guitarist.

During the Roaring Twenties, his 78s were especially popular among black record-buyers. "Lonnie Johnson has never been recognized as one of the transcendental people who influenced *everybody*," contends Ry Cooder. "You can recognize Lonnie Johnson in just about anybody, with his voice and elegant style. The stuff he did with Louis Armstrong is just incredible. What he must have sounded like to country black people! They must have thought, well, this is somebody else. He's uptown, getting this fabulous tone, and he's real elegant and top-hatted. It's a whole other thing. Pop music, really. You can see people copying him right and left. Oh, it's amazing." Lonnie's impact was especially felt in the deep South.

Johnson was city bred, and most of his original songs dealt with loneliness, insecurity, and the capriciousness of love and commitment. In Lonnie's blues, common ghetto images like bedbugs and gambling became deeper metaphors of the disillusioned:

"Love is just like playing the numbers,
you got one chance out of a million time,
You'll put your money on one-ninety-eight,
and out pops one-ninety-nine"

Lonnie, it often seems, could convey his humor and resiliency more easily through his fingers than his voice. The 5'10" bluesman was gifted with strong hands, a great touch, and a wonderfully fertile imagination. He could make his guitar thump like a country blues starvation box or comp-and-fill like a piano. His crisp rhythms revealed a vast chord vocabulary, and he had a fabulous way of ending songs with elegant chord climbs. His one-of-a-kind finger vibrato could approximate the sounds of a zither, mandolin, or bottleneck guitar being played by Tampa Red. He consistently overcame the limitations of primitive recording technology to achieve a perfect balance between treble and bass.

During his first dozen years in the limelight, Johnson favored 12-string acoustic guitars. In one of his first publicity photos, he's dressed to the nines, sitting in a chair and holding a Lyon & Healy, one of the better 12-strings available during the late nineteenth century. Big Bill Broonzy noted that Lonnie flatpicked all the time, but the presence of bass notes during some of his treble-string runs suggests that Johnson may have played fingerstyle too. He usually removed the high-octave strings from the lower courses of his 12-string, creating, in effect, a 9-string. On "No More Troubles Now" and "Away Down In The Alley Blues," for instance, he approximated a two-guitar sound by either fingerpicking or using flatpick and fingers on a guitar that sounds like a 12-string on the treble side and a 6-string on the bass. He often played in the key of *D*, and sometimes tuned his low *E* and *D* strings down a full-step.

Significant portions of the guitar vocabulary Lonnie Johnson innovated have survived intact into the modern era. In terms of influence, he was surely the Jimi Hendrix of his generation. "Lonnie Johnson was *the* top guitarist," insisted Johnny Shines. "I remember one record of his was strictly jazz, and boy, he was so goddamned fast—whoo! With a straight pick. See, he use a straight pick like another man uses three fingers. I've seen guitar players use three fingers wasn't as fast as him." Shines' traveling companion Robert Johnson admired him too, patterning "Malted Milk" and "Drunken Hearted Man" after Lonnie Johnson 78s. T-Bone Walker, Blind Willie McTell, Peg Leg Howell, King Solomon Hill, Tommy McClennan, Gary Davis, jazzmen Charlie Christian and Joe Pass, and countless others were likewise inspired by Johnson's brilliant solos and expressive bends. "I was crazy about Lonnie Johnson," says B.B. King. "Lonnie

Johnson and Blind Lemon—those were my people, along with T-Bone Walker. Lonnie Johnson was so versatile."

"I love Lonnie Johnson," echoes John Lee Hooker. "He was a genius. And nobody sound like Lonnie Johnson. You could tell it was Lonnie Johnson every time he pick up a guitar. Oh, he could play a lot of notes, but you know who he was because he had his own style, man. He's blues and he's pop—there's some of everything, the way he plays it. Oh, I just can't say enough about the man. And I knowed him personally. I used to follow him. Nice man. He like women, wine, and song. He loved everybody. He was a hero to everybody. Black and white, wherever you are—they loved Lonnie Johnson."

Alonzo Johnson was born near Rampart and Franklin Streets in New Orleans, probably on February 8, 1894. He had five sisters and six brothers, and during childhood played at banquets, weddings, and street corners with his father's band. Lonnie's first instruments were violin and guitar, and he was soon adept with mandolin, banjo, kazoo, string bass, and piano. Growing up in New Orleans, he was exposed to a much wider array of styles than country-bred performers could have heard—schooled symphonic musicians, brass bands, hot string bands, minstrels, barrelhouse and ragtime piano players, Pan-Caribbean carnival fare, and singers of everything from street cries to spirituals to opera. By 1908, Kid Ory's Woodland Band was holding court at Pete Lala's 25 Club, where King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and other jazz pioneers would congregate. By 1910, Lonnie was playing in Storyville sporting houses, often in the company of his brother, multi-instrumentalist James "Steady Roll" Johnson.

Lonnie acquired his first good guitar around 1917, when he joined a small musical revue that visited Great Britain. He is rumored to have performed for American doughboys in London and was seen playing banjo with Will Marion Cook in Glasgow. Returning home after World War I, Johnson discovered nearly all of his family had perished in the influenza epidemic. He and his brother James determined to make their living playing blues. "I got to ramblin' after that," Lonnie said. "I couldn't keep my feet still, so I just started travelin'." The brothers moved to Texas and then Missouri. When Big Bill Broonzy met them in St. Louis in 1921, Steady Roll was playing piano, while Lonnie doubled on violin, guitar, bass, mandolin, banjo, and "all of the things that you could make music on." Lonnie sang and played violin with Charlie Creath's band on the Mississippi steamer *St. Paul* and with Fate Marable aboard the *SS Capitol*. He knew Jelly Roll Morton in St. Louis, but usually worked with his brother or De Loise Searcy on piano. Sometimes the Johnsons switched back and forth on violin and guitar while Searcy manned the 88s.

In 1925 Lonnie wed Mary Smith, a twenty-year-old from Mississippi who would bear him six children before their divorce in '32. Mary made her own records beginning in '29, when a Brunswick talent scout heard her moaning in a club. Her most successful, "Black Men Blues," was recorded during her first trip to Chicago, where she was thrilled to earn fifty dollars apiece for six sides. She also recorded for Paramount, making half as much per side. After the divorce, Mary cut for Decca with Peetie Wheatstraw and Kokomo Arnold, and then turned to religious music.

Lonnie secured a long-term OKeh recording contract by winning a blues contest at the Booker Washington Theater in St. Louis. Around November 2, 1925, he made his recording debut playing violin and singing "Won't Don't Blues" with Charles Creath's Jazz-O-Maniacs in St. Louis. Two days later, Lonnie got his chance to record under his own name. With John Arnold rolling along nicely on piano, he began with "Mr. Johnson's Blues," playing hard and taking chances on guitar to lift a single-verse song into the realm of the sublime:

"I want all you people to listen to my song,
I want all you people to listen to my song,
Remember me after all the days I'm gone"

His smooth, clear vocal delivery would soon become his trademark. The squeaky back-alley violin on his second selection, "Falling Rain Blues," hinted country roots and proved Lonnie could sing and fiddle at the same time.

At Lonnie's next session, January 19, 1926, the Johnson brothers soloed simultaneously on violins during "Very Lonesome Blues," while "Sun To Sun Blues" and "Bed Of Sand" featured Lonnie's guitar. The following day Lonnie picked banjo and sassed kazoo on

Jelly Roll Johnson's only issued 78, "No Good Blues"/"Newport Blues." The brothers cut "Nile Of Genago," a lovely parlor guitar duet, and De Loise Searcy came in on "Johnson Trio Stump," a cinematic instrumental that could have easily underscored a Chaplin or Keaton short. Lonnie made another half-dozen sides during May, mostly playing violin while Steady Roll manned the 88s, and the brothers appeared on Cora Perkins' only 78. Later that summer Lonnie fiddled on George Hannah's first session, and the Johnson brothers backed Luella Miller on Vocalion's "Dago Hill Blues"/"Pretty Man Blues," with Lonnie alternating between violin and guitar, as he would on Luella's Chicago and St. Louis sessions the following year. While Lonnie mostly played guitar, violin, and piano during his 1926 sessions, he plunked harmonium while Jelly Roll fiddled on "I'm Gonna Dodge The Blues Just Wait And See"/"Oh! Doctor The Blues," creating an off-kilter cross between a blues and a drunken sea chanty. The experiment was never repeated.

During the summer of '26 Johnson made his first records with Victoria Spivey, whom he had met at the Deluxe Record Shop. "Lonnie not only played guitar for me, but also violin," Victoria remembered. "Lonnie had St. Louis sewed up with his brother James on piano. How many people know that Lonnie Johnson was considered the greatest violin player for blues in this world? I have great memories of him sitting on top of the piano playing violin with brother James at Katy Red's in East St. Louis. Dollar, five dollar, and ten dollar bills would be flying as tips." When Steady Roll and Lonnie parted ways in 1927, Lonnie focused on playing guitar, with pianist John Erby as his main accompanist. Meanwhile, Steady Roll recorded with Henry Johnson And His Boys, Lizzie Washington, and Katherine Baker, and played violin behind Ethel Waters. He then spent thirty years as the house pianist at the Waterfront Club in Newport, Illinois. Lonnie always claimed his brother was the superior musician.

Working as a team, Lonnie and John Erby backed Victoria Spivey again on nine imaginative blues in New York City and St. Louis, including "Blood Thirsty Blues," "Nightmare Blues," "Murder In The First Degree," and the oft-anthologized "Dope Head Blues." In St. Louis during spring 1927, they played behind Helen Humes, Raymond Boyd, Joe Brown, Irene Scruggs, and Bessie Mae Smith, who appeared on 78s as Blue Belle. In August, OKeh sent Johnson to New York City to make a handful of solo sides and to record with Alger "Texas" Alexander, a cottonfield moaner with a powerfully resonant voice. Lonnie showcased a sensitive feel for downhome blues on "Levee Camp Moan Blues," "Section Gang Blues," and four other sides, but found Alexander's penchant for jumping bars difficult to work with. "When you been out there with him," he sighed, "you done nine days work in one!" The label was pleased with the results, though, and reunited the musicians in the spring.

