# And then, Lightning

## A POETIC RESPONSE TO HEIDEGGER'S GODS

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Nah ist
Und schwer zu fassen der Gott.
*The god is near and hard to grasp.*

—Friedrich Hölderlin

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# ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and, that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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# ABSTRACT

Martin Heidegger's later thinking is replete with the intimate relationship between human being and the gods. Humans and the gods are those illuminated by the lightning flash of being. They hold one another tightly in this clearing (*die Lichtung*), "emblazoned" and "adorned" (*Zier*) by that primordial fire wherein humans emerge, linger, wane, and pass away, and to which the gods with bright glimmers beckon and point.

According to Heidegger, human beings have become estranged from their relationship with the gods. The shimmering light of the gods has grown dark in their world and the gods' bright message once hearkened-to is viewed as no more than a curiosity. Human being no longer cares (*Sorge*) to correspond with the gods. In fact, so dim has the light of the gods become, humans have forgotten (*Seinsvergessenheit*) the radiant light of being itself (*Sein selbst*).

*And then, Lightning* unfolds within a mood (*Stimmung*) of longing for the shining light of the gods, a light whose ray is said to illumine the world with a sense of the sacred and the holy (*das Heilige*). If I have encountered this light at all, it has been fleeting. My overwhelming experience of the gods is one of profound absence. Yet this absence speaks. I long for the suddenness of the flame and mourn its loss. Such is the intensity of this longing it has torn (*Riß*) an opening in my desacralized world through which the light of the gods may shine. But if I were to encounter the gods in my world, how do I correspond with a flash of light?

If a relationship with the gods is to be kindled, a way must be opened to receive and be received by such a light. This way is an opening in which correspondence with the gods' bright message is again possible (what Heraclitus called *homologein* and Heidegger *Entsprechung*). Such an opening is not a method, technique, process, or system, but a way—a spontaneous readiness to greet the gods— sensitive to sudden shifts of light and mindful of "the sense of being itself" (*die Offenbarkeit des Seins*).

Heidegger's lectures on Heraclitus and his descriptions of his own dwelling place in the Black Forest of southern Germany reveal that a response to the gods requires proximity to the ordinary, common events of life, and sensitivity to the shifting transparencies and opacities of the gods' bright message. Such a response necessarily favours encounter and particularity over abstraction and generalisation.

To bring the work within the proximity of the gods' light, *And then, Lightning* draws close to the gods in the places and among the people with whom I have my being. It is a poetic response that moves within the drift of what is my own-most and is brought-forth as a collection of poetic encounters with my worlding.

Accompanied by Heidegger's texts, *And then, Lightning* unfolds by way of an interdisciplinary response to Heidegger's philosophical-poetic thinking of the gods, hearkening with Heidegger to the hints and winks the gods extend through the opening of my world; sometimes surging into light, sometimes dappled in shadow, other times draped in utter darkness. The reader should not look within the work for a dialectical structure; the work does not postulate an argument *per se*, but from the outset attempts an altogether different kind of attunement (*Stimmung*) to the light of the gods, whereby the gods are waited upon, watched for, and perhaps, even greeted.

# And then, Lightning

# OPENING

Out of the hot night the cooling lightning flashes had fallen … / The poets' faces also are mourning, / They seem to be alone, yet are always divining ... [1]

*<Is nothing sacred?>*

*Nothing.*

*<Not even one thing?>*

# HEIDEGGER'S GODS

*When I come to write about the divine, it is like this: I turn around and around, a circulation of absences begins. "That, that," I hear someone say, and "there, there." I turn, but always turn too late to catch a name. I write, describing my place, cataloguing and classifying that which belongs to me, and that which slips away, all the time longing for that glimmer "which never ceases to escape me."*[2]

Throughout this work runs a refrain, brought-forth from a deep longing, and around which the poetry in the work circles, sometimes explicit other times only implicit: *How do I correspond with a flash of light?* Not the electric charge of a thunder storm, the stark glare of an electric bulb, or the blue glow of my computer screen, but the light which gives light even to these—the shimmering light that Martin Heidegger in his later thinking called "the gods," whose fragile rays are said to illumine the world of human being with a sense of the sacred and the holy (*das Heilige*). According to Heidegger, human beings have become estranged from their relationship with the gods. The light of the gods has grown dark in their world and the gods once hearkened-to are viewed as no more than a curiosity or an ancient dream from which human being has finally awakened. Human being no longer cares (*Sorge*) to correspond with the gods. In fact, so dim has the light of the gods become, humans have forgotten (*Seinsvergessenheit*) the radiant light (*phos*) of being itself (*Sein selbst*)—that primordial fire (*pur*), the lightning-strike (*keraunós*),[3] which flames-out "ever-living," "ever-emerging," "emblazoning" and "adorning" (*die Zier*)[4] all things—to which the gods with bright glimmers beckon and point.

If I have encountered such a light in my world, it has been fleeting. My overwhelming experience of the gods is one of profound absence. Yet this absence speaks.[5] I long to see all things shining in a holy light and mourn the loss of the sacred.

◊

Heidegger offers a bleak portrayal of the modern age in which I live. Today, Heidegger argues, the gods are not encounterable, for the gods' light cannot shine in the forgetfulness of being.[6] Heidegger calls these "destitute" times and equates the forgetfulness of the gods with the *Gestell*, the "enframing" or instrumentalising of beings to mere material processes and resources there to be expedited by human being, "regardless of their own essential natures."[7] In its essence, *Gestell* is the forgetting of the bright gleam of being.[8] Hence, in the *Gestell* the world only 'shows up' as a totality of present objects over which human being looms, intent to control and master.[9] Thus according to Heidegger, the enframing of the world-as-object is fundamentally a metaphysical endeavour, in the sense that it "grounds the modern age" under the aegis of a "specific interpretation" of world, governing and guiding "what is" and "what is not" able to be disclosed to human being according to its "specific comprehension of truth."[10] Today, in the modern age, the enframing of the world-as-object is primarily formulated and promulgated through the sciences.[11] "For the sciences," Heidegger writes, "in manifold ways, always claim to give the fundamental form of knowing and of the knowable in advance, whether deliberately or though the kind of currency and effectiveness that they themselves possess."[12]

The gods, however, do not appear as one object among many. As light (the bright ones), the gods reveal a world.[13] In the gods' light entities are illuminated, bringing some to appearance, while casting others into shadow, making some entities mean-

ingful to human being, while others fade in significance. In other words, the gods' light is not an 'object' *within* the world that human beings might grasp or possess, but the *way* a world is revealed—the gods' light *is* the opening of world.[14]

In the gods' light, Heidegger says, the world is revealed as fragile and fleeting, and therefore also holy and sacred.[15] Yet to eyes fixated only upon a world of present objects, the flickering light of the gods goes unnoticed.

◊

*Can I overcome loss or shield myself from absence? Can I hide from longing, let it pass by without touching? Can I remain hidden – untouched and untouchable – kept safe, separate, shielded from the ache? Barely can I hold myself back or turn away from its pull – longing. Can I overcome loss? I cannot. It must begin this way, in the shadow of divine absence; or else the work–the work I am–would miss the persistent, fleeting, scraps of a life, the accumulation of little events that must live daily with loss. To begin in this way, is to write into the work–the work I am–the vaporous ink of longing, this is writing born from the shadow and spark of some unseen flame.*

Heidegger offers a small glimmer of hope that the gods' light *may* yet shine again in such "destitute" times. In his 1946 lecture, *What Are Poets For?,* delivered on the twentieth anniversary of Rilke's death (1926), Heidegger claims that the gods' light is lost to the darkness of forgottenness and will remain so—*unless* a place is prepared for the gods to shine; a place open to receive the gods and capable of carrying their light. Heidegger writes:

> How could there ever be for the god an abode fit for a god, if a divine radiance did not first begin to shine in everything that is? The gods who 'were once there,' 'return' only at the 'right time'—that is, when there has been a turn among men [human being] in the right place, in the right way.[16]

"[This] is what poets are for, now," Alfred Hofstadter says.[17] In destitute times, the poet becomes a lightning rod, a diviner, earthing and channelling the loss and absence of the gods' light, revealing the loss of gods for others to experience. "In such a dark and deprived time," Hofstadter writes, "it is the task of the poet to help us see once more the bright possibility of a true world."[18] For Heidegger, the "bright possibility" of a world illumined by the gods' light begins by experiencing the

loss of the gods' "divine radiance." This task, of awakening loss, is well-suited to the poet, for a poet is someone acutely sensitive to the gods' absence. Heidegger writes: "Poets bring to mortals [human being] the trace of the fugitive gods, the track into the dark of the world's night. As the singers of soundness, the more venturesome ones are 'poets in a destitute time."[19] According to Hofstadter, such sensitivity gives the poet a greater "willingness to stop, listen, hear, remember, and respond to the call that comes from Being."[20] As such, the poet is not content in the *Gestell,* but homeless (*Unheimlich*), always "underway" in search of the holy—in Heidegger's own words:

> Poets who are of a more venturesome kind are underway on the track of the holy because they experience the unholy as such'[21]

The poet, so defined, is impoverished by the current enframing of world. As such, poets attempt to open bright spaces in dark times through which the gods' radiance may shine, by opening their language to receive a new song, a new world.

◊

Heidegger's later philosophical-poetic thinking is particularly attuned to the absence of the gods. Yet Heidegger was also concerned with the possibility of how the gods' light might be experienced again within and through specific locales and phenomena.[22] Heidegger did this by describing the gods' illumination specifically in relation to a German farmhouse, a jug, river, bridge, hearth, temple, and the landscape as a whole. Over his lifetime of thinking, Heidegger continued to wonder at the bright "manifestation" and "disclosure" (*Offenbarkeit*) of being and its messengers—this is being as the "temporal-spatial emerging and shining-forth of beings in their beingness

as gathered in the ensemble."[23] Finding new ways to say being in its shining so that it is not forgotten became Heidegger's abiding concern. To this end, from the 1930s to the end of his life in 1976, the gods played a central role in Heidegger's thinking as can be seen in a private correspondence with Ingeborg Böttger in 1968.[24] Heidegger writes:

> [In the modern age, the absence of the gods reveals that] "behind the technological world there is a mystery. This world is not just a creation of human beings. No one knows whether and when humans will ever experience this emptiness as the 'sacred empty'. It suffices that this relation remains open."[25]

Holding open this relation and finding new ways to let the light of the gods' break-forth is the task of the poet. Indeed, Heidegger's own thinking of the gods can be traced to his study of the poet Friedrich Hölderlin in the years following the publication of *Being and Time* (1927).[26] By 1934, in the period that would later come to be known as the "turn" (*die Kehre*) (1930-40),[27] the gods and poetry had become a serious matter for Heidegger's thinking. To this task Heidegger gave himself completely, as Andrew Mitchell notes: "Nothing could prepare the reader for the full onslaught of things divine in the decades to come."[28] In Hölderlin's verse Heidegger glimpsed a way to bring back together "thought and praise," a way-of-being torn apart and subsequently lost in the scientific age.[29] Hölderlin was acutely sensitive to the "unfolding and budding forth" of entities; that is, being as a holy happening, shining and waning within the light of being itself.[30] At the same time, Hölderlin quietly mourned the loss of the gods who had "flown" in the face of the instrumentalising of beings.[31] Such that the resplendent gleam of being no longer held sway.[32] Hence, Hölderlin proved crucial for Heidegger's later thinking by offering, as Timothy Clark observes, "a radical alternative to productionist thinking and the world of techno-science."[33]

Hölderlin's poetic language also offered Heidegger a way to speak about the sacredness of being without needing to proceed under the aegis of onto-theo-logical grammar or by falling into dualistic thinking—the gods who lived are now dead. Following Hölderlin, Heidegger entertained a new way of speaking in which divinity is neither *only* presence *or* absence but both/and.[34] Mitchell observes:

> Heidegger's thinking of divinity concerns itself not with a simple life, death, or rebirth of divinity, but with hints and traces that announce a world between presence and absence. So positioned, these hints are fragile, delicate, and easily missed.[35]

◊

Heidegger never abandoned the academic format altogether, but after the *Kehre* his thinking took on a more poetic disclosure as he began to express his thought in specific poetic words and phrases, and in some cases whole texts were written in a rich poetic invocation. Concurrent with his reading of Hölderlin, Heidegger's private notebooks and journals from the 1930-40s reveal an intense phase of experimentation with his new poetic language. In these works, style, tone, format, and terminology are pushed to their limit, as Heidegger searched for a new way to 'say' the bright disclosure of being. Such experimentation is most evident in the journals *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)* (1938) and *The Event* (1941-42).[36] But can also be found throughout the essays and lectures of this period to as late as the 1970s. [37] There is a vast amount of scholarship on Heidegger's turn to the poetic, although opinion remains divided in regards to its merits. For instance, Karl Löwith finds Heidegger's poetizing puzzling and claims it distracts from his serious philosophical thinking. Thus, Löwith writes, "often it is

hardly possible to determine … whether Heidegger poetizes philosophically or thinks poetically."[38] On the other hand, Alfred Hofstadter maintains Heidegger's poetizing is not to be seen as superfluous to his more serious philosophical concerns, rather the poetic, Hofstadter writes, "*is the thinking* itself."[39] Similarly, the philosopher, Christos Yannaras, argues that Heidegger's new poetic sensibility constitutes the crux of his later thought:

> [During the period of the *Kehre*, Heidegger's thinking became a] marriage between poetic language and philosophy … precisely that which his suspicious Roman Catholic critics mocked: *Denken als Kunst, Mystik, Romantik*? Their mocking suspicion justified his [poetic] criticism, a criticism that demolished Western metaphysics. [40]

◊

Apart from the private journals, arguably the full scope of Heidegger's philosophical-poetic thinking came to light in the lectures *The Thing* and *Building Dwelling Thinking* from 1950 and 1951 respectively.[41] These later works have a remarkably different tone and attunement when compared, broadly speaking, to the more systematic, formal style of the earlier lectures and papers. In these works, Heidegger brought to bear his new poetic lyricism. As such, these works have more in common with poetic modes of exploration than they do with formal argumentation, although formal reasoning is present too, but it is only a part of the overall drift of his thought. To read these works requires a sensitivity to "passing or indirect" philosophical and poetic resonances, the ability to enter the elasticity of Heidegger's language, and an attunement to the trace and glimmer of the gods' light shimmering through these

works as it flashes up, lingers, and passes away.[42] Therefore, in these works, as in poetry, Heidegger's thought is entwined with his language, and it is his language that gathers what is to come to thinking.

Indeed, Heidegger's language in his later works differs from a modern understanding of language, which takes language as a tool in service to human understanding and thus makes language subservient to human will and its preoccupations.[43] In contrast, Heidegger attempts to let "language speak."[44] Readers are bidden to listen to the voice of being speaking through language itself. Heidegger draws attention to the address of being in language through his unconventional way of speaking. This is language that "evades … or innovates upon prevailing conventions, and thus persistently shocks, baffles, and frustrates standard expectations" allowing for a new experience of language to emerge.[45] As such, this is language that must be encountered. Indeed, George Steiner writes, so intwined is Heidegger's thinking with his language in his later works that there is no paraphrase, exegesis, or elucidation that does not betray the sway of his thought:

*Language fails me in this moment; I do not need it – I am language now – free from trying to speak – no more naming – I must travel unknown paths.*

> No aspect of Heideggerian thought can be divorced from the phenomenon of Heidegger's prose style … Heidegger's play on the hidden life of words, his pulsating cadence, his use of metonymy, in which concrete attributes stand for abstract entities and abstract segments represent or enact a concrete whole, seem to become simultaneously transparent and hypnotic, like a deep seen through a film of *light* or *lit* water.[46]

◊

Heidegger's thinking of the gods in his later works is suggestive and evocative. As such, his later works need to be read respon-

sively. Heidegger's thinking of the gods does not arrive in a series of propositions, instead Heidegger seeks to create a mood (*Stimmung*) with his poetic language wherein readers are attuned to the glimmer and absence of the gods' light. [47]

◊

Despite the importance of poets and poetic language in Heidegger's later thinking, poetic responses to Heidegger's work are few in Heidegger studies. As far as I am aware, Richard Capobianco's philosophical-poetic work *Heidegger's Way of Being* is the only study to incorporate poetry as a central component in response to Heidegger's thinking.[48] In this sense, Capobianco's work is in keeping with the aim of my project and an overview of his work will be helpful to shed light upon the path I have taken in this work.

Of interest to my own work is the way Capobianco incorporates the voices of creators, writers, artists, and poets into his work and combines these with a beautiful meditative prose style, while at the same time offering an erudite reading of Heidegger's thinking of being. Capobianco selects a number of artists whom he takes to be attuned to the shimmering light of being: the naturalist, John Muir, the sculptor, Manuel Carbonell, the architect, Louis Kahn, and the poets, Friedrich Hölderlin, Johann Peter Hebel, William Wordsworth, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Walt Whitman, and e. e. cumming. These creators, artists, and poets are given space to sing and celebrate their own experience of the lightning-way of being—what Hölderlin poetically referred to as: the "gleaming [*Glänzen*]," "golden (*golden*)" glow that lights up all beings.[49] The inclusion of artistic and, above all, poetic voices into his philosophical discussion, Capobianco argues, helps to illuminate new avenues for thinking *with* and even *beyond* Heidegger as to what it might mean to correspond with the light of being and beings'

messengers, the gods, whose light is inseparable from beings' golden gleam. Thus, Capobianco's inclusion of poetic voices in his work is not simply a supplement to his philosophical exposition of Heidegger's thinking, nor is it arbitrary caprice on his part, nor is it merely a desire for academic novelty. Capobianco's reason for inviting non-philosophical voices into his scholarly work is purposeful and has a specific place in his thinking. As Capobianco himself explains:

> My hope is that, [… this work] will offer readers a philosophical and poetic meditation on his [Heidegger's] way of Being that not only elucidates but also evokes the *experience* of Being.[50]

Capobianco not only hopes to elucidate Heidegger's thinking but to "evoke" for readers the "*experience"* of being itself.

◊

For Capobianco, philosophical elucidation and poetic response perform complimentary but differing roles. On the one hand, philosophical elucidation is helpful for bringing clarity to a work, (in this case Heidegger's), by offering critique, evaluation, analysis, and judgement, thereby enabling readers to better grasp a work's guiding themes, suppositions, and arguments. Despite these perceived benefits, Capobianco argues, elucidation still leaves readers freed from the need to take up the question of being for themselves. For while the reader gains understanding of Heidegger's thinking, and may even experience this as an insightful and rewarding enterprise, unless the question of being becomes the reader's question, then the task of thinking is yet to be engaged. Poetry, on the other hand, does not elucidate. It does not stand back or seek clarification; rather, poetry seeks to enter into the opening spaces of thinking, and only then in order to participate.

