



## Picnic: July 1917

We lay and ate the sweet hurt-berries  
In the bracken of Hurt Wood.  
Like a quire of singers singing low  
The dark pines stood.

Behind us climbed the Surrey Hills,  
Wild, wild in greenery;  
At our feet the downs of Sussex broke  
To an unseen sea.

And life was bound in a still ring,  
Drowsy, and quiet and sweet....  
When heavily up the south-east wind  
The great guns beat.

We did not wince, we did not weep,  
We did not curse or pray;  
We drowsily heard, and someone said,  
'They sound clear today'.

We did not shake with pity and pain,  
Or sicken and blanch white.  
We said, 'If the wind's from over there  
There'll be rain tonight'.

Once pity we knew, and rage we knew,  
And pain we knew, too well,  
As we stared and peered dizzily  
Through the gates of hell.

But now hell's gates are an old tale;  
Remote the anguish seems;  
The guns are muffled and far away.  
Dreams within dreams.

And far and far are Flanders mud,  
And the pain of Picardy;  
And the blood that runs there runs beyond  
The wide waste sea.

We are shut about by guarding walls;  
(We have built them lest we run  
Mad from dreaming of naked fear  
And of black things done).

We are ringed all round by guarding walls,  
So high, they shut the view.  
Not all the guns that shatter the world  
Can quite break through.

Oh guns of France, oh guns of France,  
Be still, you crash in vain....  
Heavily up the south wind throb  
Dull dreams of pain.....

Be still, be still, south wind, lest your  
Blowing should bring the rain.....  
We'll lie very quiet on Hurt Hill,  
And sleep once again.

Oh we'll lie quite still, not listen nor look,  
While the earth's bounds reel and shake,  
Lest, battered too long, our walls and we  
Should break.....should break.....



**Rose Macaulay**

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Known to friends as Emilie, she was a novelist and poet. The Daughter of a university scholar and lecturer, she grew up in an intellectually stimulating and liberal-minded home environment. She first attracted attention as a social satirist with a series of novels. She is remembered primarily for her novels satirizing middle-class life.

works include:

"Abbots Verney" 1906,  
"The Lee Shore" 1920,  
"Potterism" 1920,  
"Dangerous Ages" 1921,  
"Told by an Idiot" 1923,  
"And No Man's Wit" 1940,  
"The Towers of Trebizond" 1956

Rose Macaulay was awarded the DBE shortly before her death in 1958.