Johnson stayed in New York during the fall of '28, recording picturesque titles like "Bedbug Blues, Part 2," "Bitin' Flea Blues," "Life Saver Blues," and "Blue Ghost Blues." Based on true-life drama, his "St. Louis Cyclone Blues" was punctuated with dramatic piano and ghostly whines:

"The wind was howlin', the buildings
beginnin' to fall,
The wind was howlin', the buildings
beginnin' to fall,
I seen that mean old twister comin'
just like a cannonball

"The world was black as midnight,
I never heard such a noise before,
The world was black as midnight,
I never heard such a noise before,
Sound like a million lions when they turn
loose their roar"

In late 1927 four sides with pianist Jimmy Blythe came out on Gennett and Conqueror credited to Duke Owens, Willie Woods, Bud Wilson, and George Jefferson, but the featured singer was obviously Lonnie Johnson.

Lonnie's next assignment in Chicago during December 1927 produced spectacular classic jazz. The band was Louis Armstrong's The Hot Fives, with Kid Ory on trombone, Johnny Dodds on clarinet, Lil Armstrong on piano, and Johnny St. Cyr on banjo. A slow, downhome 12-bar blues sketched out by Lil, "I'm Not Rough" was an ideal setting for Johnson's zithery 12-string tremolo and unforgettable bends. Lil based the hard-swinging

"Hotter Than That" on the chord changes to "Tiger Rag." Louis scatted along with Lonnie's solo, and then the two engaged in exhilarating two-bar call-and-responses. The side concluded with a quick conversation between Louis' trumpet and Lonnie's 12-string. St. Cyr switched to guitar for "Savoy Blues," comping chords and bass notes while Lonnie soloed; the exchange clearly presaged the Johnson-Lang duets.

At his final Louis Armstrong session fifteen months later, Lonnie played "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" and the old New Orleans standard "Mahogany Hall Stomp." Four-fifths of Armstrong's rhythm section that day was from New Orleans, and the musicians raised the hometown spirit. "On these records," describes producer Larry Cohn, "Lonnie Johnson was playing 12-string guitar in a large band context as cleanly as one could possibly envision. Charlie Christian was fantastic, but Lonnie Johnson was doing it ten years before. He was a jazz musician nonpareil."

In the role of OKeh staff musician, Lonnie journeyed to Memphis in February '28. He sawed raging violin blues in a trio with guitarist Nap Hayes and mandolinist Matthew Prater, picked guitar behind Mooch Richardson, and accompanied a plaintive singer named Keghouse. On the 21st, Lonnie cut four state-of-the-art 6-string guitar solos, including the fleet-fingered, utterly hip "Playing With The Strings." The OKeh team then moved on to San Antonio, where Johnson accompanied Texas Alexander and made seven new sides of his own.

A new Johnson 78 was going on sale every six weeks, and Lonnie enjoyed coast-to-coast bookings on the RKO and T.O.B.A. circuits. He was one of the few blues guitarists to work solo onstage, and sometimes accompanied comediennes. Johnson estimated that during the 1920s he played Atlanta's 81 Theater fifteen times, and he had fond memories of working shows with Mamie and Clara Smith.

Lonnie's popularity among blacks led Irving Mills, a shrewd white manager, to recruit him for specialty sides with Duke Ellington's band. The session took place on October 1, 1928. Lonnie comped well and wove a 12-string solo through Baby Cox' tough scatting during "The Mooche," which could easily have underscored a graveyard sequence in a Disney cartoon. During the lighthearted "Move Over," Lonnie more than held his own alongside the great hornmen Bubber Miley, Johnny Hodges, and Barney Bigard; the side came out credited to Lonnie Johnson's Harlem Footwarmers. Lonnie wove brilliant bends around Wellman Braud's powerful string bass in "Hot And Bothered."

Victoria Spivey and Lonnie Johnson were reteamed a couple of weeks later for a series of one- and two-part vocal duets that were part skit, part seduction, and pure hokum. Spivey was at her sultry best in "New Black Snake Blues" and "Toothache Blues," moaning, fussing, and cooing innuendos at Johnson while Clarence Williams fingered stately piano backdrops. During the same week, Lonnie recorded "Paducah" and "Stardust" with the Chocolate Dandies, a big band fronted by the vocal trio of Don Redman, George Thomas, and Dave Wilborn. He rejoined Ellington's band on November 22, 1928, for "Misty Mornin'," recording a part that virtually defines 12-string articulation.

During November '28, Lonnie Johnson and 26-year-old Eddie Lang recorded the first in a wonderfully inspired series of duets that would exert a profound influence on jazz guitar, then in its formative stages. The idea to team Lang, who understood harmony better than any other jazz guitarist, and Johnson, who had the finest technique in blues, originated with Tommy Rockwell, artist manager for OKeh Records. Johnson and Lang warmed up for two days backing Texas Alexander. Lang's flatpicked bass notes on "Work Ox Blues" and other selections set an easygoing pace for Alexander's field-holler vocals and Johnson's mandolin-like solos. On the 17th, Lonnie and Eddie cut their first pair of duets. Lang's complex, moving bass lines supported Lonnie's bluesy leads and fast triplets on "Two Tone Stomp," while the slower, 12-bar "Have To Change Keys To Play These Blues" gave Eddie a chance to solo with aplomb. On most of their subsequent duets, Lang would continue in the rhythm role, supporting Johnson with innovative bass lines, arpeggios, natural and artificial harmonics, and a variety of extended, altered, and inverted chord voicings.

Born Salvatore Massaro in South Philadelphia, Lang was the top studio guitarist of the era, and Lonnie called him the nicest man he ever worked with. "Eddie was a fine

man," he told Nat Hentoff. "He never argued. He didn't tell me what to do. He would ask me. Then, if everything was okay, we'd sit down and get to jiving. I've never seen a cat like him since. He could play guitar better than anyone I know. And I've seen plenty in my day." Eddie's facility with hot jazz, blues, pop, and classical had already inspired countless banjo players to switch to guitar, and his breathtaking duets with his boyhood pal, violinist Joe Venuti, had been on the market since 1926. To mask his ethnic identity on the race-market-aimed Johnson duets, Lang assumed the name of the newsboy who sold him his evening paper, Blind Willie Dunn, and reportedly paid him a royalty for the use. In Europe, where integrating races on record was not considered taboo, Parlophone and Odeon listed Ed Lang and Lonnie Johnson as the artists. When King Oliver, J.C. Johnson, and Hoagy Carmichael accompanied the pair in April '29 for "Jet Black Blues"/"Blue Blood Blues," the disk was credited to Blind Willie Dunn's Gin Bottle Four.

Lang and Johnson reunited in May and October 1929, producing the immortal "Guitar Blues," "Bull Frog Moan," "A Handful Of Riffs," "Blue Guitars," "Deep Minor Rhythm Stomp," "Midnight Call Blues," "Hot Fingers," and "Blue Room Blues." While Eddie provided piano-like rhythms and bass, Lonnie spun great melodies laced with fabulous pull-offs and bluesy bends. Lang stepped out as lead soloist during parts of "Blue Guitars," "Midnight Call Blues," and "Blue Room Blues," while Lonnie seamlessly segued into rhythm. The improvisations capture the musicians' warmth, humor, and mutual admiration, and they're as sublime today as they were in the Roaring Twenties. Johnson considered them his greatest musical experience.

As one of 1929's top race artists, Johnson went on the road with Bessie Smith's *Midnite Steppers* revue, and rumors flew when he was seen coming and going from Bessie's stateroom. "She was sweet on me," Johnson confessed, "but we never got real serious. Bessie had too many things going for her." Like Tampa Red and Big Bill Broonzy, Lonnie cashed in on hokum during the giddy months before the stock market crash, scoring a two-part (eventually four-part) hit duet with Spencer Williams, "It Feel So Good." Despite sexist lyrics like "be my pretty pussy, 'cause it feels to good," OKeh marketed the song to women:

"Your heart's gonna start a throbbin', honey
. . . there'll be a sweet emotion a stirrin'
yuh. . . . when this greatest of all love songs
takes you to a Garden of Eden."

Lonnie's solo sides during this period, though, tended to lament love relationships. In "From Now On Make Your Whoopee At Home," he sang with a sad, sad voice:

"All night long, blues and worry
was all I can see,
All night long, blues and worry
was all I can see,
Don't you know when you out making
whoopee, baby, you killin' me"

The next time, Lonnie advises her, "carry your coffin along." He picked up the theme again with "She's Making Whoopee In Hell Tonight."

Around 1930 "Lonnie Johnson, Recording Guitarist" got his own radio show in New York City. By now, though, he was recycling chord patterns and melodies, counting on his lyrics to set his songs apart. "I personally liked his blues," declared Edith Johnson, "but they got a little monotonous after three or four years because everything was in the same tone." Johnson himself claimed, "I recorded 125 songs against the same chords." He cut covers of "Sitting On Top Of The World" and "Kansas City Man Blues" with Clarence Williams' Jug Band in September 1930. On Halloween, Johnson and Clara Smith, Columbia's "Queen of the Moaners," portrayed a nagging, unhappy couple, with the "You're Getting Old On Your Job"/"What Makes You Act Like That" 78 coming out on Columbia by Clara Smith and Tommy Jordan, while OKeh credited "You Had Too Much"/"Don't Wear It Out" to Lonnie Johnson and Violet Green. After making a pair of Victor test pressings with comedienne Martha Raye and a few more solo 78s for OKeh and Columbia, Lonnie Johnson didn't record again for five years.

