THREE POEMS

WILLIAM SYLVESTER

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William Sylvester

The Poetry Collection is proud to celebrate National Poetry Month with this publication of Bill Sylvester's *Three Poems*, the sixth in a yearly series featuring the work of poets living in Buffalo.

2009	Bernhard Frank
2010	Ansie Baird
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2012	Ross Runfola
2013	Norma Kassirer

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Cover image: "Bow" by Kate Parzych, capturing the reflection of the bow of the USS Little Rock at the Naval Museum, Buffalo, New York. Originally produced as a full color print in May 2011 as part of the artist's show "Watermarks" at the Jung Center.

Now Listen

Once there was
a good god.

Once there was
a bad god.

The good god said,
When the moon dies,
may the light of the moon
come back to earth.

The bad god said,
When a person dies,
let us never hear
that man's voice again…

No Venus in Sight

Maybe up on Mars
another boy is in a tub
at the very same second
slowly lifts his knee
up through the soapy slime
and sees a tiny scab
and maybe Mars boy
lets his knee sink back
into the soapy slime.
Earth boy knew what was ahead.
Oh, he'd grow tall, and lean
wear a thin moustache,
leave his uniform open at the neck
eat a handful of aspirins
drink cognac from a bottle and say:
"rotten war" and never hear
anything really dumb like
"Get out of that tub this instant
You'll catch your death of cold."

Lucretius

one morning there was more motion
in the smell of new mown grass
than in the water
an in-between-space

no gathering of photons
at the shores of light
a probability crests
a sudden chill…

. . remember . .

About William Sylvester

A longtime resident of Buffalo, Bill Sylvester's career spans flying supply planes during World War II to translating Aeschylus. Educated at the Sorbonne, Columbia University, University of Chicago, and the University of Minnesota, Sylvester taught English, comparative literature, and creative writing at the University at Buffalo beginning in 1965. He is the author of many collections of poetry, essays, and translations, including *Curses Omens Prayers* (1974), *Heavy Metal from Pliny* (1992), *Fever Spreading into Light* (1992), *War & Lechery: The Poem* (1995), and *Nightmares—They Are Zeros* (2009).

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the poet.

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