

Elemental Sonority: Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Thunder

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Through a critical reading of Hölderlin's poetry and Heidegger's thinking, this essay explores how thunder awakens us to the elemental, opens us to the elements through their boundaries or cracks, and brings the hum and clamor of things, their elemental voices, to our presence.

In his discussion of Friedrich Hölderlin's poem "In lovely blueness blooms the steeple," Martin Heidegger writes that the poet calls the sights and sounds of the sky "into the singing word and there makes them shine and ring."¹ Heidegger sets as his goal to "hear the phrase 'poetically man dwells' rightly."² Yet, in spite of the focus on the aural in these statements, when it involves storms, Heidegger deliberates about lightning but ignores thunder. Two times when analyzing Hölderlin's passages about thunderstorms, Heidegger quotes through the lines about lightning but stops short before the words about thunder.³ His large quote from the poem that contains "poetically, man dwells on this earth" concludes with

Is there a measure on earth? There is none⁴

just prior to

No created world ever hindered
The course of thunder.⁵

And from Hölderlin's poem "What is God," Heidegger includes

for the lightnings are the wrath of a god⁶

but remarkably ends his quote just prior to

But thunder
Is the glory of God.⁷

This signals Heidegger's emphasis on the eyes over the ears, vision over hearing, and it is suggested, splitting over gathering. Lightning not

only splits the sky, but breaks apart the elements, ionizing and pulverizing them. One is reminded of the Pessoa heteronym Soares describing how during a storm “a wedge of metallic light opened a fissure . . .,” and, a short while later, “an awesome light suddenly splinters.”⁸ One also recalls a line from Vicente Aleixandre’s *Pasion de la Tierra*: “ser de esperanza y lluvia que descende del fondo del relámpago como un pecho partido” (“being of hope and rain that descends from depths of lightning like a split chest”). By focussing on lightning, Heidegger looks to the sky, and sees man’s place as between the earthly and heavenly, mortal and immortal, beneath and above. Man measures himself against the viewed heavenly, looking upward for his standard.

Heidegger views poetry as a building that lets man attain to dwelling. Thus, for Heidegger, poetry makes man belong to earth, dwell on earth. By turning his eyes skyward towards the lightning, he considers revelation of the concealed as a making visible what is dark and hidden from view, and his task is to let things shine in the sky’s and lightning’s light. The sound of *keraunos*, the Greek thunderbolt, is perceived and subdued across a flashing light.

By rereading Hölderlin carefully, by listening to thunder as well as looking at lightning, one can let things ring, rumble, and sing, to vibrate tonally as well as visually. By listening to thunder, man’s place will be situated in the elements, not just above the earth and beneath the sky, but within the all around, the surround, and it is suggested, at the elemental boundary. Things will then resonate, and the elements will resound. Through this rereading and re-listening, it will be heard that dwelling lets man attain to building, for fundamentally, one can say elementally, man dwells in the elemental surround and at the elemental boundary. The elemental can be heard in and is gathered by thunder.

For Hölderlin, thunderstorms are the dwelling place of man. Though lightning splits the elements, thunder gathers them. Thunder tunes things in relation to man, and concentrates the ancient and the new in man on earth. The poet must hear the concealed to reveal it. Heard from the perspective of earth, the task of the poet is to stand on earth and absorb thunder, thus enabling him to speak of the ancient, the concealed, and the elemental.

What follows, then, is a harkening to thunder. Thunder awakens us to the elemental, opens us to the elements through their boundaries or cracks, and brings the hum and clamor of things, their pithy voices, to our presence.

Hölderlin: In Thunder Man Dwells

Dann hör' ich oft den Wagen des Donnerers
 Am Mittag, wenn er naht, der bekannteste,
 Wenn ihm das Haus bebt und der Boden
 Reiniget sich, und die Quaal Echo wird.