He played clubs, but mostly supported himself with hard labor—making railroad ties, sweating in a Peoria steel foundry, working as a hotel janitor. When pickings got slim in Chicago, he moved on to Cleveland, where a radio contract on WATM fell through when his

bandleader, Putney Dandridge, skipped town due to women troubles. A residency at the 3 Deuces in Chicago with fellow New Orleans musician Baby Dodds brought Lonnie to the attention of Decca Records during the fall of 1937. His first assignment was ten sides backing Alice Moore. The handsome barrelhouse pianist at the session was none other than East St. Louis' William Bunch, a.k.a. Peetie Wheatstraw, the High Sheriff From Hell. The musicians hit it off, and Johnson backed Wheatstraw on at least seventeen sides during the next half-year. At other sessions he supported singers Ollie Shepard, Georgia White, and Vocalion's Merline Johnson.

Lonnie played acoustic 12-string on his first Decca release under his own name, "Man Killing Broad." His guitar playing was tough and sure-handed, and his opinion of women hadn't changed much either:

"You put Lysol in my gravy, black potash in my tea,
You put Lysol in my gravy, black potash in my tea,
But I fed it to your man, baby, instead of me

"Baby, I give you my money,
I even let you run around,
Even give you my money,
still let you mess around,
But you undoubtedly is the roughest little broad in town"

In 1938 Johnson began recording with pianist Roosevelt Sykes and a woefully underrecorded string bassist and drummer, but his style was basically unchanged. He did sessions with Red Mike Bailey, Jimmie Gordon, and Johnny Temple, and in late '39 joined Lester Melrose's stable of Bluebird artists. Johnson used an electric guitar for his debut Bluebird session on November 2, 1939. With powerful bass lines and dextrous treble fills, Josh Altheimer, Lonnie's only accompanist on the date, helped create a full-band sound on these vital 78s. Lonnie went back to acoustic guitar, piano, and string bass for his subsequent Bluebird sessions, which lasted until '44.

Lonnie dipped back into his jazz bag to play on Jimmie Noone And His Orchestra's "New Orleans Hop Scop Blues" and "Keystone Blues" and Johnny Dodds' "Red Onion Blues" and "Gravier Street Blues." During January '41 the Lonnie Johnson Trio, featuring Lonnie on piano and acoustic guitar, made fascinating blues and pop acetates during a gig at Chicago's Boulevard Lounge. Two months later Johnson and Blind John Davis collaborated on a pair of Clara Morris 78s.

When material shortages brought a temporary ban on recording during World War II, Johnson went on the road, playing one-nighters throughout the Midwest and West Coast. Near the war's end, Lonnie gave a compelling performance on Bob Shoffner And His Harlem Hot Shots' Mercury 78 "Trouble In Mind"/"Mitzy." In '46 Lonnie signed with Disc Records in New York and cut a dozen tepid blues and ballads with Blind John Davis, who frequently drowned the guitar in the mix. Things heated up with Aladdin label in '47, when Lonnie used an electric guitar to bop his better solos. He appeared regularly in Chicago at the Flame Club and Ruby Gatewood's Tavern, and enjoyed an extended stay at Gaston's Club, making $105 a week. Outside of music, Lonnie liked to go fishing; Big Bill bragged his pal could catch twenty-five a day.

Johnson moved to Cincinnati in 1947 and commenced recording for the King label. His attempts to crash the burgeoning R&B market paid off with 1948's "Tomorrow Night," one of his biggest hits. By the early '50s, though, Lonnie's dates were becoming few and far between. His smooth, bittersweet blues must have seemed an anachronism to those whooping it to the muscular big beat of Muddy Waters, Little Walter, and Howlin' Wolf. His '52 concert tour of England proved to be his last important musical venture of the decade. (Lonnie's solo set at Royal Festival Hall on June 29, 1952, featured "Stardust," "Just Another Day," "Backwater Blues," and "Careless Love," and he reportedly made a backstage recording that night with Lonnie Donegan, whose Jazz Band appeared on the same bill.)

Lonnie was pushing a broom at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel in Philadelphia when jazz deejay Chris Albertson found him in 1960. He encouraged Lonnie to haul out his old electric guitar and amp and cut some demos. Albertson took the tapes to Prestige Records, and Lonnie Johnson, bluesman, was back in business. "I've been dead four or five times," he smiled, "but I always came back. This time, I knew that some day, somehow,

somebody would find me." Blues aficionados cast him as an "elder statesman of the blues," and his newfound fame brought bookings at colleges, folk festivals, even Chicago's Playboy Club. By year's end, Johnson had forty-six songs in the can. His vocals were strong, direct, and impassioned, his 6-string riffing on songs like "New Orleans Blues" and "Lines In My Face" inspired. He cut *Blues & Ballads* with jazz great Elmer Snowden on second guitar. Lonnie recorded his fourth new album, *Idle Hours*, with his old friend Victoria Spivey during July 1961. Victoria wrote "Long Time Blues" and the title track for the event, conjuring the spirit of their duets from long ago.

Through Miss Spivey, John Hammond shared billings with Lonnie at Gerde's Folk City: "Lonnie wasn't playing much blues anymore. He had just been found in a hotel in Philadelphia, and he sang some sweet gospel-type tunes and jazz standards. He'd lost that edge, but every now and then there'd be moments and flashes. He was such a nice man, a beautiful guy."

During 1963 Lonnie appearing New York's Town Hall, playing solo on 6-string and coming back onstage for a few songs with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. He then toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival. "I sing city blues," Lonnie told Valerie Wilmer of England's *Jazz Monthly*. "My blues is built on human beings on land—see how they live, see their heartaches, and the shifts they go through with love affairs and things like that. That's what I write about, and that's the way I make my living. It's understanding others, and that's the best way I can tell you. My style of singing has nothing to do with the part of the country I come from. It comes from my soul within. The heartaches and things that have happened to me in my life—that's what makes a good blues singer." Lonnie recorded with Otis Spann in Copenhagen, and cut for the Spivey label later in '63.

Johnson settled in Toronto in 196. opened his own Home Of The Blues "When he lived in Canada, I'd go see nim play," remembers John Lee Hooker. "He was so friendly, with a nice personality. Always smiling. Everybody loved that man." He made his final stateside album for Folkways in 1967, but his talents remained intact almost until the end. "On Lonnie's last recordings, made in Canada with Jim McHarg's Dixieland band," describes Larry Cohn, "he plays with the exuberance, stature, and command of a 22-year-old. It's unbelievable." Johnson was struck by a car in March '69 and suffered a broken hip, followed by a paralytic stroke. He was unable to play guitar at his final public appearance, at Toronto's Massey Hall in February 1970, but received a standing ovation for his singing. Lonnie Johnson passed away in his apartment on June 16, 1970.

Victoria Spivey mailed her eulogy to *Guitar Player* magazine: "Lonnie Johnson was the greatest blues guitarist man in the business—and what a beautiful blues ballad singer he was too! Everywhere I turn, I hear him in T-Bone Walker, B.B. and Albert King, Muddy Waters, and the younger fellows like Buddy Guy. And, of course, all the white kids are playing Lonnie, most of them thinking they're being influenced by B.B. What I like about B.B. and T-Bone is that they all give Lonnie the credit for it. . . . I say to Lonnie: Join the heavenly Gabriel as you used to play with the earthly Gabriel, Louis Armstrong."

An exclusive copyrighted excerpt from Jas Obrecht's book-in-progress *Early Blues: The Music Before Robert Johnson*.
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Explanation of the Tab/Music System

".....Learning from listening is unquestionably the best way, the only way that suits this kind of music. You are setting the notes down for a record of what happened, a record that can be studied, preserved and so on, a necessary and useful companion to the recordings of the actual sounds. I keep thinking of this as I transcribe; if you could do it, it would be good to have a legend across each page reading: "Listen to the record if you want to learn the song."

Hally Wood (taken from the Publisher's Foreword to the New Lost City Ramblers Songbook.)

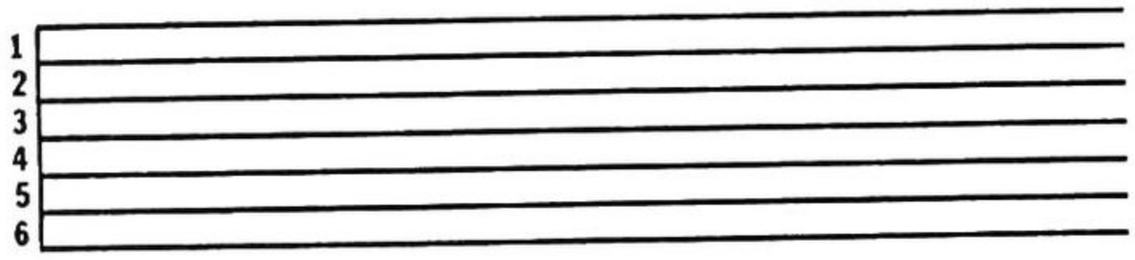
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These words are most suitable for introducing the tablature system, for tablature is just a guide and should be used in conjunction with the recordings. Tablature is not like music notation, however the combination of tab and music in an arrangement forms a complete language. Used together and with the original recordings they give a total picture of the music.

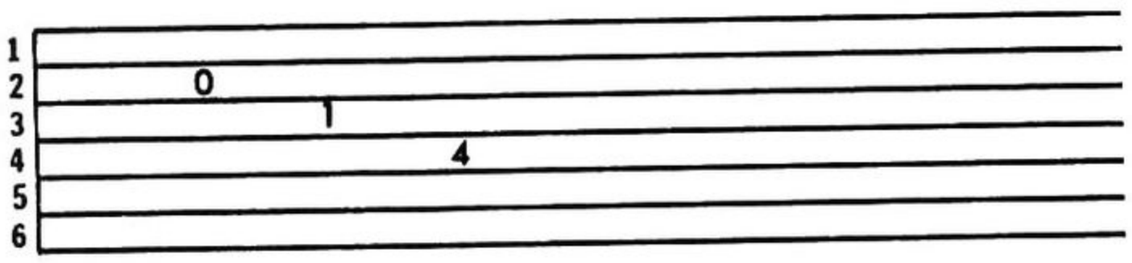
The tab system does not attempt to show rhythms or accents. These can be found on the music or heard on the recordings. Music notation tackles these articulations to a degree, but the overall sensations, the feel and the soul of music cannot be wholly captured on the written page. In the words of the great Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan: ".....The traditional ancient songs of India composed by great Masters have been handed down from father to son. The way music is taught is different from the Western way. It is not always written, but is taught by imitation. The teacher sings and the pupil imitates and the intricacies and subtleties are learned by imitation."

