

Hesitation Blues

(Hot Tuna version)

Original Words & Music:
Art "The Whispering Pianist" Dillham
Arr. Jorma Kaukonen

Ah, the version that introduced so many of us to this song. The September 2005 issue of Acoustic Guitar has Jorma's own lesson and arrangement of this. Also, I've pasted Tim Keenan's tab of this version below. Once again, get Jorma's own instructional DVDs from Homespun Tapes to really learn this piece "up right"!

Am E7 Am E7
A nickel is a nickel and a dime is a dime.
Am E7 C C7
I need a new gal -- she won't mind.

CHORUS:

F Fm C A7
Tell me, how long do I have to wait?
D7 G7 C G7 C E7
Can I get you now? Lord, must I hesitate?

Well, the eagle on the dollar says, "In God We Trust".
You say you want a man, you wanna see that dollar first.

CHORUS:

If the river was whiskey, and I was a duck,
You know I'd swim to the bottom, Lord, and never come up.

CHORUS:

Rocks in the ocean, baby, fish in the sea
Knows you mean the world to me.

CHORUS:

Well, got them hesitating stockings, got them hesitating shoes.
Lord, I got them Hesitation Blues

CHORUS:

Say, "Can I get you now? How long must I hesitate?"

HESITATION BLUES (trad., after J. Kaukonen, as recorded on the LP "Hot Tuna", ca. 1972). Tab by Tim Keenan

This is in response to a request last week. It is a great country blues tune, in "swung" 4/4, i.e. every quarter is subdivided in 3 (or you can think of it as 12/8, if you'd rather). When this sort of thing is written down, it is traditionally written as dotted time, but the eighth note is really only 1/3 of a quarter note, not 1/2. Clear as mud? Count it as ah 1 and ah 2 and ah 3 and ah 4, with all syllables the same length, and you'll do fine. Quarter notes are at a normal walking speed.

Notes:

1. Low notes, on the beat, are always played by the thumb
2. I use the chord positions marked above the tab to play all the other notes--just use the most obvious convenient finger within the chord (or nearby) to fret the tabbed notes

3.

/= 1-fret rising slur, // = 2, etc.

^ = 1/2 tone push

x = damped note

h = hammer on

! = Broken chord (rapid arpeggio, bass>treble)

==== = sustained note

4. The vamp in the first line shows h's before the treble notes in the Am and E7 chords: these are hammered on on the beat, but not plucked.

5. There are probably some errors-- if it doesn't sound right, you'll know. It is pretty obvious, once you get the feel. I never play it exactly the same, two verses running, so this is just a template.

I'm not at all sure of the first line of that last verse, but it's my best guess. I'd be happy to hear alternate "translations".

	Am	E7		Am	E7
e----	-----0-----	-----0-----		-----0-----	-----0-----
B----	h1x----1----0--3-----	h1x----1----0--3-----		h1x----1----0--3-----	h1x----1----0--3-----
G---O-	h2x----2---Oh1-----O-	h2x----2---Oh1-----O-		h2x----2---Oh1-----O-	h2x----2---Oh1-----O-
D-----	h2x----2---h2-----2-----	h2x----2---h2-----2-----		h2x----2---h2-----2-----	h2x----2---h2-----2-----
A-----	-Ox-----h2-----	-Ox-----h2-----		-Ox-----h2-----	-Ox-----h2-----
E-----	-----0-----	-----0-----		-----0-----	-----0-----
4 + a	1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a			1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a	
a	nickel is a nickel and a			dime is a dime	

	Am	E		C	C7
	-----0-1--2-			!3--0-----	
h1x----	1----0-----			!1--1-----3-1-----	
h2x----	2---Oh1-----O-			!0-----4-3-----O-	
h2x----	2---h2-----2-----			-----2-----2-----	
-Ox-----	h2-----			!3-----3-----	
	-----O-----				
1 + a	2 + a 3 + a 4 + a			1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a	
	I need a new gal			she won't mind, tell me --	

Chorus:

	F	F		F	F
e	-----	-----		-----	-----
B	1x----3x----3^====3--1====x--3x----3^====3--1--			1x----3x----3^====3--1--	
G	2x----2x-----2--2====x--2x-----2--2--			2x----2x-----2--2--	
D	3x-----3-----			3x-----3-----	
A	-----			-----	
E	-----			-----	
1 + a	2 + a 3 + a 4 + a			1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a	
	How long			do I have to wait?	

	C7		C7
e	-----		-----
B	-----1x-----		-----1x-----
G	-----3x---2-/-3====x--		-----3x---2-/-3====
D	-----2x---1-/-2====x--		-----2x---1-/-2====
A	-----3x---2-/-3====x3x		-----2-/-3====
E	-----		-----0-1--2--
	1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a		1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a

OR: $\frac{0-1}{-3} \Big| \frac{-2}{a 4 + a}$

	G7		G7
e	-----1-----1-----		-----
B	-----3-----		-----5-4-----3-----
G	-----0-----0-----		-----0-----0-----0-----
D	-----0-----0-----		-----//5-----4-----3-----
A	-----		-----
E	-----3x-----3-----		-----3-----
	1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a		1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a

Can I get you now, Lord, must I hesi-

	C	C7	F	Fm6		C	G7
e	-----					-----1=====	
B	-----1-----1-----1-----					-----1-----0=====	
G	-----3-----2-----1-----					-----0-0-----0=====	
D	-----2-----3-----0-----					-----0-----	
A	-----3-----					-----3-----	
E	-----					-----3-----3-----	
	1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a					1 + a 2 + a 3 + a 4 + a	

-tate?