Then often I can hear the great Thunderer's voice
 At noon when he, the best-known of all, draws near,
 When his own house quakes, the foundations,
 Shaken, are cleansed and my torment echoes.¹⁰

Hölderlin's thinking of thunder is from the perspective of earth—elemental earth. Man dwells on this earth and hears thunder from his earthly dwelling. Thunder comes to dwell with man on this elemental earth, comes to the very door of man's dwelling and shakes the foundations of his house and earth-dwelling. Man's door frame, the arch between his home and the world, the commencement of exploration, his path's beginning and end, are shaken. This colossal sound upsets the very edge between world and home. Thus, Hölderlin elementally hears thunder across this fundamental dwelling, that is, through earth, his home. Earth receives thunder, responds to its boom, is caressed by its sonorous flow, and is penetrated by its bass vibration. Earth and man are penetrated by thunder, and as earth resonates in response to and in harmony with thunder, it responds to thunder's course in unhindered, welcome receptivity. Thunder hurls its voice along earth's pathways, and as it does so, lifts earth up into its sonority.

Because thunder is the best known, it is better known than lightning or sky. Being at home with man and best known, thunder dwells with man on earth. Thunder shakes man's and its own home, quaking earth even to its foundation, and this shakes man's understanding, his ground, that upon which he is firmly situated. This penetrative vibration, therefore, shakes the earth and man himself. Thunder not only draws near to man, earth, and dwelling in sound, it is also felt in quaking and shaking, a fearsome earthquake. Thus, thunder, the familiar cohabitant, gathers man, dwelling, and earth through felt sound. It visits often, and one hears echoes of its own sound and the poet's torment. It and rain also cleanse our dwelling's foundations.

Und der Boden, der vom Wetter noch dröhnet,
 Doch Hoffnung röthet die Wangen,
 Und vor der Thüre des Haußes

And the ground still resounding with thunder,
 But hope now flushes our cheeks,
 In front of the door of their house¹¹

The poet again emphasizes that the ground resounds with thunder, reminiscent of the original sound of earth, the earth as the elemental subwoofer. Even Alexandre, the poet of light and water, observes “los truenos están bajo tierra”¹² (“thunderclaps are under the earth”). Because thunder is heard and felt through the earth, it is ground, not air, that primarily resounds with thunder. While shaking the earth, thunder follows paths to the entrance of man’s dwelling. The visitation of thunder invites one to experience the world beyond one’s threshold.

Und Wetter im Wald

And thunderstorms in the wood¹³

Thunder also lives in the forest. The forest, a self-cultivated shelter, a temple, the dwelling of gods and man, is the abode of thunder. To the pithy woods, the shady respite from heat and toil, the sound-muffling vertical sanctuary, thunder brings water, sound, and comfort, where “they the never-needy dwell.”¹³

Thunder gathers the elements

Thunder occurs at the boundary of the elements. It happens where lightning, rain, ozonic atmosphere, and vibrated earth meet. It begins with the electrical fire in the sky, often accompanies rain, and shakes the earth, its home and the element from the perspective of which Hölderlin receives it. Its loud noise brings to one’s sensory receptivity this elemental seam, the elements themselves. One follows thunder to the boundary, into the crack to rediscover the elements. Thunder gathers the elements into its sonorous boom, effecting a cycling of elements into and out of this crack of world. Its booming vibration reveals elementality, and the nature of elemental

boundaries. It occurs at the meeting place and time of earth, water, air, and fire. The very junction of the elements, the crack, the rip of world, elements, the very edge of things, and things themselves, is where thunder booms, rumbles, and courses.

Thunder may be thought of as the efficient cause of this boundary, the making happen where and when the elements meet, that is, it brings about the very meeting of the elements. It occasions the bringing together of the elements. It forms an elemental edge. More fundamentally, thunder is that manifested crack because it makes the elemental boundary, brings the elements together in their meeting, the seam they form. At this boundary and because of the boundary, the elements are disclosed.

