

# SIXTEEN TONS

Merle Travis (1946) Lyrics for this arrangement Tennessee Ernie Ford (1955)

**Key:** Am **Start note:** A **Time:** 2/4 **Strum:** d\_ du d\_ du & Uu du on E7

**Voices:** oooh, ahhh (chorus) **Percussion:** clang of hammer

## Intro:

**Chords:** Am / Am / E7 / Am / Am / Am↓ **or** **Notes:**A, E, C, A, E-F#-G#, A

- Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
1. Some people say a man is made out of mud  
Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
A poor man's made out of muscle and blood  
Am / Am / Dm / Dm /  
Muscle and blood and skin and.. bones  
Am / Am / E7 / E7 /  
A mind that's weak and a back that's strong: You load

## **CHORUS:**

Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
*Sixteen tons, what do you get?*  
Am / Am7 / F / E7  
*Another day older and deeper in debt.*  
/ Am / Am / Dm / Dm /  
*St. Peter don't you call me cause I can't go*  
Am↓ E7↓ Am↓  
*I owe my soul to the company store*

**Chords:** Am / Am / E7 / Am / Am / Am↓ **or** **Notes:**A, E, C, A, E-F#-G#, A

- Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
2. I was born one morning when the sun didn't shine  
Am / Am7 / F / E7  
I picked up my shovel and I walked to the mine.  
/ Am / Am / Dm / Dm  
I loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal  
/ Am / Am / E7 / E7 /  
And the straw boss said, "Well, a-bless my soul!". You load

## **CHORUS:**

Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
*Sixteen tons, what do you get?*  
Am / Am7 / F / E7  
*Another day older and deeper in debt.*  
/ Am / Am / Dm / Dm /  
*St. Peter don't you call me cause I can't go*  
Am↓ E7↓ Am↓  
*I owe my soul to the company store*

**Chords:** Am / Am / E7 / Am / Am / Am↓ **or** **Notes:**A, E, C, A, E-F#-G#, A

- Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
 3. I was born one mornin' in the drizzlin' rain  
 Am / Am7 / F / E7  
 Fightin' and trouble are my middle name  
 / Am / Am / Dm / Dm  
 I was raised in the canebreak by an old mamma lion  
 / Am / Am / E7 / E7 /  
 Cain't no high-toned woman make me walk the line! You load

**CHORUS:**

**Am / Am7 / F / E7 /**  
**Sixteen tons, what do you get?**  
**Am / Am7 / F / E7**  
**Another day older and deeper in debt.**  
**/ Am / Am / Dm / Dm /**  
**St. Peter don't you call me cause I can't go**  
**Am↓ E7↓ Am↓**  
**I owe my soul to the company store**

**Chords: Am / Am / E7 / Am / Am / Am↓ or Notes:A, E, C, A, E-F#-G#, A**

- Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
 4. If you see me comin' better step a-side  
 Am / Am7 / F / E7 /  
 A lot of men didn't, and a lot of men died  
 Am / Am / Dm / Dm  
 One fist of iron... the other of steel  
 / Am / Am / E7 / E7 /  
 If the right one don't get you then the left one will.... You load

**CHORUS:**

**Am / Am7 / F / E7 /**  
**Sixteen tons, what do you get?**  
**Am / Am7 / F / E7**  
**Another day older and deeper in debt.**  
**/ Am / Am / Dm / Dm /**  
**St. Peter don't you call me cause I can't go**  
**Am↓ E7↓ Am↓**  
**I owe my soul to the company store**

**Chords: Am / Am / E7 / Am / Am / Am↓ or Notes:A, E, C, A, E-F#-G#, A**