This is the theme I've tried to interpolate into the tablature. Tablature is the roadmap and you are the driver. Now to the tab:

Each space indicates a string. The top space represents the first string, second space the second string, etc. A zero means an open string, a number in the space indicates the fretted position for instance a 1 in a space indicates the first fret of that string.

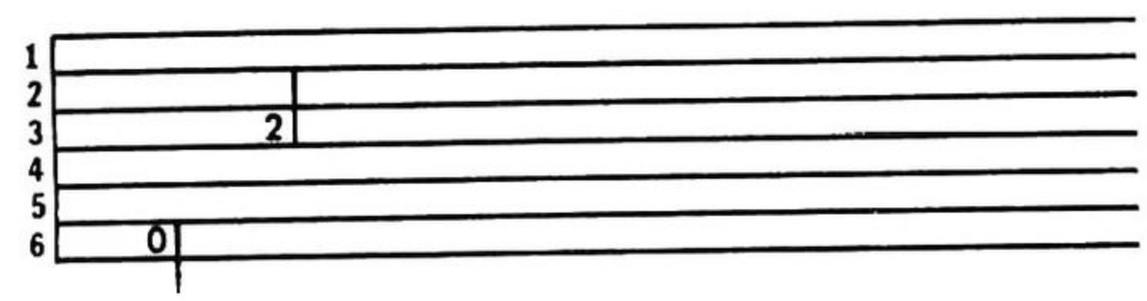


In the diagram below the zero is on the second string and indicates the open second string is played. The 1 is placed on the third string's space and signifies the first fret of the third string. Likewise, the 4 is in the fourth space and indicates the fourth fret of the fourth string.



Generally for fingerpicking styles you will be playing the thumb, index and middle fingers of your picking hand. To indicate the picking finger in tab the stems go up and line up down from the numbers:

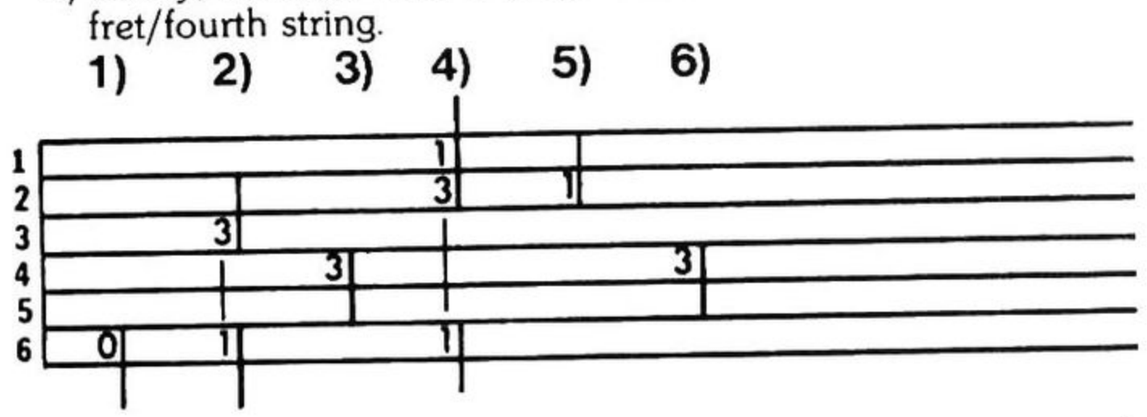
A. A stem down means that your thumb strikes the note.
B. If a stem is up, your index or middle finger strikes the note. The choice of finger is left up to you, as your fingers will dictate what is most comfortable, especially when playing a song up to tempo!
C. The diagram below shows an open sixth string played with the thumb followed by second fret of the third string played with the index or middle finger:



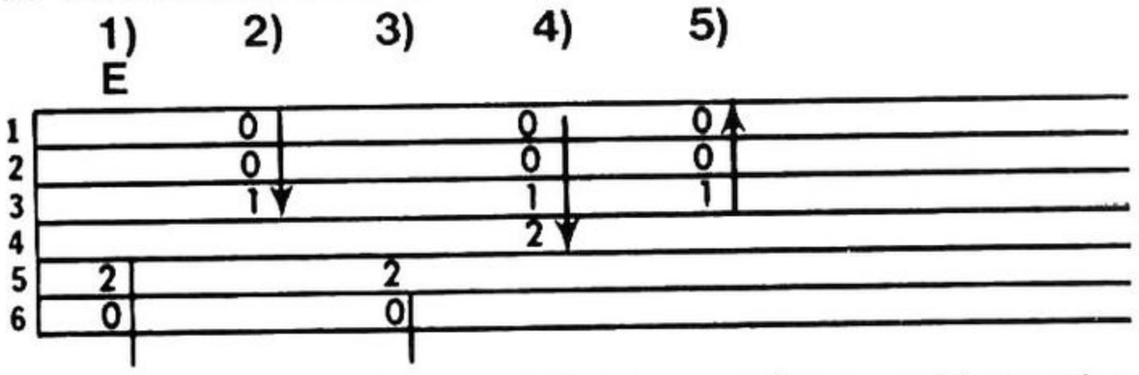
In most cases the thumb will play an alternating bass pattern, usually on the bass strings. The index and middle fingers play melodic notes on the first, second and third strings. Please remember, this is not a rule; there are many exceptions.

In fingerpicking there are two "picking" styles: Regular picking and "pinching" two notes together. A pinch is shown in the tab by a line connecting two notes. A variation of this can also be two treble notes pinched with a bass note. Follow the example below from left to right:

1) The open sixth string is played with the thumb.
2) The first fret of the sixth string is pinched together with the third fret of the third string. The sixth string is played with the thumb, the third string with the index finger.
3) The thumb strikes the third fret of the fourth string.
4) The first fret/sixth string is played with the thumb; it's pinched with two notes in the treble. The index and middle fingers strike the first fret/first string and the third fret/second string.
5) The next note is the index finger hitting the first fret/second string.
6) Lastly, the bass note is played with the thumb on the third fret/fourth string.



There are certain places in blues and contemporary guitar that call for the use of either strumming techniques or accented bass notes. The tab illustrates these as follows:



1) The thumb hits the open sixth string and the second fret on the fifth string should also sound. For example, play an E chord. Now strike the open sixth string and vary the force of your attack. Try hitting it hard enough so that the fifth string vibrates as well. This technique is very important for developing a full sound and the right alternating bass sound.

2) Next the arrow notation indicates a brush and the arrowhead indicates the direction of the brush.

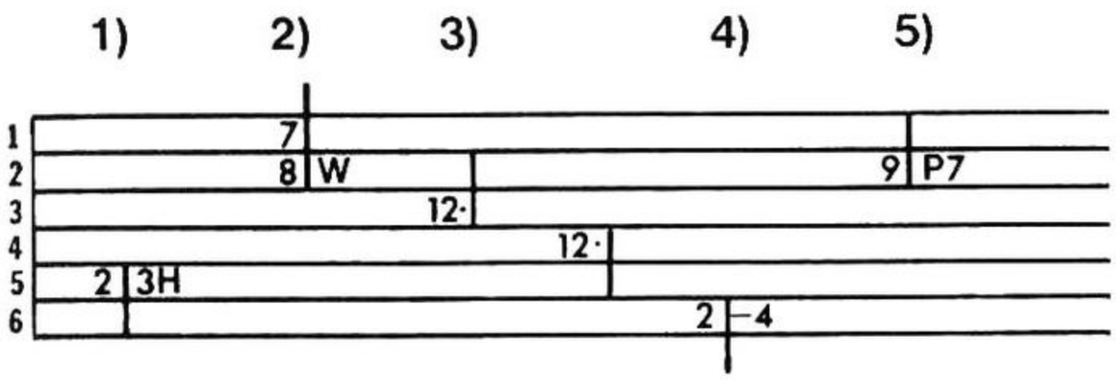
A. If the arrowhead is pointed down, the hand brushes up toward the sixth string.
B. If pointed up, the hand brushes down toward the first string.
C. The number of strings to be played by the brush is shown by the length of the arrow. For example, this arrow shows a brush up toward the sixth string, but indicates to strike only the first, second and third strings.
D. The brush can be done with your whole hand, index finger or middle and ring finger. Let comfort plus a full and "right" sound guide your choice.

3) The third set of notes again shows the sixth string/open bass note played with the thumb and being struck hard enough to make the fifth string/second fretted position sound.

4) Once more an arrow pointed downward indicates a brush up. This example forms an E chord and the brush up includes the first, second, third and fourth strings.

5) The last set of notes has an arrow pointed upward, indicating a brush downward striking the first, second and third strings.