As such, poetry draws the reader into the *experience* of thinking being itself, what Capobianco calls the "being-way."[52] One way the poetic does this is by attuning the reader not only to what is apparent to language, what Rowan Williams calls the "apprehension of our environment,"[53] those encounters that can be codified in the shared symbols or representations of a language, but also to the inapparent; that is, what is lost to language.[54] Unlike elucidation which uses language to clarify, classify, and evaluate, the poetic hearkens to the ineffable within our encounters with our environment, thereby foregrounding that which eludes codification into language.[55] Hence, poetry is often seen as a form of "extreme utterance" in comparison to our habitual use of language.[56] Nevertheless, it is here, at the edge of words, that the poetic reveals the abrupt wanting of language to speak fully and finally of being. In doing so, the poetic draws readers into the experience of thinking being itself, as it shimmers and shines just beyond—always beyond—our ability to grasp its flickering light.[57]

*I turn around and around, I write and write, I look and long and leap and mourn, but still the gods remain far-off in their absence – am I not divining?*

◊

To evoke this *experience* of being, Capobianco welcomes the voices of artists, creators and, above all, poets to guide readers into correspondence with being. For it is through the poets' song that the light of being shines; a song, which in turn, has received its light from the gods. Thus, Capobianco writes, drawing here on the German poet, Johann Peter Hebel:

*<Do you not know for this you are called, "the poet is the one who stays awake the whole night through.">*[51]

> The poet, the friend of the world, sees and cherishes every natural and crafted thing … Yet the poet at the same time sees more, sees how all of this comes to pass, the very coming-to-pass itself. The poet 'gathers the world into a saying whose word remains a softly restrained shining in which the world appears as if being caught sight of for the first time,' and the aim is never 'to instruct or educate' but simply to

> make known and let be. This is how the poet 'preaches,' not as a minister' — for the poet who preaches [as a minister] is a poor poet' — but rather as one who 'let's what is to be said appear in its shining.'[58]

Capobianco maintains his philosophical-poetic approach to Heidegger's thinking of being is entirely in keeping with Heidegger's own aspirations to find language that would allow the light of being to break forth in new ways. In a short but telling section of Capobianco's study, Capobianco recalls a conversation he had with Manfred Frings, the editor of Volume 55 of Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*. Capobianco conveys how Frings had impressed upon him the need to continue to push his language—and Heidegger's—beyond the current well-known expressions used to speak of that bright mystery, being itself. Indeed, it was always, Frings said, "Heidegger's lifelong desire to find new ways, always another way, of bringing Being itself into view … Heidegger never rested content with any one of his formulations."[59] In fact, in his 1951-1952 lecture series *What Is Called Thinking*, Heidegger himself says as much:

> Words are not terms, and thus are not like buckets and kegs from which we scoop a content that is there. Words are wellsprings that are found and dug up in the telling, wellsprings that must be found and dug up again and again, that easily cave in, but that at times also well up when least expected. If we do not go to the spring again and again, the buckets and kegs stay empty, or their content stays stale.[60]

◊

Today, close to fifty years since Heidegger's death, familiarity with Heidegger's language might, if allowed, distance us from

the same task of needing to enter into the fray of language ourselves. For this reason, Capobianco welcomes 'new' and unfamiliar voices into his philosophical work in order to tease open and reinvigorate our hearing of Heidegger's language—and our own—so to find new ways to experience the gleaming light of being and its bright messengers, the gods. Capobianco writes:

> Heidegger's way of Being continues to challenge us to see *our way of being in a new light*—and to take it up with a new 'lightness' … [this task][61] is not simply philosophical. It is more radical and far-reaching; it is to revision ourselves, our relations, our *ethos* [a fitting *way of dwelling*] in accordance with the Being-way.[62]

If we are to reinvigorate our way of being (*da-sein*), Capobianco says, we must take up the invitation to hear in Heidegger's thinking the challenge to risk our own language, to find and be found by new expressions of being that will allow the light of being to break-forth. For our being is always participating in that vivid, fresh, and endlessly creative wellspring—being itself—even if this participation has been forgotten. If the bright flame of being, that primordial lightning-flash, is to break-forth, our words must become wellsprings—open spaces—prepared with a 'lightness' and opened to receive and be received by that shimmering, golden gleam:

> Word upon word upon word—endlessly, abundantly, playfully, joyously—but never are we able to exhaust the inexhaustible 'saying' of Being itself.[63]

◊

If Capobianco is correct, thinking after Heidegger (both chronologically, philosophically, and poetically) cannot be con-

tent to merely re-inscribe Heidegger's language. Rather, to think after Heidegger is to be struck by the light of being revealed through his work and to allow this light to illumine our own way of being (*da-sein*). For this to happen, language must be risked—my language must be risked. Capobianco's challenge is first an appeal to artists and poets. This is only right after all, Capobianco says, for Heidegger himself had: "caught sight of what artists and poets have seen all along, and brought it into a poetic philosophical language."[65] The challenge is how to take Heidegger's thinking *back* into the poetic in order to say the light of being 'again and again' for myself.[66] For this to happen, I must become intimate with the messengers of being, the gods; that *gleaming*, *glowing*, *glistening* light, which Heidegger never tired of finding new ways to speaking about.

*"I would like to know what you are searching for.*

*—I too would like to know."*[64]

◊

Building upon Capobianco's turn to the poetic, but taking a more "radical and far-reaching" [67] approach to that of Capobianco, *And then, Lightning* sees an opportunity to both respond to Heidegger's thinking of the gods while taking up Capobianco's challenge to risk language in order to find another way—always another way—to say being and its messengers, the gods.[68] In order to do this, *And then, Lightning* takes Heidegger's thinking back into creative works and leaps unreservedly into the fragile, temporary, open spaces of creative writing, where the poetic, that most fleeting of disclosures, is given full-sway.

◊

Taking the many strands that comprise my loss and longing for the gods' light—faith, hope, doubt, silence, wonder, absence, beauty, death—I weave these strands together with Heidegg-

er's later philosophical-poetic thinking to prepare a space in my world through which the gods may shine. In this way, *And then Lightning* is a work in preparation; an open space for "the trace, for the non-present, for radiance" where the gods' light may yet announce itself, in the spaces between absence and longing.[70]

To his task, *And then, Lightning* invites its readers to enter poetically into the work. To open themselves to the overflow of its many absences, traces, hints, and bright spaces. And to accompany me as I hearken with Heidegger to the gods' hints and winks.[71] To do this, the work listens to Heidegger's thinking concerning how human being unfolds, not as a subject surrounded by objects, but within a world of constellations through which human being is part and, indeed, *takes part* through a conglomeration of bonds and relationalities. Heidegger calls these bonds "the fourfold" (*das Geviert*) concerning which the one taking priority is with the gods.[72] The work then follows Heidegger on the loss of this intimate relationship and the consequences of estrangement, looking all the while for avenues and possibilities for reconciliation as I long to correspond with a flash of light.

*How will I know when I have found you–or you have found me?*

◊

In order to foreground the experience of longing, no poetic utterance or individual poem receives specific interpretation. Interpretation, the poet Rubem Alves writes, has the propensity to want to "help the poet [and readers] out of his speech disturbance ... [and] bring light into darkness" prematurely.[73] In dark times, there is a danger with interpretation arriving too soon—or too late. Before interpretation, there is longing. Interpretation, for now, shall be deferred. The reader, like the poet, must be content with hints and winks.

*<"Every relation of light is an immediate relation.>"*[69]

Due to the nature of what is being discussed, *And then, Lightning* demands "an adjustment and inventiveness in the writing through which the thinking is conducted."[74] The reader will notice that the exegesis accompanying the volume of poetry eschews the typical systematic format of an academic treatise, finding it necessary instead to write in a fragmentary mode, which speaks of my struggle and longing to correspond with the gods' light.

Throughout the work, poetic response is interwoven and juxtaposed with critical inquiry and the work shuttles between these different modes of discourse creating a polyphonous and multitudinous exploration of its thesis question. These fragments are constantly in motion and switch between registers and genres as I turn my language to catch a glimmer of the gods' light. At times, these discourses are in contention with each other. At other times, they move in a harmonious flow. In this way, *And then, Lightning* seeks to perform within its very structure the struggle to correspond with the gods in the modern age. As such, the work can be read as a "work in movement."[75] Its contribution is to be found in its form or rather its *forming* and the mood this engenders, more so than in its content. Heidegger's advice for reading his own work also applies here: "When thinking attempts to purse something that has claimed its attention, it may happen that on the way it undergoes a change. It is advisable, therefore, in what follows to pay attention to the path of thought rather than to its content."[76]

For this reason, readers should not look within the work for a dialectical structure, the work does not postulate an argument *per se*, but from the outset attempts an altogether different kind of response to Heidegger's gods, whereby the gods are waited upon, watched for, and perhaps, even greeted.[77] To read in this way "may require setting aside what is accepted, safe, and manageable."[78] And yet, this is what the poetic has always ask-

ed of us, beckoning, and bidding the reader into its bright open spaces.

*<"Question the habitual. But that's just it, we're habituated to it. We don't question it, it doesn't question us, it doesn't seem to pose a problem, we live it without thinking, as if it carried within it neither questions nor answers, as if it weren't the bearer of any information. This is no longer even conditioning, it's anaesthesia. We sleep our lives in a dreamless sleep. But where is our life? Where is our body? Where is our space?">*[79]

Throughout the work, the relationship between the poet and the gods is foregrounded. The reader will encounter several recurring *récit*. These small narratives trace what I take to be early encounters with the light of the gods in childhood and my growing estrangement in the years following. These narratives are central to the work, for they offer a crucial phenomenological exploration of Heidegger's thought, while also performing my loss and subsequent longing to experience the light of the gods.

In addition, the relationship between the poet and the gods is explored in several resonant poetic images: a sudden flash of lightning, a lovers' relationship, a farmer's preparation for the coming of a new season, the unceasing flow of a river, the slow, steady growth of a tree, the innocence of childhood, the colour yellow, the longing and excitement of homecoming, the pain of estrangement, the hidden heat of an ember, the cold heart of a cinder, and the flickering light of a flame. This is writing marked by silences and openings to draw thinking into spaces of preparation.

Several of key texts from Heidegger's later work relating to the gods are explored. The lectures *The Thing, Building Dwelling Thinking,* and a less well-known article, *Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?,* are considered for the poetic way the relationship between human being and the gods emerges within specific locales, in this case Heidegger's residence in southern Germany.

Heidegger's three lectures on Heraclitus of Ephesus delivered at the University of Freiburg in 1944/1945 and 1966/1967 titled *The Inception of Occidental Thinking, Logic: Heraclitus's Doctrine of the Logos*, and *Heraclitus Seminar* respectively are also explored. Particular attention is given to the intriguing story Heidegger relates regarding Heraclitus at home warming himself before

his oven (hearth), much to the surprise of his visitors who have arrived to watch the great thinker deep in thought. Heraclitus, noticing his visitors' hesitation to come closer and their disappointed to find him occupied in such a mundane task, nevertheless beckons his visitors to enter his abode with the enigmatic greeting: "Here, too, the gods are present." The story was important to Heidegger, for he recalls the story again in 1946, in the *Letter on Humanism*, albeit with several significant interpretive glosses, which I suggest reveal Heidegger's sense for the mystery and the holy within the ordinary, and highlights Heidegger's interest in the relationship between the gods and the common things of the world.

Finally, from this bright edge, the work leaps into the collection of poetry also titled *And then, Lightning*.[80] It is there that the prosaic gives way to the poetic and my own-most is held out into the flame. The collection *And then, Lightning* listens, waits, and draws close to the bright message of the gods that is not sayable, yet resounds in all things, lights-up all things, and "steers all things."[81] As such, at stake in the poetic utterance of this work is my enacted reckoning with my world which calls for proximity with the *existentiell* of my everyday existence.[82] For it is here, in proximity to what is my ownmost, that the gods reveal themselves: within the temporal, dappled light of my world with all its wonder, tragedy, intimacy, ordinariness, and mystery.

◊

Heidegger's description of the gods suggests that the gods shine within and through locatable phenomena, and if there is to be correspondence with their shimmering light, it is in the nearness of things through which we have our being. To correspond with the gods' message in accordance with the gods

own way of revealing, therefore, requires returning to *my own* transience and way of being.[83] Accordingly, the poems in *And then, Lightning* refer to people and places wherein I have my world and return often to the dwellings and locations I know well. Of particular importance is my place of birth and residence in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. As such, several poems invoke and attend to the gods' light in relation to the flora and fauna of Aotearoa New Zealand. A reader familiar with Māori culture might find resonances with Māori spirituality.[84] It is not my intention to appropriate Māori concepts relating to the gods or the whenua, nor do I mean to equate Heidegger's notion of the gods with Māori spirituality. As a New Zealand Pākehā who implicitly thinks within a Western knowledge system, I risk misappropriating complex Māori notions by wrapping western phenomena in Māori language.[85] As Carl Mika and Georgina Tuari Stewart argue, Māori language and concepts carry with them ontological implications, "ancestral links, and postcolonial histories of struggle" which I do not share and do not fully comprehend.[86] More familiar to me is the secular, technological comportment to the world, a decidedly Western worldview.[87]

◊

To circle back to the opening of the work, there I asked: *How do I correspond with a flash of light?* This is a question that asks after my own existence and comportment within the world. Heidegger describes human being as "thrown" (*Geworfenheit*) into a world of traditions. These traditions shape the world that is available to encounter and govern the possibilities for existing therein. Heidegger writes,

> In its manner of existing at any given time, and accordingly also with the understanding of the being

> that belongs to it, Da-sein grows into a customary interpretation of itself and grows up in that interpretation … This understanding discloses the possibilities of its being and regulates them.[88]

How do I correspond with a flash of light in a world that only disclosures possibilities for being within the forgottenness of the gods' light? If I am to correspond with the gods, therefore, I cannot rely on the guidance of a world without the gods' light.[89] But neither do I know how to exist otherwise. Thus, in this work I attempt to twist free, to find another way to receive and be received by a flash of light. *And then, Lightning* creates a temporal spacing in which the gods *may* shine. This is a work of traces, absences, and glimmers. Here, in this spacing, I wait, watch, and listen for what *may* be heard, what *may* be seen, what *may* suddenly come to light.

# BLINK

The light lets everything come forward in its appearance and glow, into which everything real, set aflame by it, stands in its own contour and measure.[90]

"In the blink of an eye (Augenblick), a momentary look at what is momentarily concreate."[91]

*A world flashes up (Blitz) and is gone – dark is the night after thunder-light ...*

*... barely a glimmer.*

*Some nights, when the moonlight rides the wake of the boats, and I am struck by the beauty of everything crumbling in the fading light, I wonder if this moment isn't bathed in the glow of some distant deity, whose name I have forgotten, and whose light I see now only in retreat. I wave, and the boats think I'm waving at them ... when really, I am waving at the gods, in case they are watching ... but tonight ... the moon is hidden ... and I can hardly believe ... I could have been ... so foolish.* [92]

*... gods, the ancient glottal stop catches in the back of my throat. I cough, and it slides into my mouth. I examine it with the tip of my tongue; four little letters long drained of taste. I spit them out ... one by one.*

*In the morning, I found the flax bushes bent down and covered in mud ... the aftermath of last night's storm ... I stood for a while and looked at the road that ran beside the house ... debris strewn as far as the eye could see; leaves, branches, the odd plastic bottle ... and its surface, still wet with rain ... was all a glimmer in the rising sun ... far away, the sound of thunder could be heard rolling in the next valley ...*

# HOLY

"Is it you?"—"Yes, it's me."—"You, in broad daylight."—"In the broad daylight of darkness." … "Listen." — "Listen." In the silence something was speaking, something was being quiet.[93]

*There was creek not far from where I lived. It twisted its way along the bottom of the reserve opposite my house and disappeared into a storm grate that doubled as an emporium of sorts. For much of the year, the grate was covered by debris ranging from discarded household items: bottles, cans, toasters, plastic containers, articles of clothing; shoes, shirts, underwear, socks, woollen hats. Occasionally there was the odd car part, tires typically, but sometimes a door or a bonnet, and once, a bench seat with its seatbelts still attached. We had fun that year, taking turns to drive, heading off on road trips to some exotic far-flung destination. Having lingered for a while at the mouth of the storm grate, the creek would slowly disappear, flowing around and over and through the various objects; only to resurface again at the end of my street purged now of any miscellaneous items, where it would make its way across the tidal flat and back out to the sea.*

> Gods are mighty and full of light … The German word for 'light' is '*Helle*' which resembles—and also is close to in its meaning—the '*Heil*,' the 'holiness.' Just as, in English, 'holy' is related to 'whole.' We encounter something as wholly, if it is standing in the light. Gods are illuminated par excellence; they *are* in a whole or a holy way because they are the carriers of the light of wholeness, of holiness, of nature itself.[94]

*For a long time, I had imagined the creek flowed inland. It wasn't until my mid-twenties that I was shocked to discover my childhood logic was back-to-front. I was astonished it had taken so long to realise my mistake. Like a slippery eel, my lapse in adult reasoning was caught by chance one evening at dinner with a friend, when I happened to mention that the creek carried seaweed into the reserve that I would then use to 'decorate' the trees surrounding its banks. This story was 'impossible,' my friend protested, who went on to point out, quite rightly, that seaweed could not travel 'up' the current. So, how did it get there?*

> For even if the poet's soul may preserve in itself the presence of what is coming, the poet by himself is never capable of naming the holy immediately. The blaze of light, quietly preserved in the soul of the poet, needs to be kindled. Only a ray of light that emanates again from the holy itself is strong enough for that. Therefore, someone higher, who is nearer to the holy and yet still remains beneath it, a god, must throw the kindling lightning-flash into the poet's soul. Thus, the god takes upon himself that which is 'above' him, the holy, and brings it together into the sharpness and force of the unique ray through which he is 'allotted' to man, in order to bestow it. Since neither man nor gods by themselves can ever achieve an immediate relation to the holy, men need the gods and the heavenly ones need mortals … Because the gods must be gods and the men must be men, and because the one can never be without the other, there is love between them.[95]

