

Housewife's Lament

From a Civil War-era diary

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
One day I was walking, I heard a complaining, and saw an old woman the picture of gloom
G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
She gazed at the mud on her doorstep, 'twas raining, and this was her song as she wielded her broom

G G B7 B7 Em Em D7 D7
Oh, life is a toil and love is a trouble, beauty will fade and riches will flee
G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
Pleasures they dwindle and prices they double, and nothing is as I would wish it to be.

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
There's too much of worriment goes to a bonnet, there's too much of ironing goes to a shirt
There's nothing that pays for the time you waste on it, there's nothing that last us but trouble and dirt.

<Chorus>

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
In March it is mud, it is slush in December, the midsummer breezes are loaded with dust
In fall the leaves litter, in muddy September, the wallpaper rots and the candlesticks rust

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
There are worms on the cherries and slugs on the roses, and ants in the sugar and mice in the pies
The rubbish of spiders no mortal supposes, and ravaging roaches and damaging flies

<Chorus>

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
It's sweeping at six and it's dusting at seven, it's victuals at eight and it's dishes at nine
It's potting and panning from ten to eleven, we scarce break our fast till we plan how to dine

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
With grease and with grime from corner to center, forever at war and forever alert
No rest for a day lest the enemy enter, I spend my whole life in a struggle with dirt

<Chorus>

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
Last night in my dreams I was stationed forever, on a far little rock in the midst of the sea
My one chance of life was a ceaseless endeavor, to sweep off the waves as they swept over me

G G C C D7 D7 D7 G
Alas! 'Twas no dream; ahead I behold it, I see I am helpless my fate to avert
She lay down her broom, her apron she folded, she lay down and died and was buried in dirt.