Here are several special effects that are also symbolized in tablature:



1) HAMMER-ON: Designated by an "H" which is placed after the stem on the fret to be hammered. In the example above, fret the second fret/fifth string and pick it with your thumb. Then "hammer-on" (hit hard) the third fret/fifth string i.e. fret the third fret/fifth string. This is an all-in-one, continuous motion which will produce two notes rapidly with one picking finger strike.
2) WHAM: Designated by a "W". In the example the eighth fret/second string is "whammed" and played with the seventh fret/first string. Both notes are played together with your index and middle fingers respectively. The whammed note is "stretched." We do this by literally bending the note up. We can "wham" the note up a half tone; full tone etc.
3) HARMONICS: Symbolized by a dot (.). To play a harmonic: gently lay your finger directly above the indicated fret (don't press down!). The two notes in the example are both harmonics, The first on the twelfth fret/third string is played with the index/middle finger, while the second note-twlfth fret/fourth string - is played with the thumb.
4) SLIDE: Shown with a dash (-). Play the second fret/sixth string and then slide up to the fourth fret of the sixth string. This is a continuous movement; the string is struck once with your thumb.
5) PULL-OFF: "P" designates a "pull-off." Fret both the seventh and ninth frets on the second string. Play the ninth fret with your index/middle finger and then quickly remove it in the same stroke, leaving the seventh fret/second string. Pull-offs are generally in a downward direction.
6) In certain cases use other specific symbols are added to the tab, for instance:
   A. For ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS an "X" is placed after the fretted position.
   B. For SNAPPING a note an indication may be given with a symbol or the written word.

Many times these special techniques are combined, for instance putting a pull-off and a hammer-on together. Coordination of your fretting and picking hands will be complex initially, but the end results are exciting and fun to play.

PICKING HAND POSITION FOR FINGERPICKING STYLES: The Classical and Flamenco schools have strict right-hand rules, however for this style of acoustic fingerpicking there are NO RULES, only suggestions. Your right hand position should be dictated by comfort, however in observation of many well-known fingerpickers I found one hand position similarity — they all tend to rest their little finger and/or ring finger on the face of the guitar. This seems to help their balance for accenting notes and control of the guitar. Experiment with this position; it may feel uncomfortable at first. I ask my students to perfect this position and then compare the sound to when their finger(s) were not placed on the face of the guitar. They usually find the sound is greatly improved when some contact is kept with the guitar face.

MUSIC·NOTATION: We have somewhat adapted the music notation in that this also shows whether the note is picked with your thumb or index/middle fingers. The stems of the music notes correspond to the direction of the tab stems. I hope this will make the music notation clearer to fingerpicking guitarists.

I hope you will feel at home and comfortable with the tablature and musical notations. Remember, these are only road maps indicating where and how you should place your fingers. The playing and musical interpretation is up to you.



STEFAN GROSSMAN

Mr. JOHNSON'S BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson



1. I want all you people to listen to my song.
   I want all you people to listen to my song.
   Remember me after the days I'm gone.

Mr. JOHNSON'S BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson



LOVE STORY BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson



1. I've read love stories, read all kinds of news.
   I've read love stories, all kinds of news.
   When I had found I had nothing like the love story blues.

2. I once was a lover in my young days.
   I once was a lover in my young days.
   But the woman I loved was so mean, she drove my love away.

3. I've tried to love. but I can't get it in my mind.
   I've tried to love, but I can't get it in my mind.
   It's hard to find someone that is loving and kind.

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LOVE STORY BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson



A7 G

D (to verse one)

VERSE TWO

D Gm

(D) D

G Gm

D

A G Gm

D

(GUITAR BREAK)


1 10 10 10 10 10 10 -8 8 8 8 8 8 -5 5 5 5 5 -2 2
2 12 12 12 12 12 12 -10 10 10 10 10 10 -7 7 7 7 7 -3 3
1 2 2 2 2 3 3 4 4 5 5 7 7 5 5 -2
2 3 3 3 3 5 5 6 6 7 7 8 8 7 7 -3
2-4


G
3 5 3 5 W 5 3 2-4
0 0 0
5 5 5 5 5 0
D
5 3 5 2 4 2 4
0 0 0 0
5 3 5 3 6-7 5 7 5
3 2 4 3
0 0 0 0 0


A7
G
D

TO DO THIS, YOU GOT TO KNOW HOW

by Lonnie Johnson

VERSE ONE



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VERSE TWO

D G7 D G7 D

G D

A D

VERSE THREE

Ddim7


C dim 7
B dim 7
B♭ dim 7
D
A♯ dim 7
B dim 7
C dim 7
B dim 7
B♭ dim 7
D
G
D
A7
D

VERSE FOUR

D Ddim7 D

Ddim7 D G

D

A D

VERSE FIVE

D

G

D

A

D

VERSE SIX


D dim7
C dim7
D dim7
C dim7
B dim7
A# dim7
D
A# dim7
B dim7
C dim7
G
D
A7

VERSE SEVEN

D

G

D

A

D

VERSE EIGHT

D

G

D

A

D

VERSE NINE

D

G

D

A7

D

VERSE TEN

P

G

D

A

D

VERSE ELEVEN



D

VERSE TWELVE

G7

D

A7

D

VERSE THIRTEEN

G

D

A

D

VERSE FOURTEEN

Bdim7 Cdim7

Bdim7 A#dim7 D G

D





LEFT TO RIGHT: WARREN "BABY" DODDS, NATTY DOMINIQUE,
JOHNNY DODDS, RUDOLPH "JUDIE" REYNAUD, LONNIE JOHNSON,
LIL ARMSTRONG, CHICAGO, 1939

