

Parchman Farm Blues

sung by Bukka White

Judge give me life this mornin' down on Parchman Farm¹
Judge give me life this mornin' down on Parchman Farm
I wouldn't hate it so bad, but I left my wife in mourn

Oh, goodbye wife, all you have done gone
Oh, goodbye wife, all you have done gone
But I hope some day, you will hear my lonesome song

Oh listen you men, I don't mean no harm
Oh listen you men, I don't mean no harm
If you wanna do good, you better stay off old Parchman Farm

We got to work in the mornin', just at dawn of day
We got to work in the mornin', just at dawn of day
Just at the settin' of the sun, that's when the work is done

I'm down on Parchman Farm, but I sho' wanna go back home
I'm down on Parchman Farm, but I sho' wanna go back home
But I hope some day I will overcome

Note 1: Parchman Farm, the state prison in Parchman, Mississippi. Parchman was a complex of 15 labor camps covering a large area in Mississippi, a closed society of black men who were offered as "contract" labor to farms, railroads and industries of many sorts, passed around to do labor for the financial benefit of both the contractor and the state who sold them.