The Problem of Evil
for George Melnyk

I

That instrumental moment when
an off-duty soldier stepped on one of
Mr. Blake's flowers
and a cosmos unfolded itself
with grace and smoke
inside the seams of a poet's spying brain
a fissure erupts in flames

II

What baby replaces me with scrawny poems
when I will be too dead to remember?
My mother pretended we would never know
the difference, then, she meant the lust
after fame, or being overly concerned
with immortality
and afraid of ashes, thumbprints
smudged onto foreheads

III

It meant house arrest for Galileo I hear
(heresy is a naughty word in this world too)
Copernicus was wily enough to wait
he prevaricated until, on his deathbed
he ordered his findings published

Anne Richard Burke
Alberta