*My parents considered the reserve a waste of space; a barrier separating the old from the new, and by new they meant progress. 'People today don't need a reserve; they need a place to live' ... 'The council should do something with that land' ... 'Subdivide' become my parents' motto. Maybe they were right. But I couldn't shake the feeling I wanted the reserve to grow and overtake our property. I imaged it creeping its way into our manicured garden, now bounding up the stone steps, now seeping under the front door, now spreading through every room of the house. 'Come and claim it," I dared whisper, in defiance of my parents' pragmatism to rid the world of empty spaces. 'Come, if you're coming, if you want it, come. Come!'*

*How some nights I wished to slip out of bed and secret my way down to the creek. But first, I would need to pass through the reserve; walking alone in that wide-open space in the dark. The thought of it made me feel at once immense and insignificant; I trembled at the thought, excited by the possibility, and terrified at the risk of being caught.*

*I have very few memories of playing with other children in the reserve. What memories I do have do not involve the creek, as if the creek was either too sacred, or didn't exist when other children were present. Of course, that can't be right. Somehow, I must have forgotten my memories of the creek itself. Did the other neighbourhood children also knew about the creek. I never saw them there. Perhaps their parents had warned them to stay well away. Why hadn't my parents warned me? After all, the banks were slippery, and a secure tree-hold could never be thought of as a surety, to do so was certainly inviting an unwelcome soaking, or worse.*

> In the age of the world's night, the abyss of the world must be experienced and endured. But for this it is necessary that there be those who reach into the abyss.[96]
>
> [It is a] wonder that a world worlds around us at all, that beings are and not rather nothing, that things are and that we ourselves in their midst are, that we ourselves are and yet scarcely know who we are, and scarcely know that we do not know all of this.[97]
>
> … world as a sublime or 'holy' place.[98]
>
> —a light of revelation, but such as did not reveal to him the objects of sense perception. It was a light without bounds or termination below or above or to the sides; he saw no limit whatever to the light which appeared to him and shone around him, but it was like a sun infinitely brighter and larger than the universe: and in the midst of this light he himself stood, having become nothing …[99]

*And years later I found out, or perhaps I merely remembered, how all things blossoming and wilting in their own way can be holy, a sacred happening, a little bit of divinity shining right here, in everything; and how the poet, quietly preserving the passing of time, evokes the silent flow, thankful for what is given, not grasping, but receiving, and having received, letting time, that holy happing, slip away, back into silence.*

# APPEARANCE

The ineffable inhabits the magnificent and the common, the grandiose and the tiny facts of reality alike. Some people sense this quality at distant intervals in extraordinary events; others sense it in the ordinary events, in every fold, in every nook; day after day, hour after hour. To them things are bereft of triteness; to them being does not mate with non-sense. They hear the stillness that crowds the world in spite of our noise, in spite of our greed. Slight and simple as things may be—a piece of paper, a morsel of bread, a word, a sigh—they hide and guard a never-ending secret.[100]

*A god shimmers*

A peasant home in the Black Forest; a building in harmony with its surroundings; built for winter snow and summer heat. In the living quarters, a corner for the gods, a place to pray, to swaddle a child or prepare the dead for burial: the gods bring their message.[101]

*A god shimmers*

A bridge across a river gathers a flow of water; creates a point of congregation; the bridge becomes a meeting place, drawing together people and place. Still, the bridge makes way for the river, allowing it to freely come and go, while offering a path for the people to go about their daily tasks. In toil and in blessing, the gods bring their message.[102]

*A god shimmers*

A jug holds spring-water; a cool liquid in which lingers the weight of stone; the dark heart of the earth, and the rains of the sky; lip to lip the people quench their thirst, letting the golden liquid gush as a sacrifice for all they have been given: the gods bring their message.[103]

# DWELLING

> *Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build.* Let us think for a while of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and sky, divinities and mortals enter in *simple oneness* into things ordered the house[104]

The style of farmhouse Heidegger describes in the lecture *Building Dwelling Thinking* is a byre-dwelling, built by peasants in a style dating back 400 years. This is a style of farmhouse (*Schwarzwaldhaus*) typical of the Black Forest region (*Schwarzwald*) of southern Germany.[105]

*The house was unapologetically eccentric. The building materials had been sourced locally. These consisted of precast concrete blocks, large panes of blue tinted glass, door handles and fixtures, cupboards and bench tops, carved from caramel-coloured timbers and burnt-toffee-coloured hardwoods, selected from the surrounding area and stained with native shellac, to compliment the sand-colored tiles held in place with cream-colored mortar; the whole ensemble designed and fabricated by local crafters.*

The farmhouse is built near a spring. This provides the peasants with access to fresh water, while respecting the natural flow of the mountain brook. Although the farmhouse is built on the side of a mountain, it is not exposed, rather it is sheltered in a fold out of the path of the wind. [106] From this position, the house has an unobstructed view over the meadows stretching away into the valley below. And from the front of the house, the peasants keep watch over the seasons that announce themselves in the meadows' changing colours—purple, blue, green, yellow, brown—signalling to the peasants that a new rhythm will soon be needed in the daily routine. [107]

*Inside the house, the use of electric lighting was kept to a minimum. This was in keeping with the Frank Lloyd Wright aesthetic: A house, Wright stipulated, should light up when the world lights up, for a house is not above the world, but in the world.*

*To compensate for the lack of internal electric lighting, large glass windows were installed in the hallways, bedrooms, and living areas. Interior corridors were configured to funnel light into even the darkest corners and recesses, allowing an ample amount of light into the house. Even on overcast days the house caught the light from every direction. As well as lighting the interior of the house, the large windows created the illusion of standing outside. Adding to this feeling was the fact that there was not a single window cover in the entire house; no curtains to draw, no blinds to pull, and no shutters to close, and no way to shut the house to the outside world. It was as if the normal rules regarding interior and exterior spaces did not apply to the house. This created a sense of living within the surrounding landscape, at once open to the elements, but managing to stop just short of exposure. A few well-placed trees provided a feeling of privacy; just enough to walk from the bathroom to the bedroom in nothing more than a towel.*

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*Two rectangular stained-glass windows were recessed into the dark wood paneling at the top of the stairs. They were roughly a hand-width in diameter, long and thin, and reached from the floor to ceiling. The windows were bright yellow, and in the right light lit-up the staircase of twenty honey-colored slabs of Kauri that spiraled around a two-storied central wooden beam, hand-turned by a master carver, in a bright yellow glow.*

The deeply-sloped thatched roof of the farmhouse mirrors the rhythms of the seasons. In summer, the natural fibres of the roof catch and retain the heat of the sun. The heat is used to dry animal skins and grain for the colder months of the year when the skins are turned into clothing and gains are scarce. In winter, the same roof provides shelter from the heavy snow and rain without impeding their passage back to the earth. The deep eaves of the roof also offer shelter from the summer heat by keeping the interior of the house cool, while in the winter act as refuge from the long, cold winter nights.[108]

*Over the years the house had been overshadowed by the urban sprawl. Government housing mostly, low-cost builds designed without their human inhabitants in mind, empty spaces stacked one on top of the other. But when the house was first built, it stood out in the open proud of its position and could be seen from kilometers away in any direction. Which isn't to imply the house was a blot on the landscape. In keeping with Wright's design aesthetic, the house might just as easily have sprouted from the ground. Rather than drawing attention itself, it blended in with its surroundings; evoking the wide, flat expanse it rested upon*

In one corner of the farmhouse there is an altar behind the family table. Photos of relatives and loved ones who have passed away line the walls. It is here that the peasants light candles each day as a reminder that the "journey through time" is fleeting and to be hallowed.[109] The golden light from the alter imparts the house and all who enter with a sense of the mystery and sacredness of life. And at night, in the golden sway of the squirming and ducking candle, the peasants give thanks in recognition for all that has been given and received.

*"Beautiful," was how visitors described the house. And, perhaps, because of its beauty, these same visitors were surprised to find the house standing on a piece of land in one of the poorer suburbs of the city. "A wealth of creativity inextricably tangled up in the poverty of urban planning; and houses of even poorer imagination," as one visitor had described the situation. But to you, this was also part of its charm. Beauty loves to hide, and what better place than among the ordinary, mundane streets of greater suburbia.*

Several generations of family members live in the house and there is no attempt to hide the journey of time from one generation to the next. The fragility of existence is not concealed but brought near. This is reflected in the "spatial arrangement" of the house where space is made for both cradle and coffin. [110] Recognition of life's finitude does not deflect from the peasants' quality of life, rather it gives life its meaning by hallowing the time that is given.

> Meaning is finitude; finitude *means* …meaning is found nowhere other than here, at this limit or surface of exposure, for it is only here that we can be reached, addressed, called out by what comes to us, what arrives, what concerns us, what strikes us as meaningful.[111]

Life in a Black Forest farmhouse is not the only way a world may become a dwelling for human being. Heidegger cautions about sentimentalising the peasant lifestyle or their particular building practices:

> Our reference to the Black Forest farm in no way means that we should or could go back to building such houses; rather, it illustrates by a dwelling that *has been* how it was able to build.[112]

Nevertheless, the Black Forest farmhouse reveals what for Heidegger human dwelling entails.[113] Dwelling gives rise to and coalesces within a world of *relations*; these relationships care for and hold each other in existence ("*in simple oneness*").[114] The farmhouse and its inhabitants live as much *in* the phenomena of mountain and meadow, birth and death, as these phenomena find their existence *within* the farmhouse: sloping roof, cradle and coffin. The peasants of the Black Forest do not merely live in a locale, they dwell *within* a world and this world opens before them within a given mood or colour that lights up their comportment towards entities. But to dwell in this way also implies a return to situatedness. Human being emerges through its embeddedness within a location. It is there that human beings "develop practices and tastes peculiarly suited" to the world through which they live.[115] When humans dwell in the way Heidegger describes—open to the passing of time, involved in practices suited to their situation—human being recovers attunement to "it's 'there' (*Da*) of its own existence in the world."[116]

*For all its character, the yellow stained-glass windows at the top of the stairs drew the most comments. Why break with the theme throughout the rest of the house, those imposing large glass windows, to install two relatively small panes of colored glass? No one would deny they were stunning in the right light, but as for the rest of the house, they simply did not make sense. Why yellow? What was the significance? After admiring the artistry, the undulating surface of the blown glass, the ever so slightly uneven coloring; the next question was always, "Why?" Then a conversation would develop in which visitors would speculate as to the reason the architect had chosen yellow. "Another reference to Wright's Falling Water, the Martin house, or the Unity Temple, perhaps?" A rather usual hypothesis. "No," another guest would say, "this is a development of Wright's themes, entirely of the architect's own invention." Inevitably these conversations led to some fierce disagreements. You had heard them all before, and gazing at the windows you would say, "It's a mystery all right. But don't you just love them?" On this point, visitors always agreed.*

For Heidegger, however, conditions for human dwelling also require a trace of something that has become foreign to most modern sensibilities. According to Heidegger, if human beings are to return to a *way* of dwelling, it is crucial they do "not forget the alter corner behind the community table."[117] Dwelling, Heidegger says, involves welcoming the gods' light back into human places of habitation.

# TRACES

In 1934, Heidegger wrote a short article for his local newspaper titled, *Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?*[118] In the article, Heidegger sets out to explain his reason for remaining in southern Germany, despite having been offered twice, and subsequently declining, a prestigious position at the University of Berlin.[119] The article is significant for it reveals the close connection between the gods and location. Throughout the article, Heidegger's own worlding is on full display. Heidegger gives generous space to descriptions of his deep connection to the Black Forest and its people, which he obviously loved and cherished. Moreover, all this is expressed in a rich poetic register through which the traces of the gods' light shimmers.

*The kitchen opened out onto a courtyard. Around the courtyard were built the main living areas and bedrooms. In the middle of the courtyard grew a large maple tree. Early in the tree's life someone had the foresight to build a ring of low seating around the trunk. But the seating had been built too close to the young tree and over the years it had grown to an enormous size, claiming the seating as its own, almost engulfing the ringed seat entirely. Like a tsunami in slow motion, no one had noticed until it was too late. Now there was nothing anyone could do to save the seating, apart from cutting down the tree, which you wouldn't allow. The adults found the whole thing amusing, while the children seized the opportunity as an invitation to climb. A low seat jutting out of a tree made an ideal platform for those with smaller legs to clamber higher into the canopy.*

The article opens with Heidegger gazing over the landscape, taking in the colours, lighting, scents, and sounds, as the Black Forest opens before him. He speaks of how "the meadows and pasture lands lead to the woods with its dark fir-trees, old and towering." Soon he catches sight of people emerging from the woods and he observes the work of the local inhabitants, like the "young farmboy [who] drags his heavy sled up the slope and guides it, piled high with beech logs, down the dangerous descent to his house, when the herdsman, lost in thought and slow of step, drives his cattle up the slope, when the farmer in his shed gets the countless shingles ready for his roof."[120] Encountering each moment, the reader breathes in the poetic infusion with its fragrance still to be named, but which lingers in each word and each simple recollection.

*As a child, the tree would lean over threatening to embrace you with its thin fingers and sinewy arms. Its dark figure threw shade on all your comings and goings. You would only dare venture into the courtyard if your mother accompanied you. But that was only during the winter. In summer, you lived in the courtyard as if it was a second room. The coming warmth meant it was time to gather. Long and short; bartered or stolen; broken and sharpened, the tree's sinewy arms became the neighborhood armory. Sitting high in the canopy, you would rain down fire on anyone who dared to come near. In the autumn, the leaves gave way again to the outline of something more sinister. But before the tree was quite bare, it was quiet and comforting, a place where you could retreat and escape the daily chores or slip away from the clutches of your siblings.*

Watching the peasants work, Heidegger is prompted to recall his own cottage, which he describes in surprising detail. Nestled in its place just above the woods, "on the steep slope of a wide mountain valley in the southern Black Forest, at an elevation of 1,150 meters, there stands a small ski hut. The floor plan measures six meters by seven. The low-hanging roof covers three rooms: the kitchen which is also the living room, a bedroom and a study."[121]

*On days when you found yourself alone and at a loss of things to do, you would find yourself back at the tree. There you would select and finger small finds plucked and foraged from the dirt amongst the tree's roots. You gathered up maple seeds, filling your pockets. A maple seed comes round like a pea, but caramel colored and light in the hand, with one long-curved paper-thin wing, similar to that of a moth, delicate. Thrown high enough, a maple seed will catch the wind, spiral down in bright golden-yellow hues, shot through with a color you always had trouble describing, and try as you might, to this day, you still cannot name.*

It is clear Heidegger knew this area intimately, as he lovingly poetizes a place very dear to him. Even the silence of the area resonates in him, and he speaks of how he is bemused when:

> people in the city often wonder whether one gets lonely up in the mountains among the peasants for such long and monotonous periods of time. But it isn't loneliness, it is solitude. In large cities one can easily be as lonely as almost nowhere else. But one can never be in solitude there. Solitude has the peculiar and original power not of isolating us but of projecting our whole existence out into the vast nearness of the presence [*Wesen*] of all things.[122]

# ENCOUNTER

Heidegger' depiction of the Black Forest is intimate, detailed, and tender. The descriptions are grounded in a physical, visitable location, and they are sensitive to the relationships between people, place, and the vast solitude that gathers and brings all things near to one another in that locale. The reader never gets the impression Heidegger is merely describing an abstract setting or an environment that could be exchanged for another without losing something of its essential meaning. The article is deeply personal, and its readers are drawn into the work as Heidegger describes his connection to the people, practices, and landscape of the area, as he experiences each moment as it comes forward to greet him and is greeted by him in return.

*You could see the whole world from the top of the tree: Your mother in the kitchen opening the windows, soon will come the tangy smell of a sourdough, even though she spends long hours in the kitchen alone, she never appears to be lonely, solitude for her was a sign of peace; but now here comes your brother and sister searching everywhere for you, sweet with word but sour of eye; and then, there is your father, stiffed-back, solitary, reading at his desk, what thoughts will go to his head this time? If you leaned out a little further, you could see the boundary of the property; the rusted gate that gave way to the reserve; and leaning out a little further, you could make out the creek twisting its way out to sea, and beyond that?*

Although Heidegger describes the contours and textures of the landscape unfolding before him, he never speaks as merely an observer of the Black Forest. Rather, he speaks of himself as part of the very warp and weft of the place. So imbedded is he within his worlding in the Black Forest, that, at one point, Heidegger appears to become synonymous with each texture and fold of his surroundings. Heidegger writes:

> Strictly speaking I myself never observe the landscape. I experience its hourly changes, day and night, in the great comings and goings of its seasons. The gravity of the mountains and the hardness of their primeval rock, the slow and deliberate growth of the fir-trees, the brilliant, simple splendour of the meadows in bloom, the rush of the mountain brook in the long autumn night, the stern simplicity of the flatlands covered with snow—all of this moves and flows through and penetrates daily existence up there, and not in forced moments of 'aesthetic' immersion or artificial empathy, but only when one's own existence stands in the work.[123]

Heidegger is not merely describing a *general* setting; he speaks of a locale that is synonymous with his own being. In this sense, Heidegger does not describe his world as an abstract array of meaningless objects, but rather a web of meaningful relationships of which he is a part, indeed, in which he takes part. Together, these relationships coalesce and give rise to a meaningful world. What Heidegger expresses in this article phenomenologically, is what Julian Young calls a "happening" and Heidegger himself refers to as "*Ereignis* or [the] 'worlding' of world."[124] Here Heidegger describes what it means not merely to live *in* a world but to exist *through* a world. This is why Heidegger describes his own being as emerging and unfolding within and through the relationships specific to the Black Forest region. Seasons, mountains, rock, fir-trees, meadows, brook, each give rise to what is Heidegger's own-being, his 'worlding', his *da-sein* (*being-there*).

