The Mothers

You who breasted 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 curl’d,
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!

Written by R. J. Cowdy, and drawn by Charles Wooster by authority of the Worker’s Union, Sydney.