Der Allversammelnde, wo Himmlische nicht
Im Wunder offenbar, noch ungesehn im Wetter

The all-assembling, where heavenly beings are
Not manifest in miracles, nor unseen in thunderstorms¹⁵

And a few lines earlier

Die Mutter Erde sich und Licht und Luft sich kennt.

Our Mother Earth and light and air are known.¹⁶

Thunder gathers the elements and things. This is the “Allversammelnde,” the “all-assembling.” Storms “drift on between Heaven and Earth”¹⁷ in the crack between wind and man, air and earth, where man dwells “amid the peoples.”¹⁸ In the lines heard earlier about thunder in the forest, thunder brings together earth (“holy Earth”)¹⁹ and water (“waters roar on the rock”).²⁰ Elements appear and are heard as elements, that is, they are disclosed in their gathering, at the seam formed by their meeting through and in thunder. Things, being shaken and felt, are opened, brought into the aural clearing. Unfamiliar things, being always there and most familiar, are revealed in their strangeness to be always there, hence least strange. “How all is changed!”²¹

Thunder gathers fire, lightning. Indeed, lightning cracks the earth and thunder enters behind it at the crack to gather it into itself.

Ihm wachsen läßt, wie der Bliz, muß er
 Die Erde spalten, und wie Bezauberte fliehn
 Die Wälder ihm nach und zusammensinkend die Berge.

He would grow and split the earth
 Like lightning, as forests hurtled in his wake,
 Enchanted, and mountains crashed to the ground²¹

At the elemental boundary, elements display a synesthetic quality, taking on each other's characteristics. They seep and mix in Empedoclean fashion. Rivers rage, mountains flow, air is heavy, and fire rains down.

Water, rain, is gathered in the rolling flowing stream of thunder. Earth receives thunder's water, and is lifted into its liquidity.

Denn Freude schüttet
 Der Donnerer aus

For the Thunderer showers
 Forth joy²³

Air or sky is viewed across earth and is also gathered by thunder. Though viewed across earth, thunder begins as a sky phenomenon, born of the jagged fire snapping across the dark sky. This is the force of nature that seized the poet: "The thunderstorm," Hölderlin wrote to Casimir Ulrich Böhlendorff in 1802, is "not only in its highest manifestation but, precisely in this sense as force and appearance among other forms of the sky..."²⁴ Lightning, thunder, rain, and odor ("fragrance descends as the uproar wanes")²⁵ move through the air and vibrate it. This vibration, set off by thunder, brings all into harmony. The jagged, crusty, furrowed earth color and intone the air, rain, and light.

Thunder inserts itself into the fissure opened by lightning and into the crack that is earth, world, into the seam of the elemental boundary. But thunder also unfolds the other elements into the earth-crack and into itself. Upsurging out of the crack, elements collect, harmonize, gather in thunder's sonority. The elements are gathered by and into thunder and are brought by thunder into the crack of world. Air, water, and fire are gathered as a collection, and as a safekeeping presence, in their elementality, by and in thunder. The very elemental boundary—of air, earth, fire, water—is brought

to presence by earth-rumbling thunder, world-cracking thunder; they are gathered by and into thunder. This thunder, tuning, crying, vibrating, and ravaging, gathers and unifies.

[...] well-
 Tuned by the thunder [...]
 [...]
 For the work of knowledge takes shape in the beginning, and
 the harmony
 And tenderness and open sky which then
 Appear, enveloping all things,
 Are sung by choirs of clouds, though mortals should be the ones to
 sing,
 Adorning the spirit of heaven. Nature
 Lives forever. But the navel of the earth
 Is firm. For the flames and universal
 Elements are captive in the shore
 Grass. ²⁶

Thunder captures the elements and envelopes things, gathering them at the elemental boundary, of shore harmonizing water and grass.

