

# The Mothers

You who breast your babies,  
what have you to say?

You who suffered the birth-pangs  
shall you lightly slay?

You who were taught to believe  
in life as a sacred thing—

Oh, what shall be your answer  
when you are answering?

Oh, you who loved the toddlers—  
you who shaped their dreams.

What shall be the answer  
when every jingo screams?

Shall you be worse than the tiger,  
in the jungle curld,

Shielding its suckling offspring  
against the warring world?

Mothers of All Australia—  
mothers of him and me.

What, when the answer's given—  
what shall the answer be?—

A primitive howl of fury  
worse than that of the wild?

Shall the lioness love her cub  
more than you can love your child?

Mothers, we wait your answer—  
you of the travail-breed.

You who suffer in silence,  
you who have paid indeed!

The life that you brought to being—  
the life that was half your own—

How will you treat it?— answer  
before the dice are thrown!

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