

The Stringybark Cockatoo

The words come from Paterson's 'Old Bush Songs' and they are set to a variant of 'Life on the Ocean Waves'.

Verse

I'm a broke al-luv-ial min-er who loves his cup to drain
which oft-en times has caused me to lay in the wind and rain.
Roam-ing a-bout the coun-try, look-ing for work to do
I took a job a-reap-ing for the string-y-bark cock-a-too.
Chorus
Oh the string-y-bark cock-a-too, the string-y-bark cock-a-too.
(Echo last line of the verse.)

Ten bob an acre was his price—with promise of fairish board.
He said his crops were very light, 'twas all he could afford.
He drove me out in a bullock dray, and his piggery met my view.
Oh, the pigs and geese were in the wheat of the stringybark cockatoo.

The hut was made of the surface mud, the roof of a reedy thatch,
The doors and windows open flew without a bolt or latch.
The pigs and geese were in the hut, the hen on the table flew,
And she laid an egg in the old tin plate for the stringybark cockatoo.

For breakfast we had pollard, boys, it tasted like cobbler's paste,
To help it down we had to eat brown bread with vinegar taste.
The tea was made of the native hops which out on the ranges grew;
'Twas sweetened with honey bees and wax for the stringybark cockatoo.

For dinner we had goanna hash, we thought it mighty hard;
They wouldn't give us butter, so we forced down bread and lard.
Quondong duff, paddymelon pie, and wallaby Irish stew
We used to eat while reaping for the stringybark cockatoo.

When we started to cut, the rust and smut was just beginning to shed,
And all we had to sleep on was a dog and a sheepskin bed.
The bugs and fleas tormented me, they made me scratch and screw;
I lost my rest while reaping for the stringybark cockatoo.

At night when work was over I'd nurse the youngest child,
And when I'd say a joking word, the mother would laugh and smile.
The old cocky, he grew jealous, and he thumped me black and blue,
And he drove me off without a rap—the stringybark cockatoo.