*The sonority of thunder*²⁷

Things are well-tuned by thunder. It, the elements, and things call, cry out, harmonize, and sing. Thunder's vibration gives voice to the elements and to things by setting off their ringing and singing. And mortals should sing in harmony. The counterpoint of liquidity pattering and splashing on earth accompanies thunder's basso profundo punctuated with rests and stops. This is the terrifying attention-grabbing silence of the dragons. This is the anti-rhythmic burst of *le belle noiseuse*, the fluctuation from the background murmur of the world. The mountains flow through thunder's rolling, rumbling stream.

Sound discloses the elemental meeting and resonates the meeting. The crack of world, world, the concealed, what is revealed in the elemental meeting; the crack of elementality is disclosed in and through and to be thunder. But even thunder, sound, song scarce disclose it. Its bang, its intrusive thud and colossal rumble call for our attendant hearing. This is a hearing

that grows in intensity as the rumble fades in the distance, as the physical sonic waves diminish. Things in their elementality are well-tuned by the thunder. The silence following the thunderous clash forces one to re-listen to silence, to things, to the murmur of the world. Pessoa's Soares again helps one to listen intently to thunder that "shatters into hard silences."²⁸

The elements sound, sing, harmonize at their boundary; one hears their tune most clearly at their boundary; the boundary sings and rings. Sonority reveals the elemental. The purity of the elemental is so familiar, so close that one can only approach it at its sonorous boundaries, of water lapping against earth's shore, of wind blowing against earth, of rain sizzling the flickering flame. Thunder, the sonorous boom, exposes the melodious boundary, the elemental. This passes beyond the normal chaos of what is, surpasses even noise as the opening.²⁹ For thunder is an opportunity, an invitation, even an imperative to listen to the elements.

In "The Poet's Vocation," Hölderlin simply speaks of thunder being heard ("die Donner gehört"),³⁰ for the most fundamental thing to do in the face of thunder is simply to hear it, to listen to it, but also with it to the sonorous elemental. For Hölderlin, thunder is the third in a series of heard things, the others being Eastern prophets and Greek song. Thunder bursts "in upon the presence."³¹ Its suddenness and clarity force the elemental to be heard. Thunder, we heard earlier, roars and rings and changes things. Music discloses the concealed, but the elemental, most concealed because it is most familiar, always with us, is difficult to disclose even in song.

Ein Räthsel ist Reinent sprungenes. Auch
Der Gesang kaum darf es enthüllen.

A riddle, the pure of source. Which
Even song may scarce disclose³²

Thunder echoes³³ and is "intermingled with peaceful music."³⁴ To repeat, things, elements, and earth resound with thunder.³⁵

We heard earlier that thunder vibrates and ravages, but then leads to

die Einigkeit
Und Zärtlichkeit und den Himmel breit lauter Hülle nachher
Erscheinend singen
harmony

And tenderness and open sky which then
Appear, enveloping all things³⁶

This harmony and gathering are due to thunder's sonority, its being well-tuned.

Tönt wie Amsel Gesang
Der Wolken heitere Stimmung gut
Gestimmt vom Daseyn Gottes, dem Gewitter.

The clear tempered clouds
Carry like the blackbird's call, well-
Tuned by the thunder, by God being there³⁷

Thunder elucidates lightning.³⁸ The ear-splitting thud brings to man's presence and to the elemental clearing the brilliance of the flashing light. Thus,

Jemehr ist eins
Unsichtbar, schiket es sich in Fremdes.

The more invisible
This is, befits the unfamiliar³⁹

The sonorous reveals the Concealed.

Thunder and Elementality

Let us listen to thunder. Let us, as Heidegger writes, make it a "pains-taking listening:"⁴⁰

No created world ever hindered
The course of thunder⁴¹

Thunder's path is not constricted by the created world. Thunder moves across; it passes, foraging, caressing the earth. It feels earth's shape, its mountains, valleys, rises and dips, crevices, and cracks. It rises and falls in tune with the earth. It is a moving cover. It rides and plummets in response

to the earth. And the earth responds, dancing with thunder. Thunder has its way, earth's way.

