Boer War Poem Letters to Lucy

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