

Wake Nicodemus

Henry Clay Work

D7 G C G
 Nico de mus, the slave, was of African birth,
 D7 G C G
 And was bought for a bagful of gold;
 D7 G C G
 He was recko n'd as part of the salt of the earth,
 D7 G C G
 But he died year s ago, very old.
 D C Bm Em
 'Twas his last sad request, so we laid him away
 G D Bm C D
 In the trunk of an old hollow tree.
 D7 G C G
 "Wake me up!" was his charge, "at the first break of day—
 D7 G C G
 Wake me up for the great Jubilee!"

Chorus:

G Em D G D G
 The "Good Time Coming" is almos t here!
 D G C G C D
 It was long, long, long on the way!
 G D Em G
 Now run and tell El i jah to hurry up Pomp,
 Am7 D7 G D7
 And meet us at the gum-tree down in the swamp,
 G C G
 To wake Nicod emus t oday.

He was known as a prophet—at least was as wise—
 For he told of the battles to come;
 And he trembled with dread when he rolled up his eyes,
 And we heeded the shake of the thumb.
 Though he clothed us with fear, yet the garments he wore
 Were in patches at elbow and knee;
 And he still wears the suit, that he used to of yore,
 And he sleeps in the old hollow tree!

Nicodemus was never the sport of the lash,
 Though the bullet has oft cross'd his path;
 There were none of his masters so brave or so rash,
 As to face such a man in his wrath.
 Yet his great heart with kindness was filled to the brim—
 He obeyed who was born to command;
 But he long'd for the morning which then was so dim—
 For the morning which is now at hand.

'Twas a long weary night—we were almost in fear
 That the future was more than he knew;
 'Twas a long weary night—but the morning is near,
 And the words of our prophet are true.
 There are signs in the sky that the darkness is gone—
 There are tokens in endless array;
 While the storm which had seemingly banished the dawn,
 Only hastens the advent of day.