But in caressing earth, thunder penetrates the earth, reaching below the surface, and brings earth out, exposing it, revealing its substance, its solid density. Thunder brings hidden earth up into its sound, its song. The curves, jagged edges, and cracks of earth are lifted into thunder's sonority. Plunging into crevices, shaping contours, thunder brings the solid, the underfoot, the under-standing into sonority. The crack of sound images the crack of earth. Earth is shaken, vibrated, and resonates with thunder, but thunder also resonates earth's solidity. Sonority follows the path of and is guided by solidity. This well-tuned movement is the movement of elementality. Elemental earth resonates, is gathered by, thunder's sonority.

Thunder is often accompanied by rain. Sonority comes to solidity through liquidity. Water is one element through which and across which thunder effects the coming-into-sound of earth. The clap of thunder causes the level⁴² of the murmur to increase through inclusion of the rain, steady, surging, pulsating, and murmuring. Thunder, sonority, not only or even rolls, but flows to, with, and across earth.

Thunder, rain, and lightning pass through air. Air is the element founding sonority, that through which sound moves, its medium. Air is the background to thunder, the level. Thunder gathers air, the invisible, the *apeiron*.

We know that lightning lights the world, lets things shine, brings things forward in their place, lays them before us in their scattered domain. Lightning cracks, lights the crack, streaks. Lightning splits, rends, tears, rips . . . open. It opens the gap, the gape. It opens the world to be presented as world, other. It separates the world from us, sets it apart, and makes things distinct, setting them apart from each other. Lightning flashes into the opening, the clearing, the crack. It ruptures what was into the clearing and brings the absent into presence. But lightning hides the way, the path, by splitting the there from the here, the world from man, creating an alterity. Lightning lights the gap, the clearing, the chasm, and thus separates, divides.

But with the flash comes the crash. While lightning splits and ruptures, thunder gathers and unites. It sets together. It temporalizes a place and establishes a time. The closed, the concealed, opens in self-disclosure as other, separate, closed in the flash, then it flows into the sonorous, the crash. The resounding, the very vibration of earth by thunder, is a bringing into the clearing, the open as disclosure in a gathering, from the closed,

the silent, the dark, the still. Thunder is the big bang, the creation of being, sensed by the ever-open receiving ears.⁴³ The wandering thunder juts from the background tonal, and clamorously reestablishes space, this place, where. Fire, air, water, and earth are gathered by thunder, sonority, out of the elemental crack.

Thunder gathers earth, water, air, fire, into the elemental dwelling. It places and times, situates a dwelling by dwelling (many were made from few). Gathering its cover, its shelter, it brings back into one the many through the few. A dwelling is a bringing together of what is to a place to reside, for dwelling lets man attain to building. A dwelling, a microcosmic interiority, is a place of memory and imagination. It is a shelter for daydreaming.⁴⁴ But to encounter thunder, the dwelling needs to spread out, to become diaphanous, allowing an elasticity of daydreaming.⁴⁵ The house, thus, is not the end of a building activity, but the very condition, the commencement of human activity. "The recollection necessary for nature to be able to be represented and worked over, for it to first take form as a world, is accomplished as the home. Man abides in the world as having come to it from a private domain, from being at home with himself, to which at each moment he can retire."⁴⁶

One dwells in the elemental surround and is gathered in its gathering, its collection, by thunder. Thunder dwells in its dwelling. Thunder makes man belong to earth, dwell on earth to realize in his and thunder's co-dwelling the enjoyment of the ubiquity and effulgence of the elemental.