*Summer arrived as a heat wave and settled into as a drought. The temperature rose to 30 degrees and refused to back down. The heat was unforgiving, and the ground hardened and cracked for lack of rain. A thin layer of tawny dust settled over the house making it look like a prop on the set of an old sepia movie. In desperation, the City imposed water restrictions. The summer responded in like, withdrawing the promise of rain, as the days stretched out under clear blue skies. Everyone became irritable and lethargic. A combination set to combust under the slightest bit of friction. Even the house refused to draw a breath, despite every window being open.*

Heidegger's connection to the Black Forest lies deeper than can be expressed in propositional language. Heidegger's worlding is never fully apprehended but is only ever *encounterable* ("I *experience* its hourly changes"). As such, Heidegger's experience of the Black Forest is not reducible to generalisations or abstractions. Thus, Heidegger does not write about a generic Forest region, he does not describe merely *another* locale or space, but a specific place with particular import and meaning to his own-being. Although Heidegger does not mention 'gods' by name, traces of the gods' light can be discerned throughout the article. For example, particularity is a characteristic of the gods, whose light brings things near to human being, illuminating some things so that they become meaningful, while casting other things into shadow, so that they fall away into insignificance.[125] Thus, Heidegger specifically mentions the "deliberate growth of the fir-trees, the brilliant, simple splendour of the meadows in bloom, the rush of the mountain brook in the long autumn night, the stern simplicity of the flatlands covered with snow." Each one strikes him as consequential and worthy of specific mention—but this does not apply to just any tree or meadow in general, but *this* tree, *these* meadows and flatlands, *that* mountain brook in particular. Each one is 'splendored' and radiant when illuminated in a meaning-full light. But particularity requires proximity, and the light of the gods may only announce itself, Heidegger says, "when one's own existence stands in the work."

*You lay bare chested on the concrete titles of the courtyard, your body resonating, like an antenna earthing some unseen source of power, until the last ray has been received and the day fully absorbed.*

In a godly light, the world appears as a web of meaningful relations. The world does not reveal itself as a mere collection of objects; rather, to the one 'standing in the work' and experiencing their existence through the world, the world appears as a whole or (w)holy integrated happening. Each participant within Heidegger's world appears meaningful to him, and phenomena such as the fir-tree, mountain, meadow, cart, and road have an indispensable role to play in maintaining the relational integrity of his world, just as each is dependent upon the others for its own meaning and existence.

*Under a blanket of stifling heat, you dozed, thinking about all the things you loved ...*

*... going to the cinema alone, black coffee in the morning, van Gogh's Bedroom in Arles, magnolia trees in bloom, Bashō, Alves, Nabokov, Dostoevsky, St John's Gospel, Dylan, climbing trees, Switzerland, Jerusalem, Paris, libraries, all kinds of pencils, smoking (sadly no longer an option), wool blazers, long dinners with friends, black sand beaches, the winding drive out to Te Henga, strolling, storms, lightning, the sand dunes at Muriwai, sunrises, driving with the windows down, cold beer, uneless lists, slow walks, listening to the radio in the middle of the night, literary biographies, bike riding, skateboarding, Saturday and Monday evening, the numbers 3, 7, 9, and 11, long movies, reading, cats, empty theatres, purple flowers, English country gardens, the Wassily chair, a slow game of chess, the view from Mt Eden, Grand pianos, books that provide information on their typeface, Linotron Bembo, Lapis Lazuli, the smell of vanilla, remembrances, glasshouses, bees, enumeration, space, seeing the earth from outer space, constraint, caves, old pottery, pencil shavings, the very moment a plane leaves the ground, sitting in the shower, how the colour green is associative of days spent surfing, waterfalls, fog, dog walking, housesitting.*

Two more illustrations from the article also reveal traces of the gods' light at work through Heidegger's experience of his worlding within the Black Forest. The first comes in a poetically resonant section where Heidegger writes about philosophizing in his cabin in the mountains on a stormy night. Here he speaks of trying to utter the ineffable and describes his "struggle to hold something into language," a trace which he cannot quite name. Yet, he manages to bring the unspoken near, by offering the ineffable a place of impermanent habitation in his work, not in abstract philosophical thought, but in the wonderful poetic description of his struggle that is mirrored in the storm itself.[126]

> On a deep winter's night when a wild, pounding snowstorm rages around the cabin and veils and covers everything, that is the perfect time for philosophy. Then its questions must become simple and essential. Working through each thought can only be tough and rigorous. The struggle to hold something into language is like the resistance of the towering firs against the storm. And this philosophical work does not take its course like the aloof studies of some eccentric. It belongs right in the middle of the peasants' work.[127]

*And all things you disliked ...*

*... floury apples, the smell of onion grass, yellow sea foam, ammonia, musty books, needles, sailing boats or rather sailing on boats, the sound of mice, waking to an alarm, personality tests, bare feet, super hero films, dinner parties, long tables, nose bleeds, sunbathing, reading on the beach, sand, finding a place to store a wet umbrella, cold water, spa pools, the political party scene, best friends, celebrities, House music, knots, Deep Blue, acrylic paint, Burnt Sienna as a colour descriptor, mid-morning, anything with the word 'couples' in the title, leather couches, lattes in a bowl, purple raincoats, shopping for jeans in New Market, Jade sculptures, the mall at Christmas, living away from the sea, leather pants, gold teeth, Buffets, traffic in Auckland, home renovations, relaxing in the bath, Tel Aviv, Frankfurt, Houston, wet shoes, Comic Sans, lost books, turtle neck jumpers, dentists, talk back radio, public swimming pools, rigidity, heights, people with no imagination, apartment buildings, paint peeling from the ceiling, running on sand, the numbers 32, 99, and 10, notebooks, the phrase "she'll be right", sub-divisions, concerts that begin after 11pm, Mission Bay in the height of summer, cyclone Gabrielle, Covid-19.*

Heidegger recounts sitting with the local peasants in the evening during a break from their work:

> In the evening during a work-break, when I sit with the peasants by the fire or at the table in the 'Lord's Corner,' we mostly say nothing at all. We smoke our pipes in silence.[128]

Seldom a word is spoken between Heidegger and the peasants. Mostly they are content to smoke their pipes in silence around the table in the 'Lord's Corner' or linger by the fire that casts its radiant light over the room, so that everything glimmers and gleams, illuminated by the flame dancing in the hearth.

This is a world where familiar surfaces gleam and glow, and everyday activities shine with a golden light. This evening, while the fire burns in the hearth, the gods hold sway. For the fire in the hearth, and the table in the Lord's Corner, speak poetically of the gods' light. From out of the fire, the gods cast an illuminating light upon a world, opening and hallowing the space in which human beings come to find their place. In this fragile light, human beings linger for a little while, before the embers burn low and the night closes in once more.

*On Sunday, the temperature upped the ante and had reached 34 degrees by midday and threatened to continue to climb. Still, you didn't move. Unable to muster the strength to hide from the fever of summer, you consigned yourself to watch the cat follow the shade, slouching from tree to tree. A tiny shadow moved silently across the wilted lawn, drawing your gaze up, where you watched a plane cut a line through the empty blue sky and noticed a band of clouds gathering on the horizon, a sign of coming rain.*

Ancient building practices and rural ways of life are not essential to the experience of the gods. Nevertheless, Heidegger draws attention to the peasants' way of life to reveal how the gods are not alien to human existence but are involved in the routine and common practices of human life. In the technological age, according to Heidegger, intimacy with the light of the gods is lost or disabused. However, Heidegger sees traces of the gods' light is still experienced among the peasants of the Black Forest. As such, their way of being offers a glimpse as to what a relationship with the gods might entail. In Heidegger's depiction, we see how the gods' light casts human beings as participants *within* a world rather than as its master.[129] The gods draw human being into a relational encounter with their world, attuning them to the world in its specificity. Moreover, there is adoration and even wonder within this world lit by the gods, expressed as a deep respect of each thing that emerges and unfolds in the Black Forest. Here, the gods' light quietly opens a world of gratitude. Indeed, the peasants' world appears to "gleam [*Glanz*]"[130] such that "things show up as belonging to a *scared* order." [131] Heidegger's description of the peasants' existence in the Black Forest reveals the forgottenness of the gods' light in the technological world — an age that retains only the appearance of order, but one wholly (and holy) lacking in sacredness.

# FLEETING

*And then, lightning*: the world arrives, lingers, wanes, and passes away. In a flash of light, the essence of world is revealed.

Light reveals all things, conceals all things, and brings all things to their allotted place, but light itself loves to hide.

In the blink of an eye, in a flash-of-light, the whole (*heil*) world appears (*Heilig*), before all falls dark once more. The message of the gods.

*Lightning*: earthed moments—walking a mountain path; standing upon the mountain of Aegina; the birth of a child, the death of a loved one; strolling on the black sand beaches of the West coast of Aotearoa New Zealand; a moment of anxiety brought on by the question of why there is anything at all rather than nothing; gazing up at the night sky overcome by awe and wonder—suddenly, a world flashes-forth, a primordial disclosure.

*<What do you relate too, whose arrival are you waiting on, are you watching, or have you forgotten how to see?>*

> Pindar calls locales and mountains, meadows and river-banks, *zatheos* [*most divine*], especially when he wants to say that the gods, the shining ones who cast their gaze about, often permitted themselves actually to be seen here. They came to presence by appearing here. These locales are especially holy because they arise purely to allow the appearing of the shining one.[132]

Gods: set out a world and at the same time draw it away; a single, holy moment; a lightning flash.

*All things will pass – and you with them. But today you are content just to linger in the sun, keeping an eye on the time, as the shadows creep, stretching out before you.*

> Light itself, the appearance or genesis of *phōs*, light …But that's not all. How is this (light) clarity *of* the night? Why does it appear not only to come out of and proceed from the night, as if black gave birth to white, but also to belong still to shadow, to remain still *at the heart* of the dark abyss from which it emanates?[133]

# RISK

Light is impossible to grasp. All things are seen by it, yet light itself is never seen.

This is the nature of light: to be "free and easy and unburdened."[134]

*<Come>*

The poet proceeds by *letting (Lassen)* light flash-forth and remaining open to what is *given (Es gibt)* to unfold.[135]

*<To the pink peony resting in a blue vase, so beautiful, and yet so out of place in the cafeteria of the meat processing plant where your father works. Come, to the car found abandoned at the end of your street with a boot filled with half-eaten fruit. Come, to the father carrying his lifeless daughter from the icy stream, a ribbon of blonde plaits resting lightly over his shoulder. Come, to the flame>*

The poet proceeds lightly, content with glimpses:

*The billowing curtain. The budding flower. The crashing sea. The dwindling hour. Mountain-glade. New-spring-breeze. Flowing-stream. Evening-light. Morning-mist. Candle-bright.*

*Come.*

*Risk*

tenderness.

*Love*

what does not reveal itself.

*Remain*

intimate with silence.

*<Let what does not show itself be a concern.>*[136]

At the border of writing, always having to live without you.[137]

*To seek the gods away from the moment of their shinning is to think after "only that which slips away."*[138] *The gods run to greet the poet in the moment of their shining. To draw back now is to find oneself standing once again in the dark. The poet can only remain open to the gods and await their light.*

The poet has no mastery over the gods. This does not imply a deficit or that the relationship is inchoate. Such is the nature of divinity. Divinity is "neither a presence nor an absence. There is a concealment that is essential to it."[139]

To write about the gods, is to write without ownership, to write without ascendancy.

> Power is the language of expediency; poetry the language of wonder.[140]

Poetry is possibility.

> Poetry, as in all creative literature, is nothing but the elementary emergence into words, the becoming-uncovered, of existence as *being-in-the-world* … the world first becomes visible by what is thus spoken.[141]

*<the poet risks leaping into the bright space between words.>*[142]

*The challenge of remaining attuned to the gods and open to corresponding with their light, feels like a leap too far. It hinges upon a succession of risky decisions, that I do not feel I am capable (or perhaps unwilling, I will need to think about this more) of making.*

The poet loves the gods and yearns passionately (*Sorge*) to glimpse their light. But there is always a temptation to mistrust the precarious nature of this relationship and to seek assurances and certainty in other less phantasmatic voices. This is always a sign that the poet has stepped out of the light of the gods, and sought certainty in the arms of an illicit lover.

> Non-present, non-absent; it tempts us in the manner of that which we would not know how to meet, save in situations which we are no longer in …[143]

*Will I be mindful of the gods' messages when it shimmers and shines?*

*Will I draw close to hear their song?*

*<Poet, every decision is inherently risky. There is risk if you choose to speak, and risk if you refrain from speaking>*

*<Poet, you are not alone in having to risk leaping into the unknown. All human beings face risk: whether to respond to the mystery of their being or seek refuge and security from the bright clearing that opens before them>*

*Poets live on the edge of words,*[144] *standing between the black marks of the already-known, while looking into the white-space of the still-to-come.*

*On the cusp of language–at the edge of words–the poet must decide whether to leap into the white space between words or remain within language. Teetering on the edge, the poet sways, desperate to hear the message of the gods, but afraid to hearken and risk encountering nothing. How foolish the poet would appear if they were to risk greeting the gods, only to find nothing. If only the poet could obtain an assurance that they would be received by the gods' light. But then, where is the risk in assurances?*

*It is true. I am afraid to come into the light.*

*<The flame is hottest at the wick where it burns unseen; a white-hot concentration of light>*

*<Come>*

*<Poet, you must risk speaking or else risk letting the moment pass-by>*

Risk is the possibility of failure: "Every decision … bases itself on something not mastered, something concealed, confusing; else it would never be a decision."[145] Because the experience of risk is uncomfortable—even dangerous—poets may choose to flee from the groundlessness that opens up in an encounter with the messengers of mystery or attempt to shield themselves from facing the brightness of the open space; afraid to experience the sense of disorientation that comes when the familiar suddenly becomes threateningly unfamiliar.[146]

<M*oment of decision*>

# SPEAK

*There are two ways of speaking:*

*The irresolute: You build with language, framing a word with familiar names, safe in a lexicon that conceals, proclaiming a world indistinguishable from any other, you talk "unhindered and above all unendangered in language."*[147] *Words come to you, and are then repeated, you are content to build with the words of others, but you risk never encountering the light of the gods.*

*The resolute: You let language announce itself; you can be content to let language itself speak; you speak a language in peril, fraying and cracking at the edge of words; yours is a language broken open and exposed to the shimmering light of the gods.*

*<Risk dwelling in abeyance>*[148]

> Resoluteness means openness to the groundlessness of our existence.[149]

Poets do not take their existence for granted or seek refuge from their own-way-of-being. Poets speak because they are still finding their *way* through the bright open-spaces-of-being.[150]

> … language … now pervades them in its sway as that which they have to take over expressly as the beings that they themselves are.[151]

Poets do not shy away from what is unfolding, but remain responsive and open to being-opened.

*<Speak, poet, there can be no experience of the flame without risking language>*[152]

*To risk speaking requires a measure of resoluteness.*

Resoluteness does not negate the danger that comes with speaking a poetic word; but poets are called to speak nonetheless.

> The resolute human being knows there can be no real security and that whatever place he has chosen for himself is inescapably questionable.[153]

*<Poet, remain resolute>*[154]

# TENDERNESS

*When the poet sings, the gods sing.*

To speak in such a way—namely *of the gods*—is something that is also indeed wise … here imparts a particular and significant compass to this hint concerning how to speak of the gods …[155]

*And this is how you will know that the gods are near ... you will hear two words when one is spoken.*

In the restraint of quiescence rests the entire self-comportment of the human to beings and, indeed, *every relation to humans and the gods.*[156]

Being is often compared to light. Light discloses everything which can be seen. Yet light itself always remains concealed: cannot be seen.[157]

The poet is intimate (*Inngikeit*) with the gods; never domineering, but tender with their light. Lovingly the poet risks drawing close with intimate intention, by listening, watching, and waiting for the gods to shine.

# FOREIGNERS

In 1943-1944, Heidegger delivered two lectures at the University of Freiburg on Heraclitus of Ephesus titled respectively, *The Inception of Occidental Thinking* and *Heraclitus's Doctrine of the Logos*.[158] The first lecture of 1943 is of particular interest for two stories Heidegger recounts about Heraclitus and the gods.[159]

*Your first overseas experience was a bitter disappointment. For months you had dreamt of vast open spaces–the opposite to the cramped and familiar surroundings of home. The dream had grown to biblical proportions, as you imagined a voyage filled with daring and adventure. In the weeks leading up to your departure, you lay in bed projecting the trip on the ceiling frame-by-frame, watching it flicker before your eyes; this was real living, to live in a world filled with bright, exotic colours, each moment carefully captured on the acetate film of your mind.*

The first story Heidegger narrates involves Heraclitus at home; the second, finds Heraclitus in a place of worship: the temple of the goddess Artemis. The first story reads,

> Regarding Heraclitus the following (story) is recounted: namely, that he spoke to the visitors who wanted to approach him. Coming closer they saw him as he warmed himself at an oven. They remained standing there (very surprised by this), on account of the fact that he bid them (including those who were still hesitating) to have courage and come in, calling with the words: "Here, too, the gods are present.[160]

The second story recounts how,

> [H]e (namely, Heraclitus) had withdrawn into the temple of Artemis in order to play knucklebones there with the children; there, the Ephesians (his countrymen) stood around him, and he said to them: "What are you gaping at, you scoundrels? Or is it not better to do this [what I am now doing] than to work with you on behalf of the *polis*?[161]

*You emerged from the plane, excited to finally enter the real world, only to find yourself in a place almost an exact replica of the one you had just left. Had you gone to find the new world and ended up circling home? "Here we go then," your father said, squeezing your shoulder. For a moment your father's enthusiasm sparked a flicker of excitement. But your disappointment returned when a boy walked past wearing the same t-shirt as you.*

The first story is unexpected because it speaks of Heraclitus not in a place of worship, but standing in "an everyday place, [before] the oven, where nonetheless, according to the thinker's [Heraclitus'] own words, gods are present."[162] In regards to the second story, we do find Heraclitus in a "holy precinct," that is, in "the place of a god (i.e., the temple of the goddess Artemis); but [surprisingly] here the thinker does not attend to the presence of the goddess, whose presence means everything to him during his stay at the oven."[163]

The contrast between the two stories is important because, as Heidegger explains: "The sojourn of the thinker shows in each case precisely the *opposite* of what one expects."[164] Where one does not expect to find the gods, there they are; and where the gods are expected to be present, Heraclitus acts as if they are absent.

*On the ride to the hotel, you pressed yourself into the backseat of the taxi and peered out the window. Your gloomy face stared back in undulating waves of passing cars. Perhaps, you thought, if you squinted it wouldn't look so much like home, but this just brought the unwelcome associations inside your head, creating a bundle of images and colours, and leaving you feeling panicky and lost again. You fell back into your seat and closed your eyes, searching for the safety of dark. "Keep up," your father said, closing the door of the taxi behind you and striding towards the hotel lobby, carrying a bag under each arm. You started after him, but immediately stopped, suddenly overwhelmed by dizziness.*

In 1946, three years after the first lecture on Heraclitus, the story of Heraclitus at the oven reappears in the *Letter on Humanism*.[165] The story is recounted by Heidegger in response to a question posed by the French philosopher Jean Beaufret who had enquired into the relationship between humanism, ontology, and ethics. The subtle and sinuous line of Heidegger's thinking cannot be followed here in full. What does concern this work, is Heidegger's thinking vis-à-vis the relationship between human being and the gods which comes to light in his retelling of the Heraclitan story.

