

Dole Bread

Words by Australian poet Dorothy Hewitt, set to a tune by Mark Leyden. Hewett (1923~2002) was an Australian communist /feminist poet, novelist and playwright. Her third marriage was to Merv Lilley.

Verse

G D7 G D7 G

On an is - land in a riv - er, how that bit - ter riv - er ran.

D7 G Em G D7 G

I grew on scraps of char - i - - ty in the best way that you can.

C D7 G Em G D7 G

On an is - land in a riv - er _____ where I grew to be a man.

Chorus

C Bm Am Em C D7 G

For dole bread is bit - ter bread, bit - - ter bread and sour;

C G Em Am Em

There's grief _____ in the taste of _____ it. There's weev - ils in the flour.

Am D7 G

There's weev - ils in the flour.

And just across the river stood the mighty BHP
Poured pollution on the waters, poured the lead of misery.
But its smoke was black as Hades, rolling hungry to the sea.

In those humpies by the river where we lived on dole and stew
While just across the river those greedy smoke stacks grew.
And the hunger of the many filled the bellies of the few.

On an island in a river, how that bitter river ran.
It broke the banks of charity and it baked the bread of man
On an island in a river where I grew to be a man.

Final Chorus
For dole bread is bitter bread. There's weevils in the flour.
But men grow strong as iron upon black bread and sour,
On black bread and sour.