Thunder gathers the different elements by way of their difference into the elemental belonging together. Man is the meeting of the elemental, just as thunder is the meeting of the elemental; man and thunder meet. As heard above, thunder occasions man's gathering of the elements. Thunder sounds the way, resounds the path by joining there and here, world and man, as it gathers and flows across earth. Sonority unifies liquidity, air, light, and earth. Thunder occurs at the earth-air boundary; man is grounded on earth and stands upright in air. This boundary, a separating chasm, an edge, is thus a point of joining, touching, relating. Thunder plays out in this edge, joining earth and air; but man also plays out in the edge, joining earth and air in the becoming-as-one of ground and erecting. Thunder and man conjoin.

The lightning of resonance, the flowing of solidity, the liquidity of the air occur in thunder. One perceives the opening of the unconscious known, for the known is the open of the crack. One hears the gathering and gathers through hearing, for the gathering is the bringing into one of the many

through the elemental. The eruption of the many out of the elemental surround, out of the elemental meeting, and the gathering of the many into the elemental, are heard in thunder.

What is silent is heard in thunder. Thunder reveals in sound, brings to hearing, reveals to the ears what was silent, inaudible, concealed. It brings the strange into the familiar, the familiar to the strange. Thunder removes the hindrance of hearing, enabling an experience of the silent other, the strange but ever-present elemental. Thunder makes audible the crack, departure, separation, eruption. It is the place-giving and the time-happening of what is. Thunder surprises, startles, forcing itself and the elemental into our attention. Vico goes so far as to suggest that thunder elicited the first human language in the form of surprised interjections.⁴⁷ The crack cracks and is mended. Man is turned, tuned. Thunder brings to the ear the spilling forth, the gushing out, the extravagant, the expulsion, and explosion of the elemental. Fire, air, water, earth, overflowing elemental join in exposure and brilliance, and gather in sonority.

Thunder caresses the elements, drawn to their voluptuousness. Sound gathers. Sonority penetrates, joins, merges in passing over, across, on, and into. It draws up into itself, into a unity; a penetrative, voluptuous, sensuous, elemental sonority. The elements resonate, vibrate, quiver under/with/to the caress of thunder. The elemental itself vibrates, resonates in thunder, and comes thus to our presence.

Thunder is an explosion of sound into the world, but is also an implosion, a gravitation, an attraction, of things and the elements into sound. Sound, primordial sound, sonority, arises from the meeting of elements, of fire against earth, air against water. Sonority vibrates at the elemental boundary. Thunder is a crack of nature, binding elements and bringing the elemental in things to one's hearing presence.

The emergence, sudden appearance, voluming sonority, effulgence, of thunder out of the crack; the split, the light, of lightning, and of the world; the becoming from the gap, the elemental boundary; the upheaval, the splitting and gathering that are lightning and thunder is the very emergence of thing into and out of the elemental boundary.

To recollect—to bring back together, gather again, what was once gathered but now is dispersed; to bring into one what is many but was once one, this is the thunderous gathering. Man recollects things and the elements; man recollects thunder, and things through thunder. Sonority recollects in time, and space. In thunder's rumble, truth is aural uncovering. Thunder

and man conjoin.

Thunder and time: Memory and recency

Thunder, we heard, echoes the past, repeats, and rumbles on and on (“for hours on end, and thunder still rumbles afar”).⁴⁸ It bursts upon the now, presaging and forever changing one’s outlook, yet bringing to memory the ancient past. But thunder is new, a recent event.⁴⁹ Let us listen to thunder in time, just in time.

We know that because of thunder’s primordial relation to earth, thunder remembers earth, coursing its paths unhindered and welcome. Rain remembers earth, and through thunder, earth joyfully receives rain. But air, which non-elementally is the source of thunder, is almost forgotten by Hölderlinian elemental thunder. Air, the invisible and recent past of thunder, is forgotten. But it is forgotten, then gathered into memory by the recent thunder.