*In a panic to stay conscious, you stumbled forward grabbing at the hotel's revolving door, affording you a slippery hold and finding only air. On your way to the pavement, you were overcome by the rapid ooze of black oil welling up from inside your head, before hitting the ground in a dead faint having been claimed: First by the crush, then by the flood, and finally, by the comfort of darkness.*

To compare the two commentaries of 1943 and 1946 via a weaving of quotations, is to note several subtle changes, idiosyncrasies, and additional insights Heidegger brings to the story of Heraclitus before the oven.[166] The two accounts are important for understanding Heidegger's gods and help to further elucidate the relationship between human beings, the gods, and the world.

The first story is worth repeating for the subtle changes Heidegger makes between the account of 1943 and the second in 1946.

Translation 1943:

> Regarding Heraclitus the following (story) is recounted: namely, that he spoke to the visitors who wanted to approach him. Coming closer they saw him as he warmed himself at an oven. They remained standing there (very surprised by this), on account of the fact that he bid them (including those who were still hesitating) to have courage and come in, calling with the words: "Here, too, the gods are present."[167]

Translation 1946:

> The story is told of something Heraclitus said to some strangers who wanted to come visit him. Having arrived, they saw him warming himself at a stove. Surprised, they stood there in consternation—above all because he encouraged them, the astounded ones, and called for them to come in, with the words, "For here too the gods are present."[168]

*All around you squirms an aura of shimmering light. Slowly at first, now quickening, the light congeals, arranging and rearranging itself in a swirl of colours. Suddenly, the whole ensemble dissipates, spreading out in a puzzling display of multi-coloured lines, like an endless network of busy streets. From above, embers are falling from a dark sky, filling the city with cinders. "Dad! I can't find you! Dad. Dad!" you are yelling, each word ablaze, quivering like a spark thrown from a fire. You stiffen at a sound, someone whispering? But there is no one here but you. Again, a whisper. You listen to the unclaimed voice: "Is nothing sacred?" "Nothing," you reply, surprised at the callousness of your answer. "Not even one thing?" the voice whispers in return. "Nothing," you repeat. "Then nothing needs saving," the voice says, "not even one thing." You begin to cry*

According to Heidegger's account from 1943, Heraclitus is visited by a crowd of common "visitors" who wish to see the great thinker at work; that is, thinking profound thoughts. In 1946, however, Heidegger refers to the crowd as "strangers." In the commentary that follows the retelling of the story, Heidegger goes on to refer to the crowd multiple times as "foreigners" and "sightseers," implying the crowd's separation from Heraclitus and the gods' light shining from the oven.

Of course, the change in designation from "visitors" to "strangers," "foreigners," and "sightseers" may be of little consequence. However, I suggest these designations carry pejorative overtones throughout the accompanying commentary. Indeed, Heidegger is well-known for his wordplay and it is reasonable to think the changes between the two translations carry an important interpretive gloss.[169] More weight is given to this thesis when we consider another group of "foreigners" and "strangers" arriving at the site of yet another "oven" or, in this case, a "hearth" (the two terms can be used synonymously).

The second group of foreigners to arrive at a hearth appear in Heidegger's 1942 lecture on Hölderlin's *The Ister* (*Der Ister*).[170] In his elucidation of Hölderlin's verse, Heidegger quotes the last lines of the second antistrophe from the choral ode of Sophocles's *Antigone*:

> Such shall not be entrusted to my hearth,
> nor share their delusion with my knowing,
> who put such a thing to work.[171]

Commenting on this verse, Heidegger meditates on the meaning of the first hemistich. "What is meant by this word concerning the 'hearth'?"[172] Why should the poet sing of such an undignified and common place within the house? Who should not be entrusted to the poet's knowing? In an extraordinary pithy summary of this verse, Heidegger writes:

> *The hearth is the site of being-homely* … the hearth of the house, the locale at which there stand the gods of the hearth.[173]

The hearth in both the story of Heraclitus and *Antigone* is not simply an area for cooking, eating, and warming one's body, although it *is* this too. At the same time, the hearth speaks poetically of a world where the gods are present. Thus, when Sophocles sings of 'those who shall not be entrusted to the hearth,' he is referring to anyone who is a "stranger" or "foreigner" to the intimate relationship of the gods to the world illumined by the gods. Such people will not be entrusted to the poet's hearth because they are not attuned and therefore have no aptitude for the way the gods shine within the world, flickering in the commonplace, and shining within the ordinary.

*The next morning, you lay in bed reading the Hotel brochure, when an advertisement caught your eye. "Dad, can we skip breakfast and go to an exhibition in the city? It's called The Unseen World–and it lets you view the world up close!" You held his gaze. "We'll see if we can fit it in," he said. By his tone you could tell he had already dismissed the idea. "Please." The way this came out had a ring of desperation that your father must have heard. He bent down beside the bed. "OK, let's skip breakfast," he said, in a tone you recognise now was tinged with the dark stain of a tumour*

Considering this comment, it does not seem speculative to think that in his account of the Heraclitan story Heidegger might try to impress just how wide the disparity is between those who, like Heraclitus, are attuned to the gods shining in their world and draw near and those who, estranged from the ordinary things of their world, have no relationship with the gods. And, therefore, because they do not draw near to their world, they become foreigners and strangers to the hearth, and miss the gods' shining.

In both accounts, Heidegger portrays the crowd arriving at Heraclitus' abode expecting to find Heraclitus in "exceptional (*außergewöhnlich*)" circumstances. The German word Heidegger employs here, "*außergewöhnlich,*" has the sense of something out of ordinary, unusual, and uncommon.[174] In this way, Heidegger writes, the crowd have made the journey to Heraclitus' abode expecting to find a great thinker "at that very moment when, sunk in profound meditation, he is thinking."[175] In fact, in the account of 1943, the crowd are portrayed as seeking a mystical experience. Heidegger describes the crowd anticipating to find Heraclitus in a state of "raptured profundity." For Heidegger this reveals the crowd's real motivation for seeking out Heraclitus. According to Heidegger, the crowd have no intention of learning from Heraclitus how to think for themselves. Rather the crowd merely wish to gaze upon Heraclitus, to observe him, to behold a spectacle, to experience something outside the bounds of the everyday and common place. In 1946, Heidegger laments the fact that: "The visitors want this 'experience' not in order to be overwhelmed by thinking but simply so they can say they saw and heard someone everybody says is a thinker." Nevertheless, as the crowd arrives with great expectations of finding Heraclitus deep in thought, their excitement soon turns to dismay when they discover Heraclitus engaged in the trivial activity of warming himself before his oven.

*"Darling! How thrilling!" your mother is saying, genuinely excited by the description of your time away. She listens to your moment-by-moment replay: the sights, sounds, and smells of overseas, and the fact that you had managed to drag your father away from his schedule. "That really does sound exquisite; really just wonderful!"*

*You roll towards her, burying your face in her lap. Since returning from Sydney, you had felt uneasy at home; a foreigner in a strange land. There was a frustration in not knowing what had changed–everything looked just as it had before your trip–but something was different, and this threw shade over the moments you spent with your mother.*

In 1943, the crowd are "disappointed and baffled" to find Heraclitus warming himself at his oven. An oven was no place for profundity, an oven was about a "common and insignificant place" as one could imagine in the ancient world. While it might have been acceptable to find Heraclitus baking, even great thinkers presumedly need to eat, the crowd cannot hide their dismay to find Heraclitus engaged in such a "commonplace and charmless indigence." Indeed, standing at the oven was an activity that anyone in the crowd could be found doing at their own abode at any time. This may explain why the crowd's disappointment and bafflement take on a darker shade in 1946, when Heidegger portrays the crowd as "frustrated" at the situation. Frustration grows as the crowd realise Heraclitus is no different than anyone of them. This sudden insight is made worse when the crowd realise Heraclitus is not even cooking. Rather, his poverty is such that he is freezing and must remain close to the oven to stay warm, an existence the crowd find unacceptable for a profound thinker.[176] Heidegger writes:

> True enough, bread is baked here. But Heraclitus is not even busy baking at the stove. He stands there merely to warm himself. In this altogether everyday place he betrays the whole poverty of his life. The vision of a shivering thinker offers little interest. At this disappointing spectacle even the curious lose their desire to come closer. What are they supposed to do here? Such an everyday and unexciting occurrence—somebody who is chilled warming himself at a stove—anyone can find any time at home.[177]

*You were frustrated by the way your mother appeared to accept uncritically, almost like a child, the home she had created. The house seemed to suit her perfectly; she moved about freely looking content and at peace with herself and her surroundings. What was worse, she appeared most happy in the kitchen, cooking for you and your father. You, on the other hand, felt ill at ease, like you were holding a broken hammer that just a moment ago you were using to build a home with; now you were unsure how to proceed.*

*Suddenly, she wriggled free, rising from your bed and tucking you in in that special way of hers, which for the first time seemed odd, wrapping you up in a tight fabric cocoon. She smiled, leaning down to kiss you with the words, "I'll see you in the morning my little butterfly." You kicked a leg out of the bottom of your wrapper, breaking the spell. "Really?" she said in a soft, transparent voice. "Now tell me the truth," she whispered, returning to your conversation about your father and the overseas trip, "was the exhibition really called The Unseen World Before Your Very Eyes? It sounds wonderful, just wonderful." "Mum, it wasn't really the unseen. It was just a few bugs under a microscope and, to be honest, up-close everything looked the same, just bigger. I was hoping to see something special, something–I don't know–new–I guess," you said in a tone vacillating between irritation and disappointment.*

Frustrated by the ordinariness of Heraclitus' situation, the crowd turn to leave. In Heidegger's translation of 1943, Heraclitus is adamant his visitors must not leave and he bids them to join him in his abode and to see what is transpiring in his oven. Turning to the crowd, Heraclitus "tells them to have courage and prompts the crowd to enter" his abode. By 1946, however, Heidegger's Heraclitus is more cajoling. Perhaps Heraclitus (or Heidegger) has less hope that the crowd of foreigners will heed his words. As such, Heidegger has Heraclitus "encourage" and "invite" the crowd to draw near so as not to miss what is *essential* about this common situation. But why should the crowd want to enter Heraclitus' abode? What is worth seeing in the "poverty" of his dwelling? Heraclitus answers with the enigmatic words: "*Einai gar kai entautha theous*, 'Here, too, the gods are present.'"

Precisely what Heidegger takes Heraclitus to mean by the statement "Here, too, the gods are present" is best elucidated in the commentary from 1943. Heidegger once again places the stress on the ordinariness of Heraclitus's abode; the presence of the gods with the oven is unashamedly commonplace and mundane which, Heidegger maintains, is *utterly* extraordinary:

> This gift of the oven is the sign for what the *Theoi* (the gods) are. They are the *daiontes* [the gods], those who give themselves in the ordinary as the extraordinary. I warm myself at the oven and thereby remain in the nearness of the fire: the Greek *pur*, which at the same time means 'light' and 'glow.' You find me here near the fire, in which alone the ray of light of those peering in is possible and is one with the ray of warmth, and which lets 'emerge' into appearance that which, in the cold, would otherwise fall victim to the numbness of nothingness.[178]

According to Heidegger, an extraordinary light prevails in the commonplace and ordinary, if one is close enough to glimpse this light.

*She sat down again on the side of the bed, bringing with her a whiff of good but slightly musty smell of freesias. "Darling, the unseen looks the same as the seen. That's how it hides in plain sight." You frowned at her. "Then it's hardly unseen is it," you said, bringing a pinch of your father's logic to the exchange. "Anyone can see, darling," she replied, ignoring your tone, "but to really see what is in front of you, well, that takes being able to see what is also not there, and that's why it takes more than a microscope to catch a glimpse of it."*

*You relaxed your frown. "And how do you do that?" you ask, genuinely curious. Considering her response for a moment, she replied, "Poetry." "Poetry?" you said confused, "I hate poetry!" "Then," she said, standing again, her face illumed in the candle's flame, periodically wave-like and modulating as if carrying a signal from an unknown source, "you will never see what's right before your eyes." She kisses her fingers, pressing each one in turn to your forehead. "Good night, darling," she said, in the glassy tone you will always remember her using, as you watched her turn and leave with the flickering light.*

Heraclitus calls our attention to the gods' light flickering in the hearth of human existence; a flame burning in the ordinary phenomena of the world, illuminating somethings, while throwing others into shadow. In the same way, the gods cast their radiant glow upon the familiar things my world. Causing my world to shimmer in a light that is temporary, finite, fragile, and untameable. Far from being meaningless or insignificant, the common events of my life shine-forth with what Capobianco calls, "that primordial fire, being itself." [179] However, to experience the gods' light requires greater attunement to the ordinary and the commonplace. It is within the ordinary events of my life that the mystery of being is encountered. This is not any supernatural event, but an encounter with the people and places I know best. For Heidegger, the profundity of Heraclitus's saying is not he thinks *above* what is most common, but that he thinks what is most ordinary.

> [E]ven here at the oven, in this everyday and ordinary place where each thing and every circumstance, each action and every thought, is familiar through and through, common and ordinary; 'even here,' in this region of the familiar, *einai theous,* the 'gods presence.' … Even here, says Heraclitus, at the oven, where I warm myself, the presencing of the extraordinary in the ordinary prevails … When the thinker says *kai entautha* ('even here'), *en toi hpnoi* ('at the oven'), the extraordinary presences, then he wants to say in truth: the presencing of the gods unfolds *only* [emphasis original] here. Where, namely? In the inconspicuousness of the everyday. You need not avoid the customary and ordinary and chase after the eccentric, exciting, and tantalizing in the misguided hope of thereby encountering the extraordinary.[180]

Through his retelling of the story of Heraclitus before the hearth, Heidegger invites us, *his* foreign visitors, to enter our own worlds—our abodes—and to draw close to our *own* ovens so to experience the light of the gods in the ordinary things of the world. For it is there among what is our own-most that the gods emerge and greet us within the ducking, flickering, and rolling flame that is kindled in the very heart of our abodes. When we are intimate with the things and people with whom we share and have our world, then we catch sight of the gods who illumine a world within which every little thing becomes sacred and holy, a dwelling place for human being. To impart so much importance to common things; a farmhouse, tree, meadow, mountain, river, hearth, is not to lessen the light of the gods or the sacredness of being, but to make the gods even more important for living. To give import to the world as the dwelling place of divinity, is to *earth* the holy in what is most ordinary: a world welling-up in wonder.

> [This is] Heidegger's distinctive way of calling us back to the experience of Being as manifestation; to the experience of things as they emerge and meet us and, as we say in English 'fill our senses'; to the experience of ourselves 'vibrating back' from things … The nearness and freshness and vividness of what is, and the astonishment and joy and thanksgiving that this calls forth in us … as they emerge and linger in their appearance—but also wane, falter, and pass away. There is for us to discern, too, the deep reserve inherent in the showing of things, the *lethe*, dimension of *aletheia* that Heidegger spoke of so often.[181]

*In the fading aura of a squirming and ducking candle, the photograph floats in a clearing of light, bordered by the depth of the room: your father, aged forty-two; you aged nine, Sydney, Australia.*

*Now with the photograph in your hand, you remember it vividly—your first overseas experience. Standing in the marble darkness, all the strange coincidences of the trip come rushing back: the mosaic patterning of its many pieces forming and reforming, giving time an uneven undulation. Suddenly, the darkness of the room tilts and sways as the candles shifts and rearranges the light. The room draws back to expose a sunlit landscape, giving you the feeling of coming into a clearing having walked for hours underneath the canopy of the bush.*

*In the photograph, your photophobic father sits stiff-backed on an oversized grasshopper, his legs straddling either side of the insect's abdomen. Above him, a bright olivine neon sign reads: Micro World – The Unseen Before Your Very Eyes! To his right you are perched atop of an ant roughly half the size of your father's grasshopper, its front legs are held up in a posture of defence. You remember how you had pleaded with him to depart from his itinerary so you could visit the exhibition and found it an exquisite pleasure to find such an absurd treat in the middle of your father's tightly managed and endlessly dull schedule.*

*Across both your faces lay a ray of light. At its edges, the light refracted, prismatic, and flamed out, as it shone through the novelty oversized magnifying glass displayed in the exhibition window, creating what looked like a fire; a fire that even now, to your surprise, still had the power to ignite a flame in you.*

[The hearth is] … the place of transformations. Nothing is allowed to remain the same. Fire and its allies are at work … Things come in raw, as nature produced them. And they go out different, according to the demands of pleasure. The hard must be softened. Smells and tastes which were dormant inside are forced to come out: cooking is to give the magic kiss which wakes up sleeping pleasures. Alchemy, metamorphoses: cooking joins what nature has separated. Space is abolished. Salt, garlic, pepper, sugar, thyme, clove, parsley, oregano, cinnamon, paprika, cumin, celery, sage, tarragon, horseradish, curry powder, they are all invited, from the distant lands where they grow, to join the festival of cooking. The sweet, the sour, the bitter and the salty are forced to enter into non-existent combinations. Everything is a new creature … [182]

*<Your mother, always the poet. Do you remember the way she would mouth silent incantations as you drifted off to sleep? And on nights when you could not sleep, do you remember the stories she would tell to calm you?>*

*Barely ... it is a dim memory ... so faint now ... a glimmer. Will you tell me ... again?*

*<Draw close>*

*<There once was a Guild of Cartographers so skilled at their work that they constructed a map the very size of the town in which they lived. The map was made of the most durable paper known to exist at that time, and the ink and dyes used to render the map were mixed with an ash renowned for its water-resistant qualities. On the day of its unveiling, the map was unfolded page after page after page, until finally it lay spread-out over the entire town. The corners of the map were secured in place by the town's four boundary pegs. The map was indistinguishable from the town that now lay beneath. Every house, garden, park; every tree, leaf, and blade of grass; every road, river, and path; was rendered above on the map just as they appeared in the town below. Nothing was out of place.*

*In the week that followed, the residents reported an increase in productivity, which the Cartographers attributed to knowing exactly where they were at any given moment, due to the topographical lines that now covered every square inch of space. It was not long before the residents forgot about the town beneath their feet.*

*One year, the town experienced an unseasonably severe winter, which had an unexpected outcome on the map. The water-resistant qualities that made the map impervious to the wind and rain, also made it susceptible to becoming brittle if not constantly warmed by the sun. It was not long before the police department began receiving calls from distraught residents reporting large holes appearing in the map. Some residents even reported missing persons, presumed to have fallen through the map and now lost to the town below. As the map slowly froze, it began to break apart. And what the town folk saw beneath their feet was astounding.*

*Below the sharply rendered lines of the map, they found a land teeming with life; a land of excess, full of shadow and light. They could not be sure where one boundary line ended and the other began. Was purple blue or green? Was grey white or black? Compared to the map, the town carried within it a richness of meaning. When the residents finally built up the courage to tear the map and walk through back into their town, they were overcome by the town's variety of textures, tastes, and smells. All through the town could be heard the cries of delight and anguish as the town folk rediscovered what they had forfeited in allowing the Cartographers to replace the town with a map>*

# GUIDES

The light of the gods has a character of guidance: the gods bring forth and lay out a world.

