

How long, O Lord, How long?

Douglas Yates — inspired by Psalm 6 • Key: Bb major • 144 BPM • 4/4

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INTRO (A LONE HARMONICA CRY IN THE DARK, ONE GUITAR TUNED LOW AND SLOW, A HAMMOND BREATHING UNDER -- A MAN AT THE END OF HIMSELF, NEAR-SPOKEN)

Eb Eb

How long...

Bb Bb

(how long)

Bb Bb

How long, O Lord...

VERSE 1 (WEARY, NEAR-SPOKEN, HARMONICA FALLING BETWEEN THE LINES)

Bb Bb F F F

Don't rebuke me in Your anger, Lord, don't chasten me in heat --

Eb Eb Eb Bb Bb
I'm weak as the last of the candle, got no ground beneath my feet.

Bb Bb Bb Bb F
My bones are vexed and rattling like a gate the wind blows wide,

F F Eb Eb Eb
and my soul is sore and sinking, Lord, with no place left to hide.

VERSE 2 (THE SHUFFLE EASES IN -- BRUSHES ON THE SNARE, A WALKING BASS, THE ORGAN LOW)

Bb Bb Bb Bb Bb
I've been counting the cracks in the ceiling since the last of the daylight died,

Bb F F F
and the question keeps on turning -- how long, how long? -- while I lie here on my
Eb
side.

Eb Eb Bb Bb Bb
There's a river running through my bed, I have watered my couch with my tears,
F F F Gm Gm
and my eye is consumed with the grieving, growing old while no morning draws near.

PRE-CHORUS (THE BAND LEANS UP, ACHING BUT REACHING -- NO ANSWER YET, ONLY THE CRY)

Gm Eb Eb Eb F
 So I lift it from the bottom, from the cold floor where I've knelt --
 F F Bb Bb Bb
 one cry the whole night carries, the only prayer I've got left:

CHORUS (SIMPLE, HOLDABLE -- A WHOLE ROOM CAN CARRY IT)

F Bb Bb Bb Bb
 How long, O Lord, how long? Have mercy, hear me pray.
 Bb F Bb Bb Bb
 I am weak -- so heal me -- O hide not Your face away.
 Bb Bb Eb Eb Bb
 Return, come down and find me, O save me for love's own sake;
 Bb F Gm F Bb
 in the watches of the weeping, hold a heart about to break.

VERSE 3 (THE PIT AT ITS DEEPEST -- BACK TO NEAR-SPOKEN, THE HAMMOND HUMMING, THE ENEMIES CIRCLING)

Bb Bb Bb Bb Bb
 For the dead can't sing Your praises, and the grave keeps no account,
 F F F F Eb
 so I'm crying from the living side of the ground where Your mercies count.
 Eb Eb Bb Bb Gm
 And the ones who'd see me under, Lord, they are circling, closing near --
 Bb Bb Bb F F
 but I've cried my last down to the bone, I've got no strength but this prayer.

CHORUS (THE SAME TUNE -- CONGREGATION STARTING TO JOIN; A FIRST GREY SHADE AT THE SILL)

Dm Eb Eb Eb F
 How long, O Lord, how long? Have mercy, hear me pray.
 F F Bb Bb F
 I am weak -- so heal me -- O hide not Your face away.
 F Bb Bb Bb Bb
 Return, come down and find me, O save me for love's own sake;
 Bb F Bb Bb Bb
 in the watches of the weeping, hold a heart about to break.

BRIDGE -- THE TURN (DAWN BREAKS; HALF-SPOKEN RISING TO A SHOUT, THE B3 OPENS ALL THE WAY, HARMONICA SOARING)

Bb **Bb** **Eb** **Bb** **Bb**
Get away from me now, all you workers of the wrong (get out) --

F **Gm** **F** **F** **Bb**
for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping all night long.

Bb **Eb** **Eb** **Bb** **Bb**
He has heard my supplication (it was never, no never in vain) --

Bb **F** **F** **F** **F**
and He will receive my prayer like the dry ground drinks the rain.

Eb **Eb** **Bb** **Bb** **Bb**
So lift up your head, O weary (lift it up now) -- the long night's turning gold,

Bb **Gm** **Gm** **Gm** **Eb**
He was near through all of the darkness -- He was closer than the cold.

FINAL CHORUS / OUTRO (THE DAWN IS REAL AND IT HAS COME -- SAME MELODY AS THE QUESTION, NOW THE ANSWER; FULL BAND, CONGREGATION, HARMONICA OVER THE TOP)

Eb **Eb** **F** **F** **F**
Not long, O Lord, not long -- You heard me when I prayed.

Bb **Bb** **Bb** **Gm** **Gm**
I was weak -- but You have healed me -- You never turned away.

Bb **Gm** **Bb** **F** **F**
You have returned and found me, You have saved me for love's own sake;

Bb **Bb** **Bb** **Bb** **Eb**
in the watches of the weeping, You held a heart about to break.

Bb **Bb** **Bb** **Gm** **F**
(He heard me, He heard me) -- mercy's breaking like the day.

F **Bb** **Bb** **Bb** **Bb**
(He heard me, He heard me) -- and the weeping's turned to praise.

Bb **F** **Bb** **Bb** **Bb**
Not long, O Lord -- not long now... the morning's on its way.