

Life by the Drop

Written by Barbara Logan and Doyle Bramhall



It's difficult to have a conversation about the greatest guitarists of all time without mentioning Stevie Ray Vaughan, whose solo-acoustic version of "Life by the Drop" appears on a posthumous 1991 release titled *The Sky Is Crying*. Known for his flashy blues licks on acoustic and electric axes alike, Vaughan used a 12-string to record this tune, plowing through with a fairly straight-ahead blues shuffle pattern, keeping the riffing to a minimum.

Don't be scared off by the 12/8 time signature—thinking of each measure as four

groups of three beats will make it much easier to get through the two-bar intro riff transcribed here (easily the most challenging part of the song). Use a rhythm pattern like the bluesy A5 shuffle transcribed here for all of the "5" chords—the E5 and D5 chords employ a similar pattern on different sets of strings (just be sure your middle finger grabs the third-fret D note when you're shuffling on D5).

At the outro chorus section, Vaughan substitutes some light riffing for the D5 and E5 chords. You can grab these riffs by listening to the record, but if that proves too challenging, you can always fall back on the chord names in parentheses. —DAN APCZYNSKI

Chords

A5 x011xx
E5 011xxx
D5 xx012x
F#m 134111
E 023100
D7 xx0213

Intro Riff

Shuffle Pattern

A5

- A5** **E5**
- Hello there, my old friend
- F#m** **D5**
Not so long ago it was "Till the end"
- A5** **E5**
We played outside in the pouring rain
- F#m** **D5**
On our way up the road we started over again

Chorus

- F#m** **D5** **E5**
You're livin' our dreams, oh you on top
- F#m** **D5** **E5**
My mind is achin' and Lord it won't stop
- F#m** **D5** **E** **A5**
That's how it happens livin' life by the drop
- A5** **E5**
- Up and down the road in our worn-down shoes
- F#m** **D5**
Talkin' about good things and singin' the blues
- A5** **E5**
You went your way and I stayed behind
- F#m** **D7**
We both knew it was just a matter of time

Repeat Chorus

- A5** **E5**
- No wasted time, we're alive today
- F#m** **D7**
Churnin' up the past, there's no easier way
- A5** **E5**
Time's been between us, a means to an end
- F#m** **D7**
God it's good to be here walkin' together my friend

Outro Chorus

- F#m** **(D5)** **(E5)**
We're livin' our dreams
- F#m** **(D5)** **(E5)**
My mind's stopped achin'
- F#m** **D7** **E** **A5**
That's how it happened livin' life by the drop

Repeat last line twice and end

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