The light of the gods points to a *way* of being; a *way* of relating, of corresponding with the world.

The gods guide and direct human beings as to how to dwell within their world.

Fugacious and difficult to grasp is the gods' light; it flashes up in a moment and is gone, leaving an indelible mark in its wake.

Let the flickering light lead you home.

*<Participate in wonder. Come home to the ordinary. Human being cannot live alone>*

*How do I ... correspond with a flash of light*

*<Let the light break-forth and be your guide in a destitute time>*

*<Is nothing sacred?>*

*"Once*

*I answered Yes*

*to someone*

*or something."*[183]

*<Silence>*

*Correspondence*: to be mindful of the lightning-process.

Human beings are called to draw near to the fire blazing in their own hearth—their own worlding.

The gods are particular to the location, experience, and event encountered.[184] Metaphysics does not favour this type of locality and embeddedness and wants to ground the source of appearance in order to determine its cause, rendering it general and abstract. But the gods are alive to what is localised, temporal, finite.

> At bottom, the ordinary is not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny.[185]

The gods cannot be reduced to calculation. Nor can the gods be extracted from their place of manifestation. The gods are encounterable only in the moment of their shining.

The poet is intimate with the gods, for the poet does not stand back from the world; poets eat the world, consume divinity, take the gods into themselves, this is the poet's task: "Eat, drink, swallow my letter, carry it, transport it in you."[186]

*How do I encounter the gods' bright message?*

*<Return to the garden of your worldly being>*

*How do I correspond with a flash of light?*

*<Feast upon the world, take it into your body, become acquainted with the taste of mystery, holiness, and the sacred—eat the golden paste>*

*<Why so hesitant?>*

*<This is the gods' way: to let (lassen) the light of being show itself from itself to bring the light near as it passes away, to burn>*

*Poetry ... the invitation for foreigners to draw to their world ... to draw close to the fire burning in their own hearth.*

*<Is nothing sacred?>*

*You speak of phantoms*

*vapours*

*cinders.*

*<There is space between us>*

*<Blink and it is gone>*

*Poetry makes its home in the flickering light between being and nothing.*

Poetry opens into "ecstatic temporality [*Zeitlichkeit*]."[187]

Temporality can never be rendered once and for all. Temporality must be experienced *again and again,* and each time new meanings are discovered, new doors thrown open into new worlds, new insights revealed, new spaces open before you.

Poetry is not an attempt to flee the world, but to experience a world as *world*—the "sacred empty."[188]

The poetic bears witness to the lightning-process within all things: "The beyng of the poet is grounded in 'nature' (beyng as such), which says itself originarily in the poetizing."[189]

*The poets' priority:* their relationship to the gods; to encounter a world in its sacredness. This is the poets' priority, to remain open.[190]

<*Come, come, come*>

# POEM

The poem arrives like a lightning strike. Struck by the sudden flash of light, the poem bears witness to that primordial fire, being itself.

Like lightning, the poem is a one-time-only-disclosure.

The poem is experienced in the act of reading, not before nor after the final word is read.

> To read a poem is not to read yet another poem; it is not even to enter, via the poem, into the essence of poetry. The reading of a poem is the poem itself, affirming itself in the reading of the work.[191]

The poem is forever arriving and departing.[192]

A poem is kindled in the hearth of language. It bursts into flame, leaving only cinders.

—the bright flash of reading—

> If this could be called reading, it would be live-reading.[193]

*A poem refuses to disclose anything but the radiant light of reading*

Fixity is anathema to a poem. A poem lives in peril, in the fragile moment of reading. Poems are written in flammable ink, reading is the spark; once ignited, a poem burns and is gone.

Reading a poem is to experience excess and poverty, "measure and measureless, form and infinitude, resolution and indecision," [194] apparent and inapparent, concealment and unconcealment, light and shadow, surface and depth.

> The work—the work of art, the literary work—is neither finished nor unfinished: it is. What it says is exclusively this: that it is—and nothing more. Beyond that it is nothing. Whoever wants to make it express more finds nothing, finds that it expresses nothing. He whose life depends upon the work, either because he is a writer or he is a reader, belongs to the solitude of that which expresses nothing except the word *being*: the word which language shelters by hiding it, or causes to appear when language itself disappears into the silent void of the work.[195]

[Poetry] the most fleeting of forms, existing only within the tenuous, present-moment decanting of breath. By the time we hear the last syllable of 'moment,' the first syllable has already vanished.[196]

*<Draw close>*

*Would I*

*be so foolish*

*to believe*

*I could.*

*<Silence>*

*<Outside the clearing: all is lost. Whatever arrives is only seen in this space opened by the lightning flash>*

*<To see by the light of a poem is to lay eyes only upon what is lit up, never the light>*

The revelatory moment of a poem addresses its readers in the act of reading. The poem shines in the activity of reading. This is the readers journey through time. This is the moment of its lightning flash. A poem burns, white-hot; in a moment, it will be dark.

A poem's light does not arrive "without bringing its own brightness."[197]

…the realm of human perception, comes *only now*.[198]

*O* *N* *L* *Y*

*N* *O* *W*

*<Silence>*

*Where is*

*the flame?*

*<Here, in the flame>*

Light is the *lightening*—it is that which lightens and opens, and which, as the *bright*, holds open.[199]

*<If the disclosive flash of a poem is to be allowed full sway, a poem must be permitted to linger in spaces of indeterminacy>*

*<Let the poem slip back into the clearing from whence it emerged; the lighted realm between the spoken and ineffable>*

*<For now, let us abstain from interpretation or risk setting up boundaries that will need to be "shattered and abandoned if the truth of a work is to unveil itself.">*[200]

Whatever arrives enters into the clearing it brings with it, never before this.[201]

Silence: words stretched to the limit.

Language at the edges of words.

In a poem, language slips into silence, back into the origin of language, the unspoken, *yet-to-be* thought.

> Beyond the choice of words, positioning of words, it is then above all the entire overarching resonance of the poetic telling that 'expresses' the so-called meaning. Yet this overarching resonance of the telling is not simply the result of the positioning of words and arranging of lines, but rather the reverse: The overarching resonance of the telling is the initial, creative resonance that first intimates the language; it is the origin not only for arranging and positioning of the words, but also for the choice of words, an origin whose resonance constantly anticipates the use of words.[202]

*<The poem blooms without why. Just as the season of summer speaks silently in the season of winter, so the poet listens for what silently speaks in language. The poet listens for the ineffable word that takes root in the material world, but itself remains without root>*

We can truly hear only when we are already hearkening. But hearkening has nothing to do with earlobes … Those who merely 'hear' by keeping their ears open everywhere and carrying around what has been heard, are and will be the *axunetoi,* those who do not grasp … They do hear words and discourse, yet they are closed off to what they should listen to.[203]

To speak the unspeakable — poetry.[204]

*The poem loves to hide.*

Poetry — language at it most clandestine.

*<The poem is both spoken and unspoken>*

A poem emerges from the spacings between the words. It shimmers and gleams just beyond the poet's technical competency.

*<Come>*

> Language is not merely a tool which man possesses alongside many others; rather, language first grants the possibility of standing in the midst of the openness of beings … We must first of all assure ourselves of this essence of language, in order truly to comprehend the domain of poetry and thus poetry itself.[205]

Technique and craft create the opportunity for a poem to arrive, but they do not guarantee the poem's arrival.

*<To hear two words when only one is spoken: poetry>*

Poetic utterance emerges on the porous border between the familiar and unfamiliar, in the region of the uncanny; between word and word.

*Like an explorer*

Poets leave the bright edge of the coast and travels into the dark hinterland of the continent, returning with news wonderful and strange.

*Like a pilgrim*

Compelled to leave home in search of the sacred, once found, poets are surprised to discover they have merely circled back to the place from whence they started.[206]

*Like a child*

Who cries when in pain, and laughs when happy; the poetic emerges in the unbridled moment life wells up and bursts into existence.

# LISTENING

*<Listen for what must be left unsaid>*

*<Do not rush to say anything, resist the pressure to offer an opinion or draw a conclusion, yours is a word without why, it blossoms because it blossoms. Useless. Freed from the need to define, or categorise, the poem can speak freely of what is unfolding—to speak as-what-is unfolding>*[207]

Let us not be like those who wish to make the tree bear its fruit first and the flower afterwards. A conjuring trick and an advertisement. We are content if the flower comes first and the fruit afterwards in due time.[208]

We can truly hear only when we are already hearkening. But hearkening has nothing to do with earlobes ….[209]

*There is a fragility*
*and incompleteness to*
*a poem …*

A poem receives itself from beyond itself.[210]

*<Stay open>*[211]

Nothing higher, nothing more originary, nothing more present, but also nothing more inapparent and indestructible can be thought than beyng itself.[212]

So long as we only listen to the sound of a word, as the expression of a speaker, we are not even listening at all. Thus, in this way we never succeed in in having genuinely heard anything at all … mortal hearing must attend to something else.[213]

The poet makes no bold claims, offers no commentary or analysis, presents nothing in the way of calculable data. And yet, the poetic is where the "disclosedness [*Offenbarkeit*]" of 'questions' are "compellingly experienced," because "in poetry we are less disposed to manipulate things or reduce them to our own technical-scientific, quantitative frames of reference; we are encouraged rather to let things be what they are and show their many-sidedness."[214]

*<The measure of the poem is all the words left*

*unspoken …>*

Like the farmer who prepares a field for the arrival of a new season by creating empty furrows in the farrow ground, poetry creates spaces within language for the arrival of a new word. Poetry is not a machine that removes the effort of work; in the poem, the hard work is learning to listen—to language. Poetry is a hand-drawn plough where each pull of the handle, each well-placed-step takes time, effort, and consideration. It is an old tool with an intimate connection to the land, both inner and outer landscapes. What do the farmer and the poet have to show for their hard day's work? Only a field opened to receive the advent of the coming season. The empty field is the first sign something new will soon arrive. If a new season was not imminent the field would still lie fallow. Like the farmer who listens for the signs of the changing seasons, so the poet listens for the arrival of a bright new word.

Thinking gathers language into simple saying. In this way language is the language of Being, as clouds are the clouds of the sky. With its saying, thinking lays inconspicuous furrows in language. They are still more inconspicuous than the furrows that the farmer, slow of step, draws through the field.[215]

*When I come to write about the gods ...*

*I mix my ink with the pigments of time and temporality, and dip my pen into vapour trails and hidden currents. Time is the shadow and spark on which I write. Every poem remains "on the way."* [216]

*... to write about the gods: to write the poem–the poem I am.*

Here, too, the gods are present.

# READING

A poem flickers and ducks against a dark background, like a flame offering itself up and consuming itself in one fluid movement.

> Words strain / Crack and sometimes break, under the burden, / Under the tension, slip, slide, perish, / Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place, / Will not stay still.[217]

> Words move … / Only in time; but that which is only living / Can only die. Words, after speech, reach.[218]

To read a poem is to be struck by the way it refuses to stay still or to come fully into view.

This is reading …[219]

*to let the poem burn.*

There is no such thing as an artist, there is only the world lit or unlit as the light allows.[220]

*<The match hesitates above the wick>*

*I long to touch*

*but am afraid*

*I will be*

*burnt.*

*<You are already aflame>*

# LIGHTNING

In 1966/1967, in collaboration with the philosopher, Eugen Fink, Heidegger delivered two lectures on Heraclitus at the University of Freiburg.[221] In the opening lecture, Heidegger and Fink focused their discussion on fragment 64 of Heraclitus, in which mention is made to "lightning" (*keraunos*).[222] Commenting on this fragment, Heidegger recalls an event that made an indelible impression upon him:

> I remember an afternoon during my journey in Aegina. Suddenly I saw a single bolt of lightning, after which no more followed. My thought was: Zeus.[223]

It is a peculiar recollection. Yet one that offers a glimpse into Heidegger's thinking of the gods and their relation to ancient Greek thought and experience of the gods.[224]

Here, too, the gods are present.

*In the right light, the yellow stained-glass window at the top of the stairs gave the staircase a golden glow. Some mornings, it was like entering a pool of light. I would start the day covered in hues of turmeric and saffron. And in the evening, I would ascend dripping in gamboge and orpiment.*

*"How beautiful yellow is!" wrote Vincent van Gogh in a letter to his brother Theo, "the sun, a light that for lack of a better word I can only call yellow, bright sulphur yellow, pale lemon gold!"*[225]

*Yellow, says Goethe, "the colour nearest the light. It appears on the slightest mitigation of light, whether by semi-transparent medium or faint reflection from white surfaces. In prismatic experiments it extends alone and widely in the light space."*[226]

To raise the question of the gods demands, or so it first appears, reflection on an extraordinary level. Heidegger cautions against thinking about the gods in terms of the revelatory and bypassing the commonplace. This is to miss what is emerging within the so-called ordinary, trivial, and routine. To think after the gods is not to ask how human beings might escape the ordinary, but how humans might be attuned (*Stimmung*) to the way the gods' light diffuses, bringing colour and shade to the ordinary things of the world.

The Greek gods are not 'personalities' or 'persons' that dominate Being; they are Being itself looking into beings.[227]

*<What is the relationship of colour to the world?>*

*Lascaux, an image of a horse, long hidden, painted in yellow ochre races through the dark heart of the earth. The yellow horse is majestic. The artist has rendered the horse mid-flight, surrounded by smaller horses, also running. The herd is pursued by a pack of beasts that look to be lions or bears. Far below, almost out-of-sight, a small band of humans crouch in the darkness, spears in hand, ready and waiting for the yellow horse to appear.*

The Greeks received the gods as *the experience* of the radiant light of being itself. These moments of disclosure (*Offenbarkeit*) were always revealed through specific encounters with people or place. Much like the Homeric gods who revealed themselves in natural phenomena, such as a favourable wind.[228] The gods favour would "saturate the entire field of experience."[229] Like a sudden flash of light, everything would appear cast in the light of the god. Thus, when the gods announce themselves, they do so by casting their light upon the world, such that the experience of the world might suddenly become amorous, mysterious, wonderful, awe-inspiring, fortuitous, belligerent, sacred, or holy.[230] Heidegger, then, speaks of gods' light as an attunement (*Stimmung*). In German, the word *Stimmung* can mean both *attunement* and *mood*.[231] In this sense, the gods are not personal beings, but a pervasive colouring of the human world, through which human beings encounter and experience all things.[232] This is echoed in the essay *The Nature of Language,* Heidegger writes:

> To undergo an experience with something—be it a thing, a person, or a god—means that this something befalls us, strikes us, comes over us, overwhelms and transforms us.[233]

Seen through the experience of the Greeks, Heidegger's gods illumine human experience, casting a world in a particular colour, shade, or mood (*Stimmung*). This colour (which is the gods themselves) is not permanent, but like being itself, is fleeting.

*Why render the horse in yellow? What significance did this colour hold for the artist? Did it give the impression of life when light from the torch danced and played upon the surface of the cave? Are we looking at the face of a god, long forgotten, bidding us to enter this temporal scene opened up by the light of the artist's touch in the dark heart of the earth?*

*In Ancient Egypt, yellow is associated with gold and was thought as the colour of the eternal, indestructible, and imperishable. The tombs of the Pharaohs were painted in gold leaf, and not only the tombs, but the bones and the skin of the dead were covered too. Yellow – the colour closet to the gods, so it was believed, the gleam of the divine.*

The gods do not force their light upon human beings. If their light is to be received, this requires "openness [*Öffenbarkeit*], participation, and response."[234] Only within a *reciprocal relation* is *correspondence* possible.

*In ancient Greece and Rome, the gods were depicted with golden, blonde hair. It became fashionable for men and women of the time to dye their hair a lighter shade, as this was thought to bring an individual favour from the gods.*

*For three years, Giotto di Bondone stood in front of a lime plaster wall in the Scrovegni Chapel, painstakingly layering his pigments hour after hour in the hope of bringing to life one of history's most notorious villains, Judas Iscariot. In the painting, Judas stands centre stage with Jesus, both men illuminated by torchlight; and Judas envelops them both in his yellow cloak, his arms wrapped around the neck of Jesus, pulling him near, lips dosed with venom, and hungry for love. Perhaps this is what inspired Gauguin to paint his Yellow Christ, that jaundice, wilted icon that points nowhere but to the cross.*

The experience the gods comes in various colours as the world passes through countless shades and tones, depending on how the light is shining.

Correspondence with the gods' light means being responsive to the shifting tonalities of the world's shifting colours and sudden shifts of light.

Correspondence with the gods, then, turns on the simple question of whether or not human beings can let (*lassen*) their world sway through all its different shades and tones.

*In Spain, during the Inquisition, those who refused to succumb to the Church's authority were forced to wear a yellow cape. And who will forget the stars that shone so brightly on the chests of six million Jews killed in the Holocaust; six million stars sown into the cloth of Germany's darkest night.*[235]

*In the evening, the yellow stained-glass window at the top of the stairs would come to life again, bathing the staircase in its golden glow. Most nights I would hurry about my business, hardly noticing the play of colours upon each stair. But tonight, I took my time, ascending step by step, my body dripping with gamboge, orpiment, saffron, and turmeric; my body set aflame, a burnt offering to the night.*

# INTIMACY

The poet cannot stand outside the gods' light to discuss it. Only in the encounter with the light of the gods is the poet 'enlightened' (*erlichtet*); only in the flame is the poet aflame; only in the activity of poetizing do all things shine.[236]

> "[L]ighting is nothing other than the lighting itself … Gods and men are not only lighted by a light … they are alight [*er-lichtet*]." [237]

*Struck by the gods' light, poets are left staggering in a dazzling darkness. Slowly, poets regain their sight, only to find their world appears strangely slant – one shade off normal.* [238]

There is no experience of the gods' light beyond the moment of encounter, only the recollection of a past intimacy.[239]

*<Intimacy: an ineffable word*
*spoken once and one time*
*only>*[240]

Intimacy: the ashes of words left abandoned on the page after writing.

