**Bristlecone Pine** (Hugh Prestwood)

During a periodic review of my tablature projects I noticed a few things in this song that were in error. My apologies. This is my second (and hopefully last) iteration of Bristlecone Pine.

I have fixed up some wrong notes, and also added my fingering to some tablature passages for assistance.

So, moving on. In my opinion this prophetic song is a ‘signature’ song for Michael Johnson. A fitting end to a life well and truly lived.

On the one hand it was a difficult song to tab in that I know of at least six versions, in which each case Michael plays different fingerings. So I picked and chose what will give a good overall flow. On the other hand it’s an easy song to play since these fingerings are all slight variations of the same or slightly different chords. So once you have the basic pattern you can substitute other fingerings and it can sound equally great in your performance of the tune.

I also had an issue with the appropriate time signature; 3/4 waltz, or 6/8. Not having access to the sheet music, (internet searches weren’t much help either) I settled on a 6/8 time signature. The tempo is set at 92 bpm where these are counted on the first and fourth beat – 1-2-3-4-5-6. And I have written the tab for the introduction and ending as accurately as I could as to how Michael plays them...generally...sometimes, as well as an ‘acceptable’ rendering of the first verse and chorus.

This song benefits from the constant steady rhythm and it helps if you can remain in tempo, whatever tempo you choose. The alternating base should be second nature and if you’re not used to it, with practice it will be.

I don’t go in for labels; beginner, novice, advanced sort of thing. From what I’ve seen of Michael's songs his fingering is not complicated, just a bit ‘tricky’ at times so his tab should be accessible with a little dedication and practice.

The song progression is Intro, verses 1 and 2, chorus, verses 3 and 4, chorus, end.

And of course my thanks to Paul Ashley who gave me the idea to do this in the first place.

Enjoy,

Dale Dickson

*March 2019
Amended June 2020*

[https://youtu.be/Ec1tAM9BOPM](https://youtu.be/Ec1tAM9BOPM)
[https://youtu.be/aGT3EHa2BDk](https://youtu.be/aGT3EHa2BDk)
BRISTLECOMB PINE (Hugh Prestwood)

INSTRUMENTAL ⇒

Intro

1. Way up in the mountains on the high timberline

There's a twisted old tree called the bristlecone pine

The wind there is bitter, it cuts like a knife

And it keeps that tree holding on for dear life
BRISTLECOMB PINE - 2

2. But hold on it does, standing its ground
3. For as I would slowly return to the earth
4. And who knows but that as the centuries turn

Standing as empires rise and fall down
What little this body of mine might be worth
A small spark of me might continue to burn

When Jesus was gathering lambs to his fold
Would soon start to nourish the roots of that tree
As long as the sun does continue to shine

The tree was already a thousand years old
And it would partake of the essence of me
Down on the limbs of the bristlecone pine

CHORUS - Now the way I have lived there ain't no way to tell

When I die if I'm going to heaven or hell

1. So I'd just as soon serve out eternity's time
2. So when I'm laid to rest it would suit me just fine

To sleep at the feet of the bristlecone pine
Continue with verses 3 and 4, then Chorus 2, and end below.
BRISTLECOMB PINE - 3

To sleep at the feet of the bristle cone

Tablature Below
Bristlecone Pine  (DADGBE) capo 2 tempo 92 arr. Michael Johnson

Intro

Verses

1. Way up in the mountains on the high line there's a
2. But hold it does stand its ground
3. For as I would slowly return to the earth what
4. And who knows but that as the center lies turn a

Verse

twist ed old tree called the bristle cone pine the wind there is
standing as empty as this body of mine might be worth
small spark of me might be worth as long as the

Verse

cuts like a knife and it

Verse

gatherer lambs to his

Verse

sun does its

Verse

tree
Bristlecone Pine  
(DADGBE)  \[ \text{capo 2} \]
\[ \text{tempo 92} \]

arr. Michael Johnson  
\[ \text{tuner} \]

Verse 1:
1 & 3
\[ E2 \]
\[ B2 \]
\[ G0 \]
\[ D2 \]
\[ A0 \]
\[ E0 \]
2 & 4
\[ E0 \]
\[ B0 \]
\[ G0 \]
\[ D0 \]
\[ A0 \]
\[ E0 \]

Keep that tree hold...ing
the tree was al...re...ady
and it would par...take of
the essence of the britis...cone

Chorus:
\[ E2 \]
\[ B2 \]
\[ G0 \]
\[ D2 \]
\[ A0 \]
\[ E0 \]

...way I have lived, there ain't no way to tell when I die if I'm

Go back to Verses

Now the...

Go to Chorus below

...in' to heav'n or hell (1) so I'd just as soon serve out (2) so when I'm laid to rest it would

et...er...mi...ty's time...me suit me just fine to

Sleep at the feet of the britis...cone pine.

after 1st Chorus, go back to Verse 3
after 2nd Chorus, continue ahead

to sleep...ep at the
Bristlecone Pine

**DADGBE**

Capo 2
Tempo 92
Arr. Michael Johnson

```
EBGDAD
0 2 4 0 2 4 0 0
2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
```

Feet of the bristlecone...pine.

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End
0 0 4 2 4 2 0 0
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
```

Go to End below

```
3 0 2 0 2 0 1 0
5 0 3 0 3 0 2 0
4 0 2 0 2 2 2 0
```

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

```
1 1 2 0 2 0 0 0
1 1 2 0 2 0 0 0
1 1 2 0 2 0 0 0
0 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
```

3 3 5 3 5 3 5 5

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3 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
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Footnotes: