

## Letters to Lucy

From Beverley Fraser – a poem written by her grandfather, Arthur McBeth, during the South African War

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 its 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