BLUES IN G

by Lonnie Johnson



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D

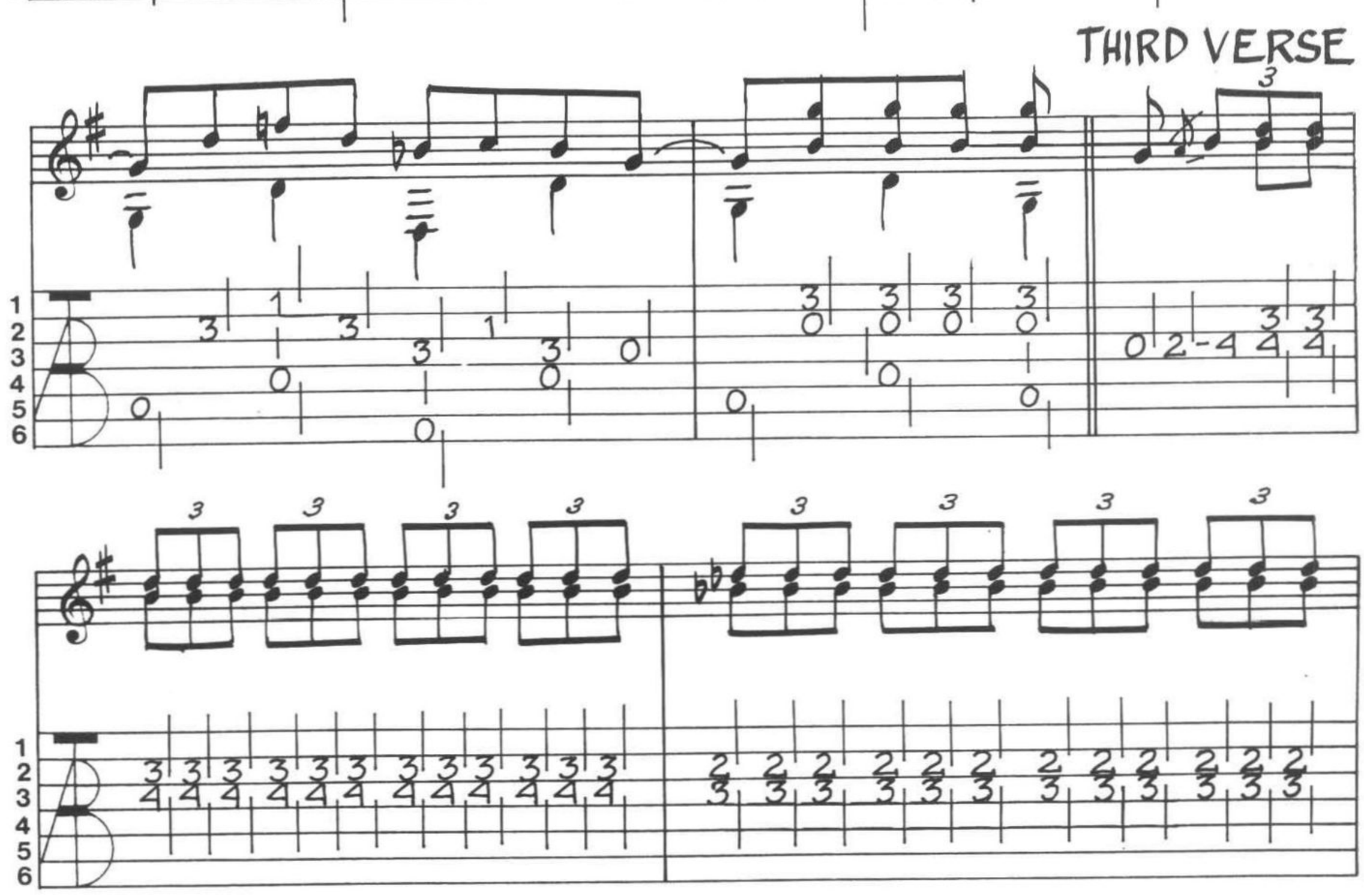
G

SECOND VERSE

C



THIRD VERSE




D
FOURTH VERSE


(C)
G
D
G
FIFTH VERSE


C
E♭7
G
D
3
G

SIXTH VERSE

C


D
G
1
2
3
4
5
6
(ho)
12
15



AWAY DOWN IN THE ALLEY BLUES

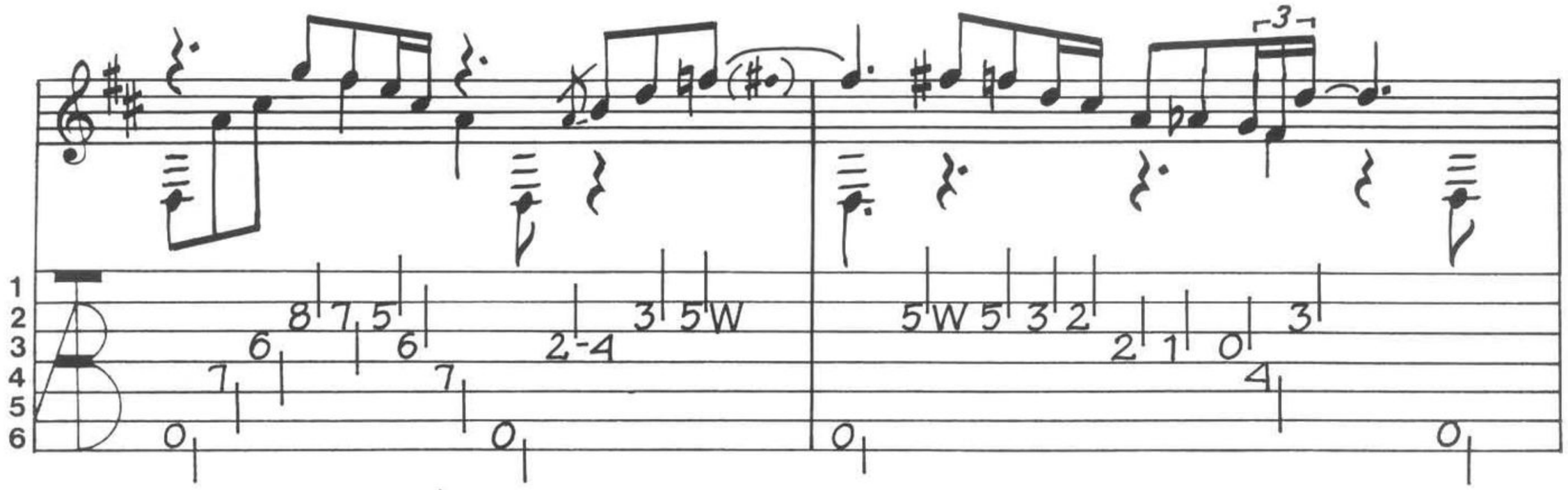
by Lonnie Johnson



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SECOND VERSE




3
5
THIRD VERSE

FOURTH VERSE

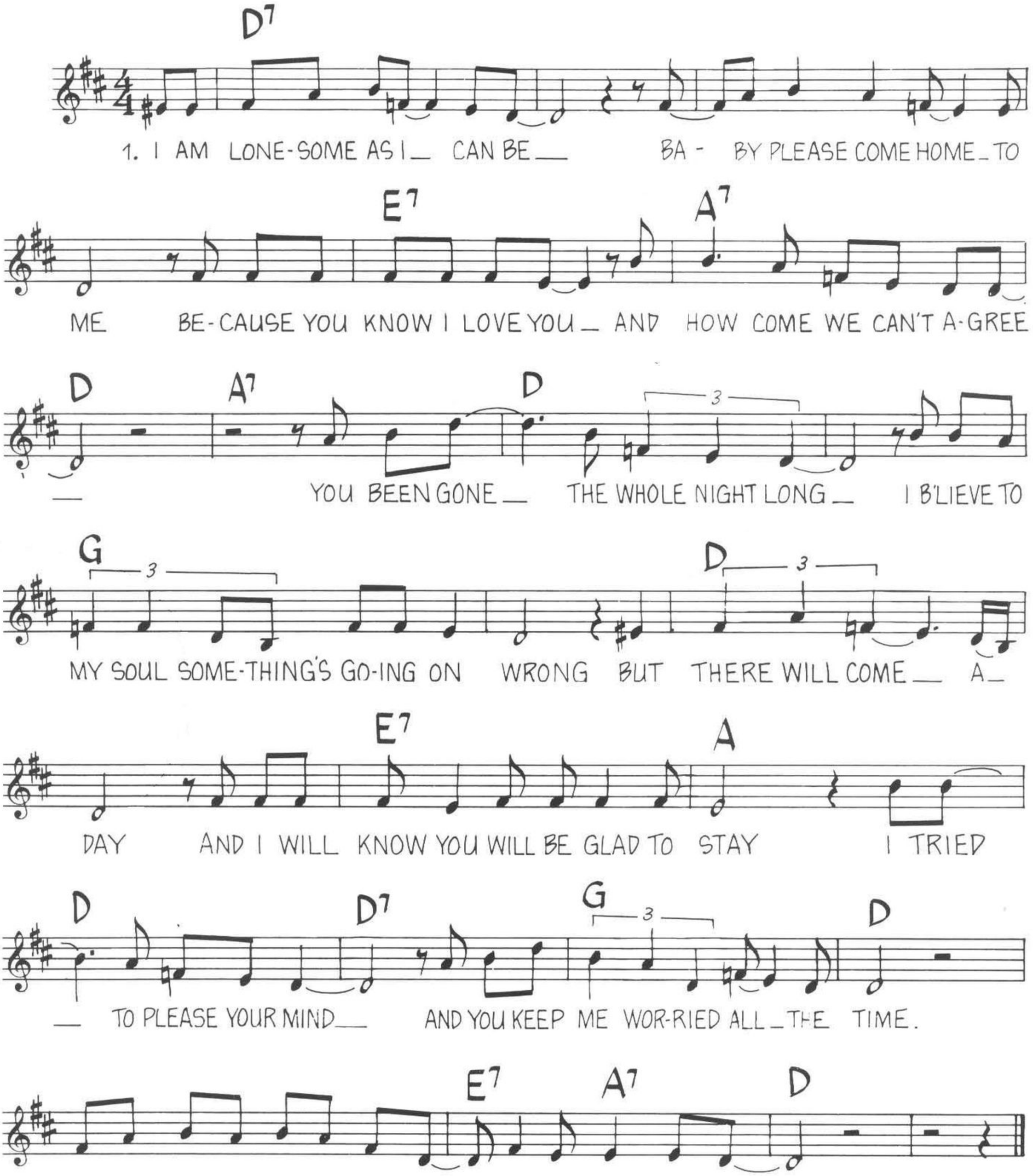
FIFTH VERSE

SIXTH VERSE



SWEET WOMAN YOU CAN'T GO WRONG

by Lonnie Johnson



1. I'm lonesome as I can be.
   Baby, please come home to me.
   Because you know I love you and how come we can't agree?

2. You've been gone the whole night long.
   I believe to my soul something's going on wrong.
   But there will come a day and I will know you will be glad to say.

3. I've tried to please your mind.
   And you keep me worried all the time.
   You will either run me crazy or I'll loose my mind.

4. You know you don't treat me right.
   When you stay out both day and night.
   And I must stop you now, or you got to consider somehow.

5. You know I love you now.
   And I loved you all along.
   Although you my sweet woman and I mean you can't go wrong.

SWEET WOMAN YOU CAN'T GO WRONG

by Lonnie Johnson

FIRST GUITAR BREAK



A7

To verse 2.

end of verse 2.

SECOND GTR BREAK

D

D7


Bdim
Adim
G#dim
D

I'M SO TIRED OF LIVING ALL ALONE

by Lonnie Johnson



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1. So tired of sighing.
   So tired of crying.
   I'm so tired of living all alone.

2. All my days seem weary.
   The skies seem dreary,
   And I'm all alone and where must I roam.

   Refrain: Although we have drifted so far apart.
   My arms may be empty, have not give up in my heart.
   I'm so tired of yearning,
   For the long returning.
   I'm so tired of living all alone.

3. So tired of sighing.
   So tired of crying
   I'm so tired of living all alone.

4. My days seem weary.
   All the skies seem dreary,
   I'm all alone and where must I roam.

   Refrain: Although we are drifting so far apart.
   My arms may be empty, but never down in my heart.
   I'm so tired of sighing
   I'm so tired of crying.
   I'm so tired of living all alone.

I'M SO TIRED OF LIVING ALL ALONE

by Lonnie Johnson

FIRST GUITAR BREAK



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(D)
D
(To chorus)
SECOND GUITAR BREAK
D


A7
D
G
D

BITIN' FLEA BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson









1. I've got a cat and a dog, they sleep down in the hall.
   I've got a cat and a dog, they sleep down in the hall.
   It scratches all full of fleas and they come in my room to have a ball.

2. Starts hopping and jumping, crawling and biting on me.
   They're hopping and jumping, crawling and biting on me.
   It's known to be no bed bug it's nothing but a doggone flea.

3. You have to get a spyglass, to see where that little devil lands.
   You have to get a spyglass, to see where that little devil lands.
   He's just as light as a match but he bites like a doggone man.

4. He will start to crawling from your feet, he'll crawl up around your waist.
   He start from your feet and he'll crawl up around your waist.
   And he'll bite you so doggone hard, to keep from falling you will need a brace.

5. Then you will look for him but don't never think he don't see you.
   You may look for him and can't find him but don't never think he don't see you.
   'Cause he will crawl behind you and nail your backbone half in two.

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BITIN' FLEA BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson

INTRO

Tuning:
DADGBE

CAPO I

Adim Abdim

VERSE ONE

A7 D G

D G

D

A7 G

D Adim Abdim A7

GUITAR BREAK

D


G
Adim
D
(B7)
(E)
(A7)
D
A7
D

LIFE SAVER BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson



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1. It's raining and storming on the sea, we're miles and miles from shore.
   It's raining and storming on the sea, we're miles and miles from shore.
   The way the waves is rocking this ship, we won't see home no more.

2. The wind is so strong, turning this old ship round and round.
   The waves is so strong, turning this old ship round and round.
   Something tells me, won't be long before we're sinking down.

3. The Captain say, "Get your lifesaver, fasten them around your waist."
   Captain say, "Get your lifesaver, and fasten them around your waist."
   Because we're sinking down and the lifeboat is your safest place.

