

Friedrich Holderlin, *Hymns and Fragments*, trans. Richard Sieburth,
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.

[In lovely blue . . .]

In lovely blue the steeple blossoms
With its metal roof. Around which
Drift swallow cries, around which
Lies most loving blue. The sun,
High overhead, tints the roof tin,
But up in the wind, silent,
The weathercock crows. When someone
Takes the stairs down from the belfry,
It is a still life, with the figure
Thus detached, the sculpted shape
Of man comes forth. The windows
The bells ring through
Are as gates to beauty. Because gates
Still take after nature,
They resemble the forest trees.
But purity is also beauty.
A grave spirit arises from within,
Out of divers things. Yet so simple
These images, so very holy,
One fears to describe them. But the gods,
Ever kind in all things,
Are rich in virtue and joy.
Which man may imitate.
May a man look up
From the utter hardship of his life
And say: Let me also be
Like these? Yes. As long as kindness lasts,
Pure, within his heart, he may gladly measure himself
Against the divine. Is God unknown?
Is he manifest as the sky? This I tend
To believe. Such is man's measure.
Well deserving, yet poetically
Man dwells on this earth. But the shadow
Of the starry night is no more pure, if I may say so,
Than man, said to be the image of God.

Is there measure on earth? There is
None. No created world ever hindered
The course of thunder. A flower
Is likewise lovely, blooming as it does
Under the sun. The eye often discovers
Creatures in life it would be yet lovelier
To name than flowers. O, this I know!
For to bleed both in body and heart, and cease
To be whole, is this pleasing to God?
But the soul, I believe, must
Remain pure, lest the eagle wing
Its way up to the Almighty with songs
Of praise and the voice of so many birds.
It is substance, and is form.
Lovely little brook, how moving you seem
As you roll so clear, like the eye of God,
Through the Milky Way. I know you well,
But tears pour from the eye.
I see gaiety of life blossom
About me in all creation's forms,
I do not compare it cheaply
To the graveyard's solitary doves. People's
Laughter seems to grieve me,
After all, I have a heart.
Would I like to be a comet? I think so.
They are swift as birds, they flower
With fire, childlike in purity. To desire
More than this is beyond human measure.
The gaiety of virtue also deserves praise
From the grave spirit adrift
Between the garden's three columns.
A beautiful virgin should wreath her hair
With myrtle, being simple by nature and heart.
But myrtles are found in Greece.

If a man look into a mirror
And see his image therein, as if painted,
It is his likeness. Man's image has eyes,
But the moon has light.
King Oedipus may have an eye too many.
The sufferings of this man seem indescribable,
Inexpressible, unspeakable. Which comes
When drama represents such things.
But what do I feel, now thinking of you?
Like brooks, I am carried away by the end of something
That expands like Asia. Of course,
Oedipus suffers the same? For a reason,
Of course. Did Hercules suffer as well?
Indeed. In their friendship
Did not the Dioscuri also suffer?
Yes, to battle God as Hercules did
Is to suffer. And to half share immortality
With the envy of this life,
This too is pain. But this also
Is suffering, when a man is covered with summer freckles,
All bespattered with spots. This is the work
Of the sun, it draws everything out.
It leads young men along their course,
Charmed by rays like roses.
The sufferings of Oedipus seem like a poor man
Lamenting what he lacks.
Son of Laios, poor stranger in Greece.
Life is death, and death a life.

thor of the *Dialogus de differentia vitae rusticae et urbanae* cited in this and the following line.

Thermodon. River flowing from the mountains of Cappadocia in Asia Minor into the Black Sea. Mentioned in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Aeschylus's *Prometheus*.

Valtellino. I.e., Valtellina, mountainous region in northern Lombardy bordering on Switzerland.

Schönberg. Common German place name. May refer to the town in the Bayrischer Wald on the edge of Bohemia.

Scotus. Either the philosopher Erigena (?–875?) or the theologian Duns Scotus (1265?–1308).

Tenerifé. One of the Canary Islands.

Sulaco. Mountain range and river in Honduras. Or possibly a deformation of Soulac, a town at the tip of the Médoc Peninsula near Bordeaux.

Venafro. Town in the Italian province of Campobasso. Founded, according to legend, by Diomedes and known for its earthquakes.

Zamora. Capital of the Spanish province of the same name. Also a place name in Mexico and Ecuador.

Jacca. I.e., Jaca, Spanish town at the foot of the Pyrenees in the province of Huesca.

Genoa. See the poem "Columbus."

Larissa. Capital of Thessaly.

In Lovely Blue

This text is drawn from Wilhelm Waiblinger's novel *Phaeton* (1823). Waiblinger was a young college student in Tübingen and an ardent admirer of Hölderlin who frequently visited the poet in his tower during the years 1822 to 1826. The hero of Waiblinger's novel, the mad sculptor Phaeton, is modeled after Hölderlin, and this text is offered (in prose form) by the narrator as a specimen of the artist's insanity: "He would cover all the paper he could lay his hands on with writing. Here are a few pages taken from his papers which give a good idea of his terribly distraught state of mind. In the original they are divided into lines of verse, in Pindaric fashion." This comment encouraged Ludwig von Pigenot to recast the prose text into its "original" verse form: I have followed his reconstruction, printed in volume 6 of the Hellingrath edition. Beissner and other editors print this text in prose (if at all), while

disputing its authenticity. André du Bouchet, who translated the poem for the Pléiade edition of Hölderlin, comments: “The unsurpassed beauty and, what’s more, the coherence of this poem, render such conjectures futile.” “In lovely blue . . .” is a central text in Heidegger’s canon; see especially his essays “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry” and “. . . Poetically Man Dwells. . . .”