Poets do not seek but wait. They do not name but withhold all names. They do not *ascribe* but steps *aside* to make space for a new word to be heard.

> [T]he human is in conversation, and in a manner that constantly bears it: it is that which the human encounters every day, but does so without grasping and engaging it … Even when humans listen with their ears, it is not guaranteed that they have listened to what they have heard, and that they have gathered themselves toward it in a harkening way.[241]

*<Poets speak of the gods as nearness and absence, as if they were the same>* [242]

Poets favors enjambment to the full stop, careful not to end their line too soon.

> Only the thoughtful ones and the patient ones are the careful ones. Because they think of what is composed in the poem, they are turned with the singer's care toward the mystery of the reserving nearness.[243]

For eyes unaccustomed to the flame, poets speak of phantoms and distant lights that vanish when spoken. This too, is a sign of intimacy.

The gods reveal themselves in the intimacy of a lover's discourse.[244]

Here, in a poetic embrace, a connection is made with what is not the poet's own. [245]

> Words expire when uttered … like the silence that draws lovers near, like breath that shares in the wind.[246]

Poets open themselves to the approach of the gods. When the poet lets the gods' white-hot concentration of light fall upon the tinder of their world, a relationship kindles into the bright flame of love.

*<Draw near to see the flame flickering in the hearth>*

Poets see familiar things down to their depths. When the wind blows, the poet hears the gods singing.[247]

*That, that*![248]

Poetize what is overlooked.[249]

Here, too, the gods are present.

*<Do not flee the ordinary, common things of your world>*

*<Come, speak with flashes and sparks. Come, gather the fragile glimmers, follow every little thing that shimmers. Do not be afraid of things that sway. Love all that decays. Bring each encounter into the poetic, let every little thing shine with a holy light>*

*<Return again and again to the world; earth the word in ordinary things; risk language, notice what blossoms among the mess, do not be afraid of ambiguity, cinders still burn here>*

The loss of intimacy: Poets in "sacred mourning."[250]

*Where are you?*

<In the billowing of a curtain; in the puff of white snow drifting off the branches of a pine tree on a cold, calm winter's day; in the luminous moon suddenly emerging from behind thick clouds in the harvest-time night sky.>[251]

# MYSTERY

*<Enter into the fray of life; let the light attune you to the world in all its particularity; gather words in order to say the word that is and is not your own>*

This is the unfolding mystery that poets yearn to know: the *sway* of life.

*<To encounter mystery is to let (lassen) a mystery remain>*[252]

*But the poet's vocation is to speak?*

*<Then speak, but speak of what eludes you, not once and never again, but speak "the mystery again and again.">* [253]

*Poets risk speaking of mystery*

When others have grown tired of mystery's vaporous ways.

*Poets risk not speaking of mystery*

By allowing mystery to slip away when others have said too much.

Because poets risk language, the poet is loved by mystery.

> Because the gods must be gods and the men must be men, and because the one can never be without the other, there is love between them.[254]

*Poetising*:

sanctifying,
consecrating,
hallowing.

*Poetising*:

listening,
watching, waiting

"The peal of stillness"[255]

Poets participate in mystery, not to overcome mystery, but to preserve it.[256]

The word 'mystery' is onomatopoeic. To speak the word 'mystery' poets must compress their lips before the word is uttered, signifying the two sides of mystery.

*Sayable*: the lips are poised to speak.

*Unsayable*: the lips refrain from speaking.

"[H]ow can we preserve it—this mystery of nearness—without our knowing it? For the sake of this knowledge there must always be one who first returns home and says the mystery *again and again*."[257]

<*That which is ungraspable is nearest*>

*Poets seek connections; yearn for what does not immediately draw attention; are content to listen, watch, and wait; to allow the light to shine "nowhere, but in the dark."*[258] *Their poetic word might appear inchoate, or "like mere weakness."* [259] *Yet, the poet's reticence to make poetry 'useful'* [260] *guards the poem's participation in mystery.*

On the bright edge of *nowhere*, the poet sings of what is *now here*.

> We are too quick to believe that the mystery of what is to be thought always lies distant and deeply hidden under a hardly penetrable layer of strangeness. On the contrary, it has its essential mode in that which is nearby, which approaches what is coming into presence and preserves what has drawn near.[261]

*<Let your language unfurl slowly, neither tarrying or rushing. Let each word unfold at its own-most pace. Let the poem blossom in due course>*

*<Come, leave behind the cities of certitude and walk in the woods of dappled things>*

*Poetic utterance requires a double hearing.*[262]

Poetry is a sanctuary for mystery. On one side, poetic language can be taken up as an *objet d'art*, a cultural artefact, a body of literature. This side of the poetic is the subject of literary theory, of casual reading, of critique.[263] On the other side, the poetic is lawless; it transgresses the bounds of any judgements placed upon its utterance. Here, on this side of language, the poetic speaks words that remain hidden, silent, and veiled; this is language of the ineffable because it "exceeds the boundaries of our critical competence."[264] On this side of language, poetry refuses to give itself fully. On this side of language, poetry speaks the sayable and the ineffable with one breath. [265] On this side of language, readers enter into *the experience* of language. [266] On this side, language speaks.

# WAITING

Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky. They leave to the sun and the moon their journey, to the stars their course, to the seasons their blessing and their inclemency; they do not turn night into day nor day into a harassed unrest. Mortals dwell in that they await the godly ones *as godly ones*. In hope they hold up to the godly ones what is unhoped for. They wait for the hints of their arrival and do not overlook the signs of their absence. They do not make gods for themselves and do not worship idols. In the very depth of misfortune they wait for the weal that has been withdrawn.[267]

*The neighborhood had once been a remote Kauri gum station populated by a small band of workers and their families. They lived off the land, growing vegetables, raising livestock, fishing the creek. For years, the people here knew only their rural way of life. But as the city expanded, eventually its roads found their way to the station. Soon, the city coach arrived carrying news from the city and broadening the topics of conversation around the dinner table. It wasn't long before the coach was carrying the women to stores in the city that had long been out of reach. It was as if a new world had opened before them.*

*A coach, of course, is not a nimble as a horse. To reach the settlement with any regularity, the coach required better roads. Within a short space of time, the bush drew back to reveal newly cut roads, gravel roads, well made and maintained. This meant the coach always arrived on time. Inevitability, daily schedules soon required rearranging; new routines, new timetables, each adjusted to coincide with the coach's arrival and departure times. The neighborhood doubled in size; new families arrived, artisans set up studios and began producing local wares. New stores popped up. But none compared to the new corner store with its soaps, perfumes, canned beans, fabrics for clothing, bedding, and curtains, boiled sweets, parasols, whiskey, gin, sweet cherry, leather belts, buttons, and innovations like the zip and the lighter.*

*The area soon became a destination, a place where people came to make something of themselves. The mood of the settlement changed too; the settler mentality which prided itself on individualism and non-conformity was compelled to search out new horizons, while organization and centralization, in the form of a community committee, emerged to stabilize and bring coherence to the visions and aspirations that looked to assert themselves with each new arrival.*

*And for all this, progress sounded like nothing more than the piercing blasts of a horn blown by a young lad with a wispy moustache and a smoked stained cravat tied in a Osbaldeston knot who sat in the box beside the coach driver, warning people to move aside while the coach swung through the settlement on its way to its next stop. This was enough to change everything. The city grew and the settlement soon became a suburb, losing both its attunement to the land and its charm. After some time, the coach was eventually replaced, too; it became an antiquity, with its old-fashioned charisma, a memento to another time, rickety and clumsy, its value long faded with a bygone day. Now we have a bus stop with frosted glass and an electric timetable which updates every hour. The bus stop will vanish too, I suppose. Eventually it will come less and less, until one day it won't come at all. Still, for now, the bus continues to pass through the neighborhood.*

*A forceful expulsion of air from the bus's brakes brought the bus to a stop. I climbed aboard and paid the driver. The driver's hands were extraordinarily agile despite their size. I watched him sorting the coins into the black metal tray on the ticket stand, which fell into their assigned slots with a flick of his thumb. He immediately rummaged in a small wooden box underneath for change, scooping it up and placing it into my hand without a glance. He snaped the box shut, simultaneously yanking a lever with a bulbous red rubber seal so the double doors sighed and swung closed. He threw open his little driver side window, and the bus lurched forward. I staggered, grabbing at an overhead strap, before falling into an empty seat. The bus is a sauna in summer. The half-moon windows open into the bus bringing in the sound of the engine but little air. I sat on the vinyl seat, the back of my legs wet with sweat and tacky.*

*Out of the top half of a dirty window I could see the occasional roof of a passing car, and watched the rise and sag of endless powerlines go by with metronomic regularity. I closed your eyes, and with a small tilt of my head I leaned against the vibrating window and began to drift away, cradled in the dull drone of the bus's airless interior.*

# NIGHT

… to live 'authentically,' 'poetically,' is to have a relation with the unknown as such …[268]

*Time is trimmed to the nub. The inventory of your life is fading. The memory of you will soon be laid to rest, far away from the living. This is the tradition observed. Should it disappoint you or cause you concern? Tonight, you feel discordant, antiheroic, burnt by the suddenness of the flame.*

*You dwell in candle light; staring at the photograph of a young boy and his father riding on the back of giant insects, a memory worn thin by the hands of the heart. Will it survive the night and see the light of day? Unknown. For now, there will be no resurrection.*

*The light is slipping away; the language of the heart begins to slur, and the night pulls tight around your chest; soon, the braided cord will no longer tether you to the tangible world of your waking life. The wick dwindles. The candle is drawing close to its end. Time is a flame you cannot hold forever. In a moment, it will be dark.*

*Here, too, the gods are present.*

# WORLD

The poet is *worldly*.[269]

*In the beginning, everything squirmed and popped and spun and squelched; the smallest things sparkled and quivered and slunk and soared endowed with names and beating hearts, and even the stones in the garden, the sand on the beach, and the clouds in the sky had something to say, everything was alive. A piece of string could play a symphony, the bed had a personality, toys were siblings and the house could speak in creaks and moans if the wind was blowing in the right direction.*

The 'world' is not a theory that can be understood by detached or impartial observation. Nor is 'world' the material Earth or the Universe more generally, or any notion of "a great space or container" in which the poet exists as a subject surrounded by mere objects.[270] 'World' is a primordial disclosure.

> We bring with us, even in the simplest kinds of task or statement, a sense of a 'world' … It means no particular entity (it is not the planet or the globe itself) but is that presupposed and disregarded space of familiarity and recognition within which all the beings around us show themselves, are for us.[271]

Heidegger's notion of 'world' can be understood as the medium within and through which all things emerge, creating the fundamental experience of existence. For the most part, the poet is unaware of their world. It functions as the unnoticed "background" of their existence but it "determines … fundamentally, [what] there is."[272]

*The backyard was a jungle replete with lions and tigers. A cardboard box was a treasure chest. A chair was a sea faring ship. Pencils were swords. Puddles were vast oceans. Trees were either friends or foes. Car grills had teeth that grimaced or grinned. A crumpled leaf, a broken twig, an over-grown path. A blue thread of colour in a clear glass marble. A beam of dust in a ray of light. A sunlit room, moss sprouting between bricks, smoke above a chimney. A falcon hovering at dusk. Every little thing was miraculous in its moment; inexhaustible and evanescent. When you cried, every little thing hurt. When you laughed, everything laughed. The wind whispered your name, and everything was shining. And then, it was gone.*

According the Heidegger, 'world' is not stationary, rather it is a dynamic play of relations. In this sense, a world can be disrupted, enlarged, and given new shape and expression. This happens when something disrupts or intervenes in a world, temporarily or decisively, causing a world to sway by rearranging the worldly relations of everyday existence, thereby thrusting up for a moment the possibility of being in a different *way*. This might entail a season of illness, the sudden loss of a loved one, visiting a foreign country, or something as mundane as moving into a new house. Then the poet might ask, "Why do I do things in such a way?" Lee Braver refers to such moments as "localized" disruptions.[273] This type of disruption can bring to light the unacknowledged ways being is given and experienced. When the world is disrupted in this way, the poet might question the customs, systems, behaviours, and traditions that give rise to their world and provide it meaning.

*I cared little about sudden shifts of light or rising floods. These were the years when the topography of life lay silent before me, mapped out in the most exacting detail. One day I tilted towards death. I tried to steady myself, to stop myself falling, but I slipped ... and I found myself lying in a sunlit landscape. Where once again, every little thing sparkled and quivered and slunk and soared and the wind whispered my name, and every little thing was holy.*

Occasionally, a world *in toto* can be given a new colour and expression. This can happen when being (*Sein selbst*) is seen in a new light. This can occur in the deeply destabilising moods (*Stimmungen*) such as wonder, love, awe, or anxiety; the very moods to which poetry is attuned.[274] In these moments, Heidegger says, human beings are cast into a mood (*Stimmung*) of "uncanniness" (*Unheimlichkeit*). In German, *Unheimlichkeit,* has the sense of "not-at-home-ness," and in this mood "everyday familiarity collapses."[275]

Poetry moves within a mood of uncanniness. When the poet's world is encountered through poetry "everyday familiarity collapses" and their world is given a new *sway*. [276]

In poetry, 'world' is always open to change. Poets open new worlds through their unconventional use of imagery and language. When language is broken open, the world is reconfigured.

In this way, poetry can affect *real* change. It is not surprising that poetry can change a world. "A world is *where* we live our lives, [it is] the *milieu* in which we *dwell,"* Taylor Carman says.[277] And because "things always only show up for us in the context of a world" when new connections and relationships are made, as can happen in poetry, we experience a *new* world.[278]

A poem never leaves the poet or reader in the exactly the same world. After the *experience* of poetry, Jane Hirshfield insists, "a person feels, tastes, hears, thinks, and sees in altered ways."[279]

# CORRESPONDENCE

*How do I correspond with a flash of light?*

<*Come*>

Here, too, the gods are present.

*And then,*

*Lightning*

# NOTES

[1] Friedrich Hölderlin, '*As When On A Holiday …,*' quoted in, Martin Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, trans. Keith Hoeller (New York: Humanity Books, 2000), 69.

[2] Thank you to Robert Smith for inspiring the wording of this section. Robert Smith, *Derrida and Autobiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 171.

[3] Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar, 1966/67*, trans. Vittorio Klostermann Verlag (Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1979), 4.

[4] Martin Heidegger, *Heraclitus: The Inception of Occidental Thinking and Logic: Heraclitus's Doctrine of the Logos*, trans. Julia Goesser Assaiante and S. Montgomery Ewegen (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019), 168; Heidegger and Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*, 4–5.

[5] For Heidegger, absence is not privation, but the gods speaking. Heidegger writes: "The default of God and the divinities is absence. But absence is not nothing; rather it is precisely the presence, which must first be appropriated, of hidden fullness and wealth of what has been and what, thus gathered, is presencing …". Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Harper Perennial, 2013), 182.

[6] For example, Heidegger says: "Not only have the gods and the god fled, but the divine radiance has become extinguished in the world's history." Martin Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 89.

[7] Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996); Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1996), 307–41.

[8] Metaphysics is the search for what is common to all beings. While the word 'metaphysics' itself has a history of interpretation, metaphysics is always in some respect a search for a grounding structure for beings. Therefore, Kevin Hart says: "When we go back to the ground of metaphysics, we discover that it is constituted as onto-theology." Kevin Hart, *Postmodernism: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2004), 163.

[9] Albert Hofstadter, "Introduction," in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), xv.

[10] Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 115.

[11] Timothy Clark argues that "Heidegger's pervading concern is to challenge what 'knowledge' usually means, diagnosing and repudiating the reductive violence implicit in the kinds of knowledge that have become dominant in the West, with their vocabulary of 'mastering', 'conquering', 'grasping', 'making certain' and so no." Timothy Clark, *Martin Heidegger* (London: Routledge, 2002), 102. For similar and sympathetic critiques of 'scientism' and its metaphysical presuppositions see, Mary Midgley, *Science and Poetry* (London: Routledge, 2001); Bjørn Ekeberg, *Metaphysical Experiments: Physics and the Invention of the Universe* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 17–21; Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (London: Yale University Press, 2009); Iain McGilchrist, *The Matter With Things: Our Brains, Our Delusions, and the Unmaking of the World (The Ways to Truth)*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (London: Perspectiva, 2021); Iain McGilchrist, *The Matter With Things: Our Brains, Our Delusions, and the Unmaking of the World (What Then Is True?)*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (London: Perspectiva, 2021).