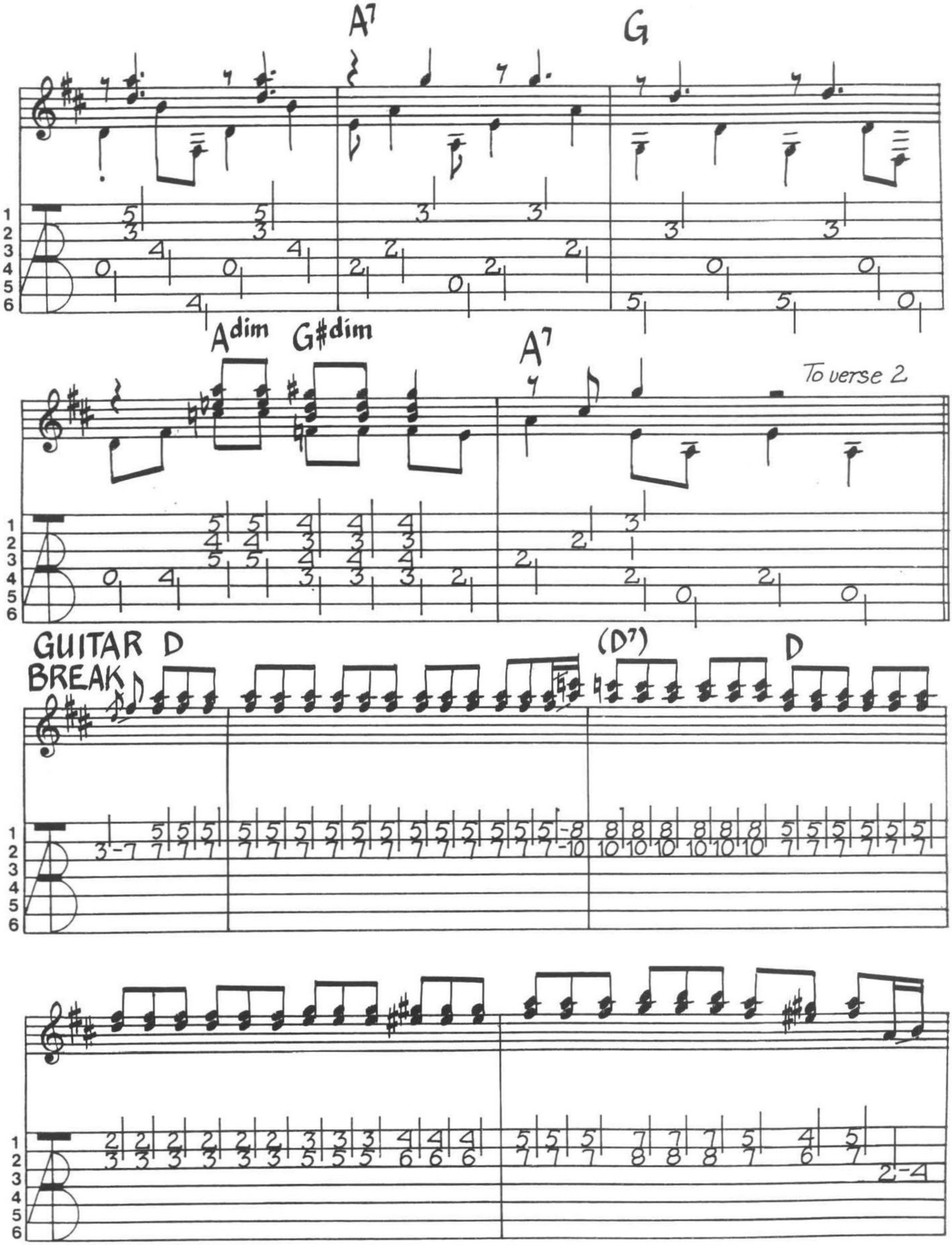
4. And we floated all night long in the storm, lost miles and miles from shore.
   And the water was freezing and the rain begin to pour.
   I say, girls and boys let's pray, 'cause we won't see home no more.

5. Uncle Sam's ship was coming, painted in red, white and blue.
   Uncle Sam's ship was coming, painted in red, white and blue.
   We say we live in New York City, red and white, blue brothers, all the way through.

LIFE SAVER BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson




A7
G
Adim
G#dim
A7
To verse 2
GUITAR
BREAK
D
(D7)
D
2-4


G
D
A
G7
D
Adim
G#dim
A7

BLUE GHOST BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson



1. Mmmm,I feel myself sinking down.
   Mmmm,I feel myself sinking down.
   My body is freezing, I feel something cold creeping around.

2. My windows is rattling, my door knob turning 'round and 'round.
   My windows is rattling, my door knob turning 'round and 'round.
   This haunted house blues is killing me, I feel myself sinking down.

3. I've been fastening this haunted house, six long months today.
   I've been fastening this haunted house, six long months today.
   The blue ghost is got the house surrounded, Lord and I can't get away.

4. They've got shotguns and pistols, standing all around my door.
   They've got shotguns and pistols, standing all around my door.
   They haunt me all night long, so I can't sleep no more.

5. The blue ghost haunts me all night, the nightmare ride me all night long.
   The blue ghost haunts me at night, the nightmare rides me all night long.
   They're worrying me so this haunted house, I wish I was dead and gone.

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BLUE GHOST BLUES

by Lonnie Johnson

GUITAR BREAK

Standard Tuning

E7

CAPO I

A E7 A

E A E

(B7) B7

UNCLE NED DON'T USE YOUR HEAD

by Lonnie Johnson



1. I'll be glad when you're dead, old man Ned.
   I'll be glad when you're dead, old man Ned.
   Yes, when you're dead, you'll stop hanging your britches on my bed.
   I'll be glad when you're dead, old man Ned.

2. I'll be glad when you're dead, you good for nothing hound.
   I'll be glad when you're dead, you good for nothing hound.
   Yes, when they put you eleven feet under the ground,
   You and my wife will stop messing around.
   I'll be glad when you're dead, you good for nothing hound.

3. Uncle Ned you better stop using your head, Uncle Ned.
   You better stop using your head, Uncle Ned.
   Now, the reason you're sick in bed, eating all that raw visional bread.
   I'll be glad when you're dead, Uncle Ned.

4. And this pigmeat going to be the death of you, Uncle Ned.
   Uncle Ned, this pigmeat going to be the death of you.
   Yes, the pigmeat killed your papee, and your grandpa too.
   Uncle Ned, pigmeat going to be the death of you.

5. Uncle Ned, you can't do the things you did years ago.
   Uncle Ned, you can't do the things you did years ago.
   You remember you're 94, and you can't shake that thing no more.
   You can't do the things you did years ago.

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UNCLE NED DON'T USE YOUR HEAD

by Lonnie Johnson



A7

To verse 1

FIRST GUITAR BREAK

D

(A7)


3
D
3 5 HP 3
E7
D
A7

CAT YOU BEEN' MESSIN' AROUN'

by Lonnie Johnson



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1. Now, look here woman, you done lost your mind.
   This is not my child, you bring me a better line.
   'Cause there's something wrong,
   Woman don't start that lies, there's something wrong.
   I never had such mix up in my family, since I was born.

2. First he's slue footed, and his head is long,
   And he's been half nuts ever since you brought it back home.
   So there's something wrong.
   I mean, there's something wrong.
   So take it back where you got it,
   Woman 'cause depression is on.

3. Now, his eyes is blue, and his hair is brown.
   You know darn well, you been messing around.
   So, take that lie off of me.
   I mean, take that lie off of me.
   Woman, you had a twelve month vacation, so don't put that lie on me.

4. Now, his head is nappy, and his feets is long,
   His eyes is crossed, and his sight is gone.
   You know, there's something wrong.
   Yes woman, there's something wrong.
   I never had nothing like that in my family, woman since I've been born.

5. I said it wasn't my child, and you argued me down.
   Now, my eyes ain't blue and my hair ain't brown.
   Woman, you've been messing around.
   Yes, woman, you've been messing around.
   So woman, get out of my face, before I take my fist and knock you down.

CAT YOU BEEN' MESSIN' AROUN'

