

The heaven patrolling moon,
Glides o'er the sapphire plain
And the sentry stars are posted
Till old Sol comes forth again
With fun those stars seem winking
And I really do believe,
That they laugh at Earth's sons' turmoils
Those legacies from Eve
They sparkle on the lover
As he walks the leafy dell
And wonders whether she'll be there
His buxom country belle
They shine out all the brighter
When the silly owl of night
Goes trekking home a devious course
In the small hours 'fore the light
They smile upon the ocean vast
And the ship for Afric' bound
Laden with British Khaki lads
The wily Boer to pound
They're watching at the midnight hour
When the frosty crystals gleam
And where the white Veldt's blurred by many a mound
Where troopers lie and dream
And a harsh voice cuts through the startled air
"Every man of you turn out!"
And the sick and worn out man is cheered
By "Get mounted you lazy lout"
But smiles of scorn give the sentry stars
When they watch Earth's stars of death
When the bullet speeds on its baleful way
And a life is gone at it's breath
When the heavens are mocked by the act of man
And Earth's red meteors fly
And the lightning's flash and the thunder roars
Neath that gold sprinkled sapphire sky
Old Sol turns out on sentry go
The stars are relieved at last
And over that blood splashed shell ploughed plain
They lie till high noon is passed
Maimed and dead lies side by side
Horse and rider and gun
The wounded licking their fevered lips
And cursing the noontide sun
The bearers are slowly picking them up
The dead are holed without priest
And filthy birds on the rock crowned hills
Are patiently waiting the feast
And poor dumb beasts with broken limbs
Who ne'er shall be saddled again
Lift their speaking eyes to their torturer man
And ask for succour from pain
Then once again does the rifle speak
A quiver and all is o'er

Poem by Arthur McBeth written in South Africa during the Boer War