Thunder forgets the recent past. Thunder startles the short term memory from man, bringing him back to the ancient: Greek song, Eastern prophets, the elements. Thunder comes from the

Tiefen der Zeit,
Und deutungsvoller, und vernehmlicher uns

depths of time,
More full of meaning and more audible to us⁵⁰

Because it is ancient, thunder is more meaningful, therefore more audible; more audible, therefore more meaningful. Listen to a past quote:

Und Wetter im Wald und bei dem Nahmen derselben
Tönt auf aus alter Zeit Vergangengöttliches wieder.
Wie anders ists! und rechthin glänzt und spricht
Zukünftiges auch erfreulich aus den Fernen.
Doch in der Mitte der Zeit
Lebt ruhig mit geweihter
Jungfräulicher Erde der Aether
Und gerne, zur Erinnerung, sind
Die unbedürftigen sie
And thunderstorms in the wood, and at their name

Divine things past ring out from time immemorial.
 How all is changed! And to the right there gleam
 And speak things yet to come, joy-giving, from the distance.
 Yet at the center of Time
 In peace with hallowed,
 With virginal Earth lives Aether
 And gladly, for remembrance, they
 The never-needy dwell⁵¹

Thunder gathers time—the ancient, the recent, the future—in the crashing, booming, startling, rumbling now. Thunder, booming into the crack of time, brings time together; the center of time rings from time immemorial to things yet to come. Thunder gathers the elements in time; thunder gathers time in the elements. How all is changed. Perhaps that explains

Der stille Gott der Zeit und nur der Liebe Gesez,
 Das schönausgleichende gilt von hier an bis zum Himmel.

The quiet God of Time, and only the law of love,
 That gently resolves all difference⁵²

Perhaps now we can now better understand

Is there measure on earth? There is
 None. No created world ever hindered
 The course of thunder⁵³

Conclusion

Hölderlin links poetry with thunder.

Und darum hast du, Dichter! des Orients
 Propheten und den Griechensang und
 Neulich die Donner gehört

Was it for this you heard the prophets of the East
 And Greek song and lately, poet,
 Voices of thunder?⁵⁴
 And, the storms in the air coming from the depths of time, meaningful

and audible, “quietly come to rest in the poet’s soul.”⁵⁵ In the poet is revealed the abyss (“die Verborgene”),⁵⁶ the con-cealed. For the poet to speak of the concealed, he must hear the concealed, and hear the concealed as concealed and being unconcealed. He must hear the elements resounding in their meeting; he must hear the elemental boundary, the crack, the edge of things. That is why Hölderlin urges:

Doch uns gebührt es, unter Gottes Gewittern,
Ihr Dichter! Mit entblößtem Haupte zu stehen

Yet, fellow poets, us it behoves to stand
Bare-headed beneath God’s thunderstorms⁵⁷

Elementally man dwells.

Notes

¹ Martin Heidegger, “...Poetically Man Dwells...,” (hereafter PMD), in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), 225.

² PMD, 213.

³ When Heidegger’s quotes of Hölderlin include thunder, as in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, he either passes on the opportunity to elucidate it, or includes very brief comments. Examples of the latter are that distant thunder reminds one of terror (page 74), and that the earth’s ring echoes heaven’s ring (pages 190-92). Page references are to Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, trans. Keith Hoeller (New York: Humanity Books, 2000).

⁴ PMD, 220.

⁵ Friedrich Hölderlin, “In lieblicher Blau”/“In lovely blue,” in *Hymns and Fragments* (hereafter *HF*), trans. Richard Sieburth (Princeton University Press, 1984), 251.

⁶ PMD, 225.

⁷ “Was ist Gott”/“What is God,” *HF*, 214-5.

⁸ Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of Disquietude*, trans. Richard Zenith (Riverdale-on-Hudson: The Sheep Meadow Press, 1996), 132.

⁹ Vicente Aleixandre, *Poesías Completas*, ed. Alejandro Duque Amusco (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2001), 181; from the section “Ser de Esperanza y Lluvia”.

