

(Guitar: *Capo 1*)

D G D A A⁷ D G D A A⁷ D

1. Let us con-tem-plate the grape vine, From its life now let us learn, How its growth is fraught with suff'ring, Midst en-vi - ronment so stern;

D⁷ G D E⁷ A A⁷ D G D A A⁷ D

How unlike the untamed flow-ers Growing in the wilder - ness In a maze of wild confu-sion, Making pat - terns num-berless.

2. But the blossoms of the grape vine
Without glory are and small;
Though they do have some expression,
They are hardly seen withal.
But a day since they have flowered
Into fruit the blooms have grown;
Never may they wave corollas
With luxuriant beauty shown.

3. To a post the vine is fastened;
Thus it cannot freely grow;
When its branches are extended,
To the trellis tied they go.
To the stony soil committed,
Drawing thence its food supply;
It can never choose its own way,
Or from difficulty fly.

4. Oh, how beautiful its verdure,
Which in spring spreads o'er the field.
From life's energy and fulness
Growth abundant doth it yield.
Till it's full of tender branches
Twining freely everywhere,
Stretching 'gainst the sky's deep azure
Tasting sweetly of the air.

5. But the master of the vineyard
Not in lenience doth abide,
But with knife and pruning scissors
Then would strip it of its pride.
Caring not the vine is tender,
But with deep, precision stroke
All the pretty, excess branches
From the vine are neatly broke.

6. In this time of loss and ruin,
Dare the vine self-pity show?
Nay, it gives itself more fully
To the one who wounds it so,
To the hand that strips its branches,
Till of beauty destitute,
That its life may not be wasted,
But preserved for bearing fruit.

7. Into hard wood slowly hardens
Every stump of bleeding shoot,
Each remaining branch becoming
Clusters of abundant fruit.
Then, beneath the scorching sunshine,
Leaves are dried and from it drop;
Thus the fruit more richly ripens
Till the harvest of the crop.

8. Bowed beneath its fruitful burden,
Loaded branches are brought low—
Labor of its growth thru suff'ring
Many a purposed, cutting blow.
Now its fruit is fully ripened,
Comforted the vine would be;
But the harvest soon is coming,
And its days of comfort flee.

9. Hands will pick and feet will trample
All the riches of the vine,
Till from out the reddened wine-press
Flows a river full of wine.
All the day its flow continues,
Bloody-red, without alloy,
Gushing freely, richly, sweetly,
Filling all the earth with joy.

10. In appearance now the grape vine
Barren is and pitiful;
Having given all, it enters
Into night inscrutable.
No one offers to repay it
For the cheering wine that's drunk,
But 'tis stripped and cut e'en further
To a bare and branchless trunk.

11. Yet its wine throughout the winter
Warmth and sweetness ever bears
Unto those in coldness shiv'ring,
Pressed with sorrow, pain, and cares.
Yet without, alone, the grape vine
Midst the ice and snow doth stand,
Steadfastly its lot enduring,
Though 'tis hard to understand.

12. Winter o'er, the vine prepareth
Fruit again itself to bear;
Budding forth and growing branches,
Beauteous green again to wear;
Never murmuring or complaining
For the winter's sore abuse,
Or for all its loss desiring
Its fresh off'ring to reduce.

13. Breathing air, untainted, heavenly,
As it lifts its arms on high,
Earth's impure, defiled affections
Ne'er the vine may occupy.
Facing sacrifice, yet smiling,
And while love doth prune once more,
Strokes it bears as if it never
Suffered loss and pain before.

14. From the branches of the grape vine
Sap and blood and wine doth flow.
Does the vine, for all it suffered,
Lost, and yielded, poorer grow?
Drunkards of the earth and wanderers,
From it drink and merry make.
From their pleasure and enjoyment
Do they richer thereby wake?

15. Not by gain our life is measured,
But by what we've lost 'tis scored;
'Tis not how much wine is drunken,
But how much has been outpoured.
For the strength of love e'er standeth
In the sacrifice we bear;
He who has the greatest suffering
Ever has the most to share.

16. He who treats himself severely
Is the best for God to gain;
He who hurts himself most dearly
Most can comfort those in pain.
He who suffering never beareth
Is but empty "sounding brass";
He who self-life never spareth
Has the joys which all surpass.