

The Work Song

Words & Music:
Oscar Brown, Jr. & Nat "Cannonball" Adderley

Fans of the guitar instrumental "Anji" will recognize this as Part D of the tune (knowing this tune helps you play that one, kids!). '60s guitarists would have recognized it immediately, since "The Work Song" was a hit for each of the songwriters, as well as for Nina Simone & Art Blakey, amongst others. Anyone have the chords to it?

Breaking rocks out here on the chain gang.
Breaking rocks and serving my time.
Breaking rocks out here on the chain gang,
Because they done convicted me of crime.
Hold it steady right there while I hit it.
Well, I reckon that ought to get it.
Been working and working but I still got so terribly far to go.

I committed crime, Lord, I needed.
Crime of being hungry and poor.
I left the grocery store man bleeding,
When they caught me robbing his store.
Hold it steady right there while I hit it.
Well, I reckon that ought to get it.
Been working and working but I still got so terribly far to go.

I heard the judge say, "Five years."
"On the chain-gang you gonna go."
I heard the judge say, "Five years labor."
I heard my old man scream "Lordy, no!"
Hold it steady right there while I hit it.
Well, I reckon that ought to get it.
Been working and working but I still got so terribly far to go.

Gonna see my sweet honey bee.
Gonna break this chain off to run.
Gonna lay down somewhere shady.
Lord, I sure am hot in the sun.
Hold it steady right there while I hit it.
Well, I reckon that ought to get it.
Been working and working,
Been working and slaving,
Been working and working, but I still got so terribly far to go.