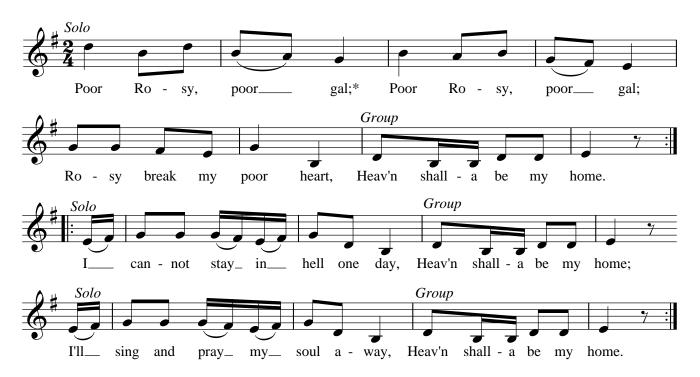
Poor Rosy

Informant/Performer: Unknown Port Royal Islands, SC, before 1865 Source: William Francis Allen, C.P. Ware, and Lucy McKim Garrison Slave Songs of the United States (1867)



* Poor Caesar, poor boy.

Background Information

...the same tune varied in quickness on different occasions. "As the same songs," writes Miss McKim, "are sung at every sort of work, of course the tempo is not always alike. On the water, the oars dip 'Poor Rosy' to an even andante; a stout boy and girl at the hominy mill will make the same 'Poor Rosy' fly, to keep up with the whirling stone; and in the evening, after the day's work is done, 'Heab'n shall-a be my home' peals up slowly and mournfully from the distant quarters. One woman, a respectable house-servant, who had lost all but one of her twenty-two children, said to me: 'I like Poor Rosy better than all the songs, but it can't be sung without a full heart and a troubled spirit.'

The rests, by the way, do not indicate a cessation in the music, but only in part of the singers. They overlap in singing, as already described, in such a degree that at no time is there any complete pause.

In repeating, it may be observed that the custom at Port Royal is to repeat the first part of the tune over and over, it may be a dozen times, before passing to the "turn," and then to do the same with that.