

Hymn of Breaking Strain

*He went over it in his head, plate by plate, span by span, brick by brick, pier by pier,
remembering, comparing, estimating, and recalculating, lest there should be any mistake;
and through the long hours and through the flights of formulae that danced
and wheeled before him, a cold fear would come to pinch his heart...*

Text: Rudyard Kipling, 1935, alt.

Music: Leslie Fish, 1983

BREAKING STRAIN 76.76.76.76.6

arr. Kenan Schaeffkofer, 2021

1 The care-ful text-books mea-sure (Let all who build be - ware!)
2 But in our dai - ly deal - ing with stone and steel, we find
3 The pru-dent text-books give it in ta - bles at the end:
4 We on - ly of Cre - a - tion (Oh, luck - ier bridge and rail)
5 Oh, veil - ed, se - cret Pow - er, whose paths we seek in vain,

1 the load, the shock, the pres-sure ma - ter - i - al can bear.
2 the gods have no such feel - ing of guilt for hu - man - kind.
3 the stress that shears a riv - et, or makes a tie - bar bend,
4 a - bide the twin dam - na - tion: To fail and know we fail.
5 be with us in our hour of ov - er-throw and pain;

1 So when a buck - led gir - der lets down a steel cas - cade,
2 To no set gauge they make us, for no laid course pre - pare,
3 what traf - fic wrecks mac - a - dam, what con - crete should en - dure.
4 Yet we— by which sole to - ken we know we once were gods—
5 that we— by which sure to - ken we know Thy ways are true—

1 the blame for loss, or mur-der is on the ma - ker laid.
2 and pres - ent - ly o'er - take us with loads we can - not bear:
3 But we, of Eve and A - dam have no such lit' - ra-ture,
4 take shame in be - ing bro-ken, how - ev - er great the odds.
5 be - cause of be - ing bro-ken, may rise and build a - new.

the ma - ker, not the made!
too mer - ci - less to bear.
to warn us or make sure!
the bur - den of the Odds.
stand up and build a - new.