

# New Mexico Quarterly

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Volume 36 | Issue 3

Article 8

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1966

## Three Poems

Olavo Bilac

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### Recommended Citation

Bilac, Olavo. "Three Poems." *New Mexico Quarterly* 36, 3 (1966). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmq/vol36/iss3/8>

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## Three Poems by Olavo Bilac

### DOWN RIVER

The river trembles, rolling, wave on wave . . .  
 Almost night. Following the slow march  
 Of the water, which inundates the marshes about it,  
 We proceed. The wind bends the bamboo trees.

Alive just now, clothed in red, bloody,  
 The twilight is fainting. The night wipes out  
 The last light from the firmament . . .  
 The river rolls, trembling, wave on wave.

### ONE EVENING IN AUTUMN

Autumn. In front of the sea. I open wide the windows  
 Facing the silent garden, and view the waters, absorbed.  
 Autumn . . . Curling up, the yellow leaves tumble,  
 The fall. Widowhood, old age, discomfort.

Why, lovely ship, in the light of the stars  
 Did you visit this sea, empty and dead,  
 If, at the wind, you lifted your sails,  
 If, at the light, you left the port?

The water sang. Your sides, kissed by foam,  
 Broken up in laughter and white flakes.  
 But, you came with night and you left with the sun!

And I gaze at the empty heaven; I see the ocean  
 And the place you were last in  
 Glowing in the light of dawn.

## WAVES

Between the burning calms, tremulously,  
Night on the high seas animates the waves.  
From the depths the wet Golcondas rise,  
Live pearl: the cold nereids:

Interlock, they run pursued,  
Return, crossing themselves; and in lascivious swells  
Dress their forms, white and rounded,  
With purple algae and sea ferns.

Thighs of vague onyx, polished bellies  
Of alabaster, hips of silver foam,  
Breasts of uncertain opal, gleam in the night

And green mouths, filled with sighs,  
Phosphor-fired and perfumed with amber,  
Sob vain kisses which the wind disperses.

translated from the Portuguese  
by John Gaw Meem