

Pickin' Up Spuds

Words by Canberra poet, Colin Webb reflecting on a holiday job at Burrawang NSW; set to the tune 'Rosin the Bow'.

I heard in the heat of Dec - em - ber me un - cle was dig - gin' the spuds;
Bein' short of a quid then for Christ - mas I put on me old work - in' duds.
By six I was down in the pad - dock, the trac - tor was go - in' a - round,
Dig - gin' up rows of pot - a - toes and leav - ing 'em there on the ground.

Well, he gave me some bags and a bucket, and he told me bout green ones and chats;
I looked round the paddock all over, there was spud-bags and backsides and hats –
There were backsides of every description, and hats bobbin' up and down.
Then I heard him yell 'Come on young fella, you won't make much just standin' around!'

So I wired right in to them 'taters – I was goin' at 'em like fire!
Till me head started hurtin' and I slowed down – in five minutes I started to tire.
The sun was a-blazin' down on me, I started to feel quite a thirst,
Me back and me legs were both achin': I wondered what would cave in first.

But when I saw that I'd filled five or six bags, why, then I felt like a young bull!
Till he came round and shook 'em down properly and he said 'These here bags are half-full!'
Well, I felt me heart sink within me when I thought what I would have to do,
But I filled 'em right up to the top, and I threw in a green spud or two.

Oh, the paddock was as rough as blazes – There were thistles and snakes in me socks;
And I noticed the fella beside me was fillin' his bag up with rocks.
He was lobbin' 'em in there like crazy, and it brought a smile to me lips
When I thought about the poor bloke who'd be buyin' them spuds to make chips!

When me uncle went home for his dinner I sat down in the shade of the fence;
When I felt me sore muscles and sunburn I tell you, it fair made me wince.
I prayed for a storm as I lay there, and we had one – it came down a flood!
I thought 'Beauty, we'll pack up and go home'. But no, we picked spuds in the mud.

Yes, we worked spuds till eight that evenin', Then I loaded his truck up and all;
But when I asked my uncle to pay me He gave me five dollars, that's all.
Well, I'm told green potatoes are poison; That night, I had a dream
Me uncle was eatin' spuds, and every potato was green!