

# 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 Schaeferkofer, 2021

Em D C

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,

Em D C

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;

Em C D Em

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—

Em C D Em

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.

D C D/A Em

Oh the ma-ker, not the made!

Oh too mer-ci-less to bear.

Oh to warn us or make sure!

Oh the bur-den of the Odds.

stand up and build a-new.