by Lonnie Johnson

FIRST GUITAR BREAK

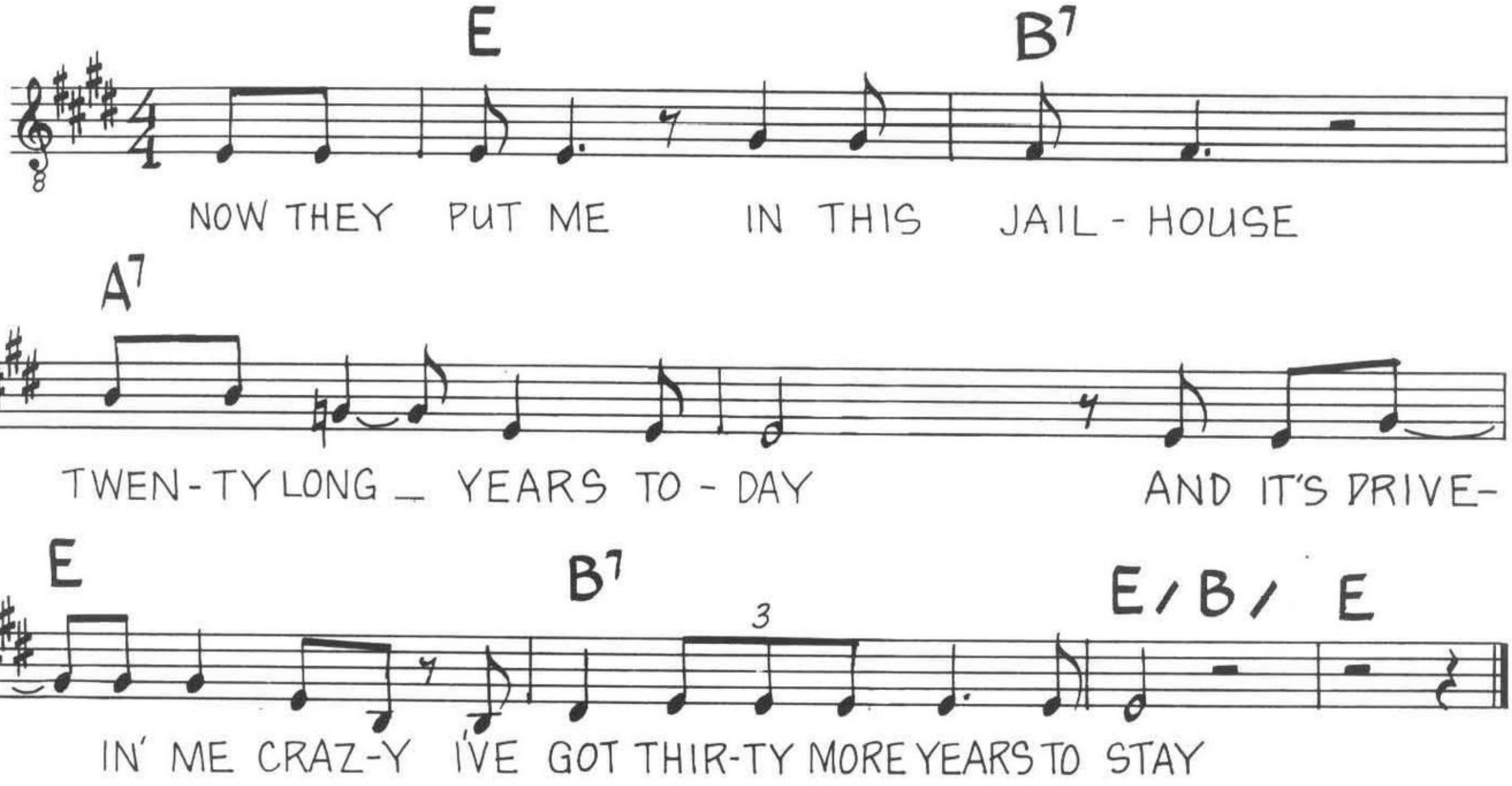
12 string,
Tuning:
DADGBE

CAPO I
(12 STRING)



THERE IS NO JUSTICE

by Lonnie Johnson



1. Now, they put me in this jailhouse, twenty long years today.
   And it's driving me crazy, I got thirty more years to stay.

2. The jailhouse boys's a lonesome place,
   Especially when that turnkey, slams the door in your face.

3. Now, they send me by public mail and I can't even sign my name.
   Some dirty rat pulled his job and I got to bear the blame.

4. I even killed my last dollar, to those with a vacant hand.
   Then bad luck passed all the crooks and I had to be their fallin' man.

5. Boy, I've been laying in this death cell, writting my time upside the wall.
   When I had plenty of money, I had friends, now I'm in trouble, ain't got a friend at all.

6. Boys, it's a pity, but sure can't understand.
   They say the judge is for justice and still they framed an innocent man.

7. I was put in this cell, twenty long years ago.
   Some poor men live their time mourning, some never lives to go.

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THERE IS NO JUSTICE

by Lonnie Johnson

INTRO

Standard Tuning

E B7

CAPO I

A

E B7

E A E

(To verse 1)

GO BACK TO YOUR NO GOOD MAN

by Lonnie Johnson



1. It's true, you bake good jellyroll, the best I've ever found.
   It's true, you bake good jellyroll, it's the best I've ever found.
   But there's one thing you got to stop momma, that's serving it all over town.

2. Don't you think because I love you, you can play me for a chump to my face.
   Now, you think because I love you, you can play me for a chump right to my face.
   But I'm not as dumb as you think, there's another woman to fill your place.

3. Give me them clothes I bought you, take my diamonds off your hands.
   Give me them clothes I bought you, take my diamonds off your hands.
   Now, you're just like I found you, go back to your handyman.

4. Now, I put shoes on your feet when your bare feet was pattin' the ground.
   I put shoes on your feet when your bare feet was pattin' the ground.
   While I was out slaving for you, you was chasing ever rat in town.

5. Now, woman I stuck with you, when you didn't have a friend at all.
   Woman I stuck by you, when you didn't have a friend at all.
   So, give me them shoes I bought you in that week and let your head go bald.

GO BACK TO YOUR NO GOOD MAN

by Lonnie Johnson




D
A7
G
D
(To verse 2)
GUITAR BREAK


G7
D
A7
G7
D
Adim
Abdim
A7
To verse 3

STOMPING 'EM ALONG SLOW

by Lonnie Johnson





SECOND VERSE

THIRD VERSE

vib.

FOURTH VERSE

A

FIFTH VERSE



SIXTH VERSE





SEVENTH VERSE

A7

vib.

EIGHTH VERSE


A
NINTH VERSE


A
TENTH VERSE
ELEVENTH VERSE

TWELFTH VERSE

THIRTEENTH VERSE

WOKE UP WITH THE BLUES IN MY FINGERS

by Lonnie Johnson

INTRODUCTION

DGDGBE

FIRST VERSE

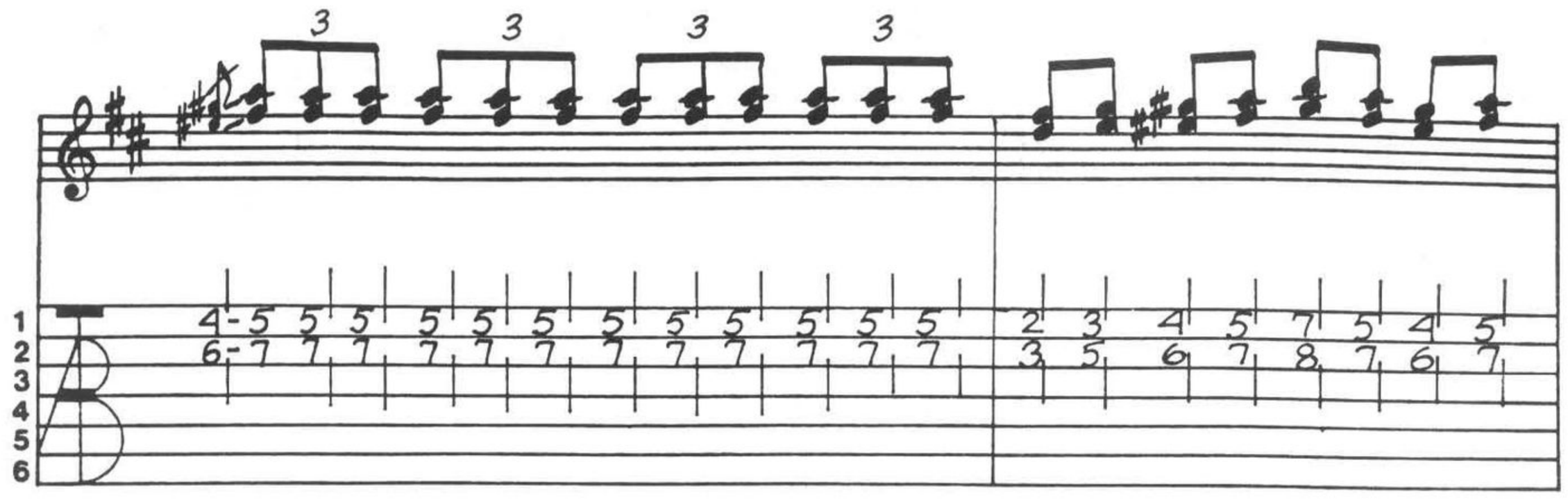
E7

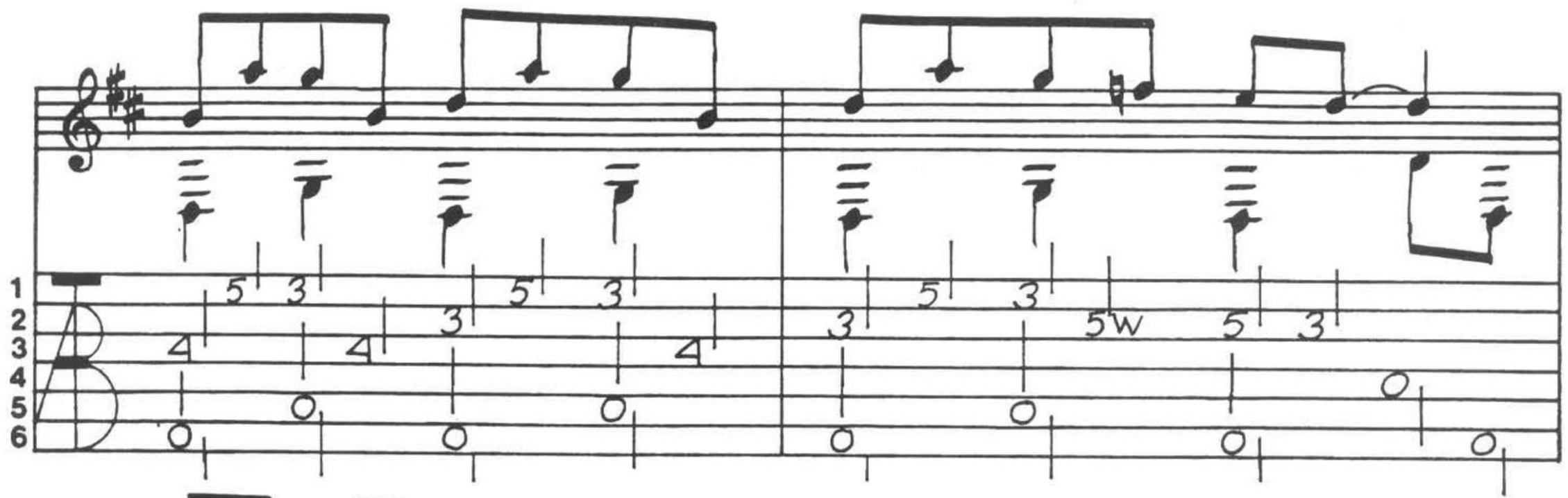
SECOND VERSE

E7

D

THIRD VERSE


3
3
3
3
1
2
3
4
5
6


1
2
3
4
5
6


1
2
3
4
5
6


3
3
3
5
1
2
3
4
5
6


E7

FIFTH VERSE