¹⁰ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Chiron,” trans. Michael Hamburger in *Hyperion and Selected Poems* (hereafter *HSP*) The German Library, vol. 22 (New York: Continuum, 1990), 162-3; hereafter abbreviated *HSP*.

¹¹ “Friedensfeier”/“Celebration of Peace,” *HSP*, 236-7.

¹² Aleixandre, *Poesías Completas*, 173; from the section “El amor no es relieve” of *Pasión de la Tierra*.

¹³ “Germanien”/“Germania,” *HSP*, 214-5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ "Friedensfeier" / "Celebration of Peace," *HSP*, 234-5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ "Wie wenn am Feiertage" / "As on a holiday," *HSP*, 194-5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Germanien" / "Germania," *HSP*, 214-5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² "Der Rhein" / "The Rhine," *HF*, 72-73.

²³ "Wenn aber die Himmlischen" / "But when the gods," *HF*, 154-5.

²⁴ Friedrich Hölderlin, *Essays and Letters on Theory*, trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 153.

²⁵ "Wenn aber die Himmlischen" / "But when the gods," *HF*, 154-5.

²⁶ "Griechenland" / "Greece," *HF*, 206-207;

"Tönt [...]

[...] dem Gewitter.

[...]

Denn anfangs bildet das Werk sich Wissenschaft, die Einigkeit
Und Zärtlichkeit und den Himmel breit lauter Hülle nachher
Erscheinend singen,

Sterbende nemlich müssen singen, zierend den Geist des
Himmels aber singen daselbst

Gesangeswolken. Denn immer lebt

Die Natur. Fest aber ist der Erde

Nabel. Gefangen nemlich in Ufern von Gras sind

Die Flammen und die allgemeinen

Elemente."

²⁷ Refer to Heidegger's discussion of song in "What Are Poets For?," in *Poetry. Language, Thought*, 138-9.

²⁸ Pessoa, *Disquietude*, 132.

²⁹ Michel Serres, *Genesis*, trans. Geneviève James and James Nielson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 22.

³⁰ "Dichterberuf" / "The Poet's Vocation," *HSP*, 154-5.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² "Der Rhein" / "The Rhine," *HF*, 70-71.

³³ "Friedensfeier" / "Celebration of Peace," *HSP*, 230-1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 236-7.

³⁶ See note 26.

³⁷ "Griechenland" / "Greece," *HF*, 206-7.

³⁸ "Patmos," *HF*, 100-101.

³⁹ "Was ist Gott" / "What is God," *HF*, 214-5.

⁴⁰ PMD, 216; the phrase Heidegger uses is "Mühteren Hören" (Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Günther Neske Pfullingen, 1954), 190.

⁴¹ See note 3.

⁴² See Alphonso Lingis, *The Imperative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 25-38.

⁴³ See Serres, *Genesis*, 60.

⁴⁴ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (New York: The Orion Press, 1964), 3-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁶ Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 152.

⁴⁷ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), paragraph 448, page 150.

⁴⁸ "Wie wenn am Feiertage"/"As on a holiday," *HSP*, 192-3.

⁴⁹ "Dichterberuf"/"The Poet's Vocation," *HSP*, 154-5.

⁵⁰ "Friedensfeier"/"As on a holiday," *HSP*, 194-5.

⁵¹ "Germanien"/"Germania," *HSP*, 214-5.

⁵² "Friedensfeier"/"Celebration of Peace," *HSP*, 234-5.

⁵³ See note 3.

⁵⁴ "Diechterberuf"/"The Poet's Vocation," *HSP*, 154-5.

⁵⁵ "Wie wenn am Feiertage"/"As on a holiday," *HSP*, 194-5.

⁵⁶ "Germanien"/"Germania," *HSP*, 212-3.

⁵⁷ "Wie wenn am Feiertage"/"As on a holiday," *HSP*, 194-5.

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