

## **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/aGT3EHa2BDk>

# BRISTLECOMB PINE (Hugh Prestwood)

MICHAEL JOHNSON

INSTRUMENTAL ⇒

Tuning - Drop D  
 Capo - 2  
 Tempo - 92/3:50

Intro

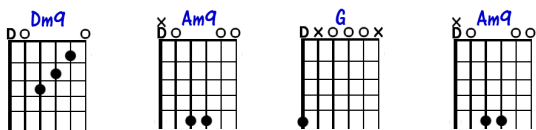
1. Way up in the mountains on the high timberline

There's a twisted old tree called the bristlecone pine

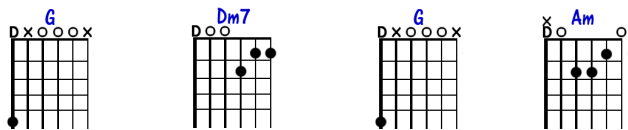
The wind there is bitter, it cuts like a knife

And it keeps that tree holding on for dear life

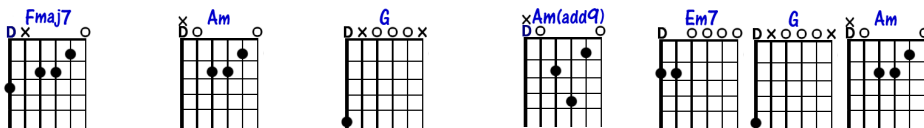
# BRISTLECOMB PINE - 2



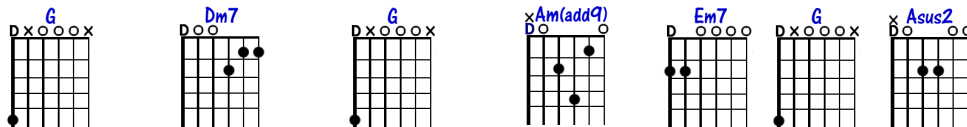
2. But hold on it does, standing its ground
3. For as I would slowly return to the earth
4. And who knows but that as the centuries turn



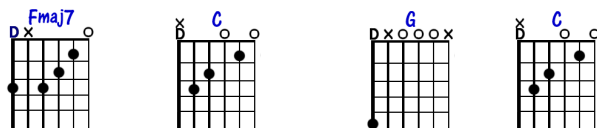
Standing as empires rise and fall down  
 What little this body of mine might be worth  
 A small spark of me might continue to burn



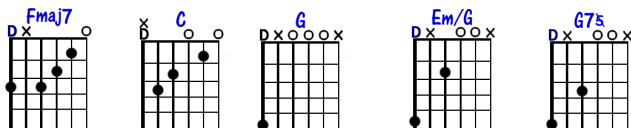
When Jesus was gathering lambs to his fold  
 Would soon start to nourish the roots of that tree  
 As long as the sun does continue to shine



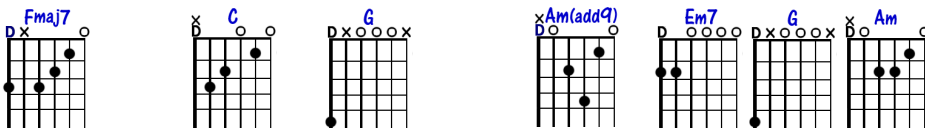
The tree was already a thousand years old  
 And it would partake of the essence of me  
 Down on the limbs of the bristlecone pine



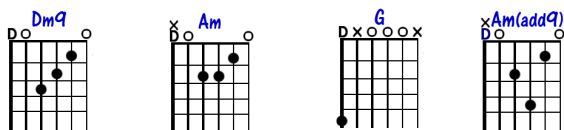
**CHORUS** - Now the way I have lived there ain't no way to tell



When I die if I'm going to heav.....en or hell



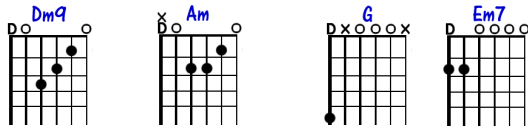
1. So I'd just as soon serve out eternity's time
2. So when I'm laid to rest it would suit me just fine



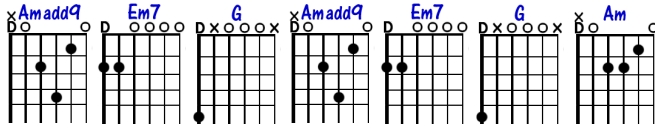
To sleep at the feet of the bristlecone pine

**Continue with verses 3 and 4, then Chorus 2, and end below.**

# BRISTLECOMB PINE - 3



To sleep at the feet of the bristle.....cone



.....pine

End

The tablature consists of two systems of six lines each. The first system has the following fret numbers: 3, 0, 3, 5, 5, 0, 3, 0, 1, 4, 1, 0, 0, 0, 2, 4, 2, 2, 0, 0, 2, 5. The second system has: 1, 4, 2, 2, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 5, 5, 0, 3, 0, 5, 5, 0, 3. Above the first system, there are blue numbers: 2, 2, 3, 2, 1, 4, 3. Below the first system, there are blue numbers: 3, 4, 0, 1. Below the second system, there are blue numbers: 3, 4, 0, 1. Below the tablature is a fretboard diagram with frets 3, 3, 5, 5, 0 marked on the strings.

Tablature Below





# Bristlecone Pine

by Hugh Prestwood

(DADGBE)

6/8

capo 2  
tempo 92

arr. Michael Johnson  
tabature by Dale Dickson

1 of 3

## Intro

E B G D A D

## Verses

1. Way up in the moun...tains on the high tim...ber...line there's a  
 2. But hold on it does stand...ing its ground  
 3. For as I would slow...ly as the ret...urn to the earth what  
 4. And who knows but that as the cen...tur...ies turn a

twist...ed old tree called the bristle...cone pine the wind there is  
 stand...ing as emp...ires stand...ing as Jes...us was  
 lit...tle this bo...dy of mine rise and fall pine down the wind there is  
 small spark of me might con...tin...ue to burn worth would so...on start to  
 as long as the

bit...ter it cuts like a kni...fe and it tree fold  
 gath...er...ing lambs to his  
 nour...ish the roots of that  
 sun does con...tin...ue to shine

# Bristlecone Pine

by Hugh Prestwood

(DADGBE)

6/8

capo 2  
tempo 92

arr. Michael Johnson  
tabature by Dale Dickson  
2 of 3

→ 2, 3 & 4

keeps that tree hold.....ing  
the tree was al.....re.....ady  
and it would par.....take of  
down on the limbs of  
a thou.....sand dear  
the ess...ence of the bris.....tle.....cone years

1 & 3

life.  
me. old.  
pine.

Go back to Verses

2 & 4

Now the...

Go to Chorus below

Chorus

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

go.....in' to hea...ven or hell (1) so I'd just as soon serve out  
(2) so when I'm laid to re....st it would

et.....er.....ni....ty's ti.....me fine a...  
me just fine to

sleep at the feet of the bris...tle.....cone pine.

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

to sle.....ep at the

# AB Bristlecone Pine

by Hugh Prestwood

(DADGBE)

6/8

capo 2  
tempo 92

arr. Michael Johnson  
tabature by Dale Dickson  
3 of 3

E B G D A D

feet of the bris...tle...cone.....

Go to End below

pine.

End