[12] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 1977, 56. Heidegger's concern with science and the scope of the technological age is not a critique of science and technology *per se*, but the presuppositions that give rise to these in

the modern world, furthering and sustaining the age's forgetfulness of the bright flame of being and the gods, neither of which appear as objects in the world. According to Heidegger, the undergirding assumption of the technological age is a notion of truth whereby the truth of an entity is thought to be verifiable (*veritas*) or falsified by the correlation of the entity with a standard of reason (i.e., a proposition, theory, concept or judgement). "Truth means today and has long meant," Heidegger writes, "the agreement or conformity of knowledge with fact (*The Origin of the Work of Art*, 50)." This standard of 'truth' or reason seeks to ground all entities by the correlation and confirmation of their being with the authority of reason. Thus, in the *Principle of Reason*, Heidegger argues, "Modern technology pushes towards the greatest possible perfection. Perfection is based on the thoroughgoing calculability of objects. The calculability of objects presupposes the unqualified validity of the *principium rationis*. It is in this way that the authority of the principle of reason, so understood, determines the essence of the modern, technological age (121)." However, Heidegger identifies a more originary truth at work that goes unnoticed in the technological age. Heidegger recovers this more originary truth in the notion of *aletheia*. *Aletheia* is truth that transpires not in perfection between knowledge and its object. Rather, this is truth as emergence, not correctness. Through *aletheia* beings are revealed from what is hidden, silent, reserved, veiled, and unconcealed. This notion is crucial if human beings are to remember the way of being and the gods in the modern age. For by thinking truth as revealing *and* concealing, Heidegger says, "we are reminding ourselves of what, unexpected and unthought, underlies our familiar and therefore outworn notion of truth in the sense of correctness (*Origin of the Work of Art,* 50)." On the one hand, *aletheia* reveals a world, while at the same time, another world is concealed. In other words, every revealing is simultaneously a concealing. In this sense, the 'truth' that is revealed through *aletheia* is not entities in themselves, but the *way* a world is disclosed. In the technological age, the revealing nature of truth as *aletheia* is forgotten, to the extent that it no longer holds *sway*, but goes unthought in an object-orientated understanding of truth. In part, this is due to the nature of *aletheia itself*, for it is truth that does not fall within the purview of objective verification, "and since we cannot verify it," Albert Borgmann writes, "we cannot get a firm grip on it. Truth, perceived as the primordial revelation of all entities, is therefore continually accompanied by essential obscurity" (*The Transformation of Heidegger's Thought*, 148-49). Under the guidance of the principle of reason, the technological age cannot abide being's obscurity. Thus, Heidegger characterises the technological age as privileging of presence and the forgetting of truth as revealing and concealing. What is more, Heidegger says, the technological drive towards uncovering and maximising an object's truth pushes entities, including human beings, to function in an increasingly dehumanised and anti-relational way. In other words, as the technological age dominates the horizon of the modern world, it functions in an increasingly nihilistic manner. Hence, Heidegger argues, "this functioning always drives to further functioning, and that technology increasingly tears humans away from the earth and uproots them" (*Der Spiegel Interview with Martin Heidegger*, 325). In the technological age, truth becomes forthwith 'use'. Such is the dominance of the modern technological projection of world-as-object that all beings come to be seen in terms of what Heidegger describes as the drive to expedient, pressing beings for profit (a standard of metaphysical realisation) by making them yield the greatest maximum benefit. What is not instantly 'useful' is discarded, overlooked, and forgotten. Heidegger writes: "This setting-upon that challenges forth the energies of nature is an expediting [*Fördern*], and in two ways. It expedites in that it unlocks and exposes. Yet that expediting is always itself directed from the beginning toward furthering something else, i.e., toward driving on to the maximum yield at the minimum expense" (*The Question Concerning Technology*, 15). What of the gods in the technological age? What becomes of the gods' radiant light that reveals and conceals worlds, yet does not appear as one more object among many that can be pressed for profit? The gods' light grows dim, for human beings no longer care to hearken to their message. As such, the gods withdraw into absence (*lethe*), along with their names, which no one in the technological age can recall.

[13] Eva Brann, *Homeric Moments: Clues to Delight in Reading the Odyssey* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2002), 35–45.

[14] Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 163. See too, *The Origin of the Work of Art* where Heidegger writes: " In the midst of beings as a whole an open place occurs. There is a clearing, a lighting. Thought of in reference to what is, to beings, this clearing is in a greater degree than are beings. This open center is therefore not surrounded by what is; rather, the lighting center itself encircles all that is, like the Nothing which we scarcely know. That which is can only be, as a being, if it stands within and stands out within what is lighted in this clearing. Only this clearing grants and guarantees to us humans a passage to those beings that we ourselves are not, and access to the being that we ourselves are." Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 51.

[15] Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 88–89.

[16] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 90.

[17] Hofstadter, "Introduction," xv; Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 139.

[18] Hofstadter, "Introduction," xv.

[19] Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 138–39.

[20] Hofstadter, "Introduction," xv.

[21] Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 138–39.

[22] In the essay, *What Calls for Thinking,* Heidegger insists: "Thinking is thinking only when it purses whatever speaks *for* a matter." Heidegger would have us abandon abstract speculation in favour of thinking that engages with the phenomena. Martin Heidegger, "What Calls for Thinking?," in *Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), 378.

[23] Richard Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 7.

[24] In 1966, Heidegger gave an interview to the German paper *Der Spiegel*, at Heidegger's request the interview was not published until after his death. Heidegger's concern with the gods is evident in the interview, as can be seen in the follow quote. Asked what he thought of the current technological age Heidegger replied: "Philosophy will not be able to effect any immediate transformation of the present condition of the world. This is not only true of philosophy, but of all human reflection and striving. Only a god can still save us. I see the only possibility of salvation in the process of preparing a readiness, through thinking and poetizing, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god in the decline." Martin Heidegger, "Der Spiegel Interview with Martin Heidegger," in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 326.

[25] Wiegand Petzet Heinrich, *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 61.

[26] Martin Heidegger, "Letter to Father William J. Richardson," in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 298–304; Joan Stambaugh, "The Turn," in *From Phenomenology to Thought, Errancy, and Desire: Essays in Honor of William J. Richardson, S.J.*, ed. Babette E. Babich (New York: Springer, 1995), 209–12.

[27] Stambaugh, "The Turn"; William J. Richardson, "Heidegger and the Problem of Thought," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 65 (1962): 58–78; William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 4th ed. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003).

[28] Andrew Mitchell, *The Fourfold: Reading the Later Heidegger* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015), 163.

[29] Jean-Yves Lacoste, *From Theology to Theological Thinking*, trans. W. Chris Hackett (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 79.

[30] Lacoste, 2.

[31] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 209–19.

[32] Heidegger writes: "This is the world's night, rearranged into merely technological day. This is the shortest day. It threatens a single endless winter. Not only does protection now withhold itself from man, but the integralness of the whole of what is remains now in darkness. The wholesome and sound withdraws. The world becomes without healing, unholy." Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 115.

[33] Clark, *Martin Heidegger*, 97.

[34] Martin Heidegger, "Memorial Address," in *Discourse On Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 55–57. See too, Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 163. For a similar argument that regards Hölderlin's verse enabling Heidegger to think outside of metaphysics, see Francesca Brencio, "Foundation and Poetry: Heidegger as a Reader of Hölderlin," *Studia Philosophiae Christianae* 49, no. 4 (2013): 181–200.

[35] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 163.

[36] Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Martin Heidegger, *The Event*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

[37] Heidegger's last public work is a poetic meditation on a painting by the painter Paul Cézanne. In the work, Heidegger meditates on the central theme of his thinking: the question of being. He also touches upon the notion of the 'holy'. Martin Heidegger, "Cézanne: From the Series Gedachtes for René Char; L'Herne 1971; Last Version 1974," in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 310–11.

[38] Löwith is quoted in Vincent Vycinas, *Earth and Gods: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 2. The original quote appears in Karl Löwith, *Heidegger Denker in Dürftiger Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fisher Verlag, 1953), 10.

[39] Hofstadter, "Introduction," xvi.

[40] Quoted in, Basilio Petrá, *Christos Yannaras: The Apophatic Horizon of Ontology*, trans. Norman Russell (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2019), 15.

[41] Martin Heidegger, "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?," in *Heidegger: The Man and the Thinker*, trans. Thomas Sheehan (London: Routledge, 2017), 16–18; Heidegger, "The Thing"; Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 141–59.

[42] Edward Hirsch, "Allusion," in *A Poet's Glossary* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 20.

[43] Hofstadter, "Introduction," xvii.

[44] Martin Heidegger, "Language," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 2013), 203.

[45] M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College, 1993), 286.

[46] George Steiner, *Martin Heidegger* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), 9-10. Emphasis added.

[47] Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenology and Theology," in *The Religious*, ed. John D. Caputo, trans. James G. Hart, John Maraldo, and William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 64.

[48] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*.

[49] Capobianco, 35; 108. See too, Richard Capobianco, "Heidegger on Pindar's 'Gold' and Heraclitus's 'Kosmos' as Being Itself," *Filozofia: Journal for Philosophy* 72, no. 5 (2017): 347–56; Martin Heidegger, "On the Question Concerning the Determination of the Matter for Thinking," trans. Richard Capobianco and Marie Göbel, *Epoché* 14, no. 2 (2010): 213–23; Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*.

[50] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 6. Emphasis original.

[51] The quote is from a poem by Johann Peter Hebel. Heidegger quotes the line in a lecture on Hebel published in 1957 with the title '*Hebel – Friend of the House*'. Quoted in, Capobianco, 48.

[52] Capobianco, 6.

[53] Rowan Williams, *The Edge of Words: God and the Habits of Language* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 147.

[54] The revealing and concealing nature of poetry is described in a striking reflection on literature by Maurice Blanchot: "It is precisely the essence of literature to escape any determination of its essence, any assertion which might stabilise it or even turn it into a reality: literature is never given, but remains always to be rediscovered or reinvented. It is not even certain that the word 'literature', or 'art', corresponds to anything real, or possible, or important … Whoever seeks it seeks only that which slips away; whoever finds it finds only what falls short of literature or, even worse, what lies beyond it. This is why, in the end, it is non-literature that each book pursues as the essence of what it loves and yearns passionately to discover." Maurice Blanchot, *The Book to Come*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 201.

[55] Two poems will suffice to show how the poetic hearkens to the ineffable, thereby drawing readers into the exper-

ience of being itself. The first comes from the Japanese poet, Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694), and the second from the Welsh poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins (1844-1889). After each poem I offer a short elucidation. Matsuo Bashō. Translation, Jane Hirshfield, *Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 85 Italics original; Gerard Manly Hopkins, *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 176.

*lightning—*
*a night heron's cry*
*flies into darkness*
inazuma ya yami no kata yuku goi no koe

"Lightning" (*inazuma*) flashes. The brilliance of light comprises the entirety of the first line ("*lightning*—"), simultaneously opening the poem and directing the lines that will follow.[55] Although the length of time between the first and second line is unspecified, for the reader it is but an instant of bright white space before the eye catches again on the dark marks of the second line. A heron's cry rings out. Does the heron cry because of the sudden flash of light? Or is the cry of the heron itself the lightning flash tearing open the dark night? The haiku accommodates both readings, as if to highlight an accordance between the two events that is impossible to parse. The poem is no longer dealing with the science of causation, but is attuned to something more primordial—the lightning and the heron's cry arrive *together*. And yet, the heron's cry is not heard in the haiku itself. The cry arrives unadorned by any extra description. Bashō offers the reader no indication as to the volume, tone, pitch, or length of the cry. If it is 'heard' at all, it is for the reader to listen for the heron's cry in the silent white space surrounding the haiku. Like lightning—the heron's cry arrives from out of the bright open space of the white page, and into the bright open space of the white page the cry vanishes, back into the night's bright nothing.

Moonrise

I awoke in the Midsummer not-to-call night, | in the white
and the walk of the morning:
The moon, dwindled and thinned to the fringe | of a fingernail
held to the candle,
Or paring of paradisïacal fruit, | lovely in waning but lustre-
less,
Stepped from the stool, drew back from the barrow, | of dark
Maenefa the mountain;
A cusp still clasped him, a fluke yet fanged him, | entangled
him, not quit utterly.
This was the prized, the desirable sight, | unsought, presented
so easily,
Parted me leaf and leaf, divided me, | eyelid and eyelid of
slumber.

In the open, fragmentary spaces of Hopkin's unrhymed verse, light breaks forth unannounced, only to be instantaneously concealed in the unparsable opening phrase: "I awoke in the Midsummer not-to-call night, | in the white / and the walk of the morning." Tenuous and fragile, the line holds together the apparent ("walk") and the inapparent ("white"); the unconcealing ("not-to-call night") and concealing ("in the white"). The second line finally emerges from out of the first's passing: "The moon, dwindled and thinned." This is the morning's bright jointure: from night's concealing absence springs forth the poet's waking hours, which are borne away again into the dark even as he walks into the light: "A cusp still clasped him." Into this world with its shimmering and gloaming, the poet risks speaking—of home. Not a dwelling place in the imagination, but a real locale that is and is not his own: "dark Maenefa the mountain." Darkness and light, absence and presence, intimacy and estrangement, material and mystery, each amplified by the poetic and given a place of impermanent habitation ("morning"). In the poet's world, morning is joyful but tinged with mourning. Black marks in a white space: the poet's cadences of home.

[56] Williams, *Edge of Words*, 147.

[57] Capobianco reiterates Heidegger's assertion that being is only understood "during the experience" of thinking being. Although this sounds paradoxical, the reason for this, Capobianco says, is because thinking *is* "the experience" of being itself. Heidegger, *The Event*, 207. See too, Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray and Fred D. Wieck (New York: Harper & Row, 1954); Brent Dean Robbins, "Joyful Thinking-Thanking: A Reading of Heidegger's 'What Is Called Thinking?,'" *Janus Head* 13 (2012): 13–21.

[58] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 48.

[59] Capobianco, 69.

[60] Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 130.

[61] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 98. Emphasis mine.

[62] Capobianco, 98.

[63] Capobianco, 94.

[64] Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 25.

[65] Richard Capobianco, "Heidegger on Heraclitus: Kosmos/World as Being Itself," *Epoché* 20, no. 2 (2016): 475.

[66] Capobianco, 475.

[67] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 98.

[68] The title of this work, *And then, Lightning,* refers to Heidegger's 1943 lecture on Heraclitus. According to Heidegger, Heraclitus repeatedly calls attention the sudden manifestation of being into begingness. For Heraclitus, this moment goes by several names: light (*phos*), fire (*pur*), and lightning (*keraunós*). Lightning, Heraclitus says, is the unparseble moment of emergence that shines in all things and "steers" all things into their place. It is this light to which the gods hint, point, and beckon human beings to become both its recipients and caretakers. Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 122–29.

[69] Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 28.

[70] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 204.

[71] Heidegger describes the gods as beckoning or winking to human beings, bidding them into the light of being. Etymologically, the German verb *winken is* derived from the old Germanic noun *der Wink* and has the sense: to beckon, call near, signal, awaken, wave or hail. A good number of these meanings are carried over into the English *wink*. Heidegger, "The Thing," 176; Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 2013, 148. See, Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 165–66.

[72] In 1969, Heidegger addressed the Academy of Arts and Sciences in Athens, Greece. The address was later published with the title, *The Provenance of Art and the Determination of Thinking.* In this address, Heidegger underscored the relation of the gods to human being. The gods, Heidegger noted, are those beings who "look" into the gleam of being itself and mediate between the light of being and the human being. Thus, Heidegger said, according to the Greeks, the goddess Athena had bright-eyes that gazed into the light of being, and having gazed into being, could then counsel human being, helping humans to know how best to respond to the bright-light of being. Richard Capobianco, "Overcoming the Subjectivisms of Our Age (or Why Heidegger Is Not a Phenomenologist)," ed. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018), 310–14.

[73] Rubem A. Alves, *The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet* (London: SCM Press, 2002), 100.

[74] Stephen Benson and Clare Connors, eds., *Creative Criticism: An Anthology and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 32.

[75] *And then, Lightning* can be thought of as what Umberto Eco calls "a work in movement." My poetic response to Heidegger's gods is expressed as much in its *forming* or *unfolding* than in its content. The reader therefore should seek to enter into the *experience* of reading the work, for it is in the experience of the work's movement that its question is most keenly expressed. Peter Bondanella, *Umberto Eco and the Open Text: Semiotics, Fiction, Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 30.

[76] Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 23.

[77] Martin Heidegger, "Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)," in *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 67–68.

[78] Ann Smock, "Translator's Introduction," in *The Space of Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 12.

[79] Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, trans. John Sturrock (New York: Penguin, 2008), 210.

[80] As Joan Stambaugh says, "we cannot leave metaphysics by a series of reasoned conclusions. We must simply leap [*Sprung*] out of it. Joan Stambaugh, "Introduction," in *Identity and Difference* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 13.

[81] Here I suggest a resonance with Heraclitus fragment 50: "If you have listened not merely to me, but rather have listened to the *Logos* (in obedience to it, hearkening to it), the knowledge (which subsists therein) is to say the same as the *Logos*: one is all." Commenting on the fragment Heidegger says: "Said simply: fragment 50 is about the homological relation of the human *logos* to *the Logos* … The human, as the one who gathers in a hearkening way, is 'gathered towards' being: this is, the human is open to being, and is so on account of being." Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 182–92; 223–24.

[82] Dasein is always involved in a world in a very immediate way. Heidegger refers to this immediacy as "existentiell." A question for the existentiell would be to ask: "How do I understand or decide about my own being." This question differs from Existentialism or the philosophical inquiry into the structure of human existence. Nevertheless, as John Macquarrie observes: "the existential question is rooted in the existentiell one, that is to say, the theoretical inquiry takes its rise from the concrete situation of existing in the world. Heidegger shares the common existentialist distrust of abstract rationalism. The question of Being is not to be considered in terms of abstract speculation, but on the basis of our own first hand participation in existence." For this reason, Macquarrie goes on to say, "Men [human being] are not spectators of Being but participants in it, and if there is to be a philosophy of Being, this cannot be reared on any kind of detached observation, but only on the basis of our total participation." John Macquarrie, *Martin Heidegger* (Virginia: John Knox Press, 1968), 10–11.

[83] Hölderlin underscores the need for poets to return to the specificity of their own existence if the gods are again to be encountered: "You spoke to the divinity, but this you have all forgotten, that the first-fruits are not for mortals, that they belong to the gods. The fruit must first become more common, more everyday, then it will be the mortals' own." This fragment is found in Hölderlin's notebook. Quoted in, Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 55.

[84] Carl Mika has written two important studies on Heidegger's later thinking of "presence" and the "fourfold" and the relation to Māori notions of absence, whakapapa, and whakairo. Carl Mika, "Thereness: Implications of Heidegger's 'Presence' for Maori," *Alternative* 11, no. 1 (2015): 3–13; Carl Mika, "The Enowning of Thought and Whakapapa: Heidegger's Fourfold," *Review of Contemporary Philosophy* 13 (2014): 48–60.

[85] Paora Moyle, "A Model for Māori Research for Māori Practitioners," *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work* 26–38, no. 1 (2014): 29.

[86] Carl Mika and Georgina Stewart, "Lost in Translation: Western Representations of Māori Knowledge," *Open Review of Educational Research* 4, no. 1 (2017): 134–46, https://doi.org/10.1080/23265507.2017.1364143.

[87] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2007); Julian Young, *The Death of God and the Meaning of Life* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[88] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 17-18/20. *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) appears in two authoritative English translations: John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (1962) and Joan Stambaugh (1996). Both translations give the original German pagination in the margins. Both will be used in this work. Therefore, quotes in this work give the page number to the English translation and the original German page number, separated by a forward slash. For example, 67/77. In order to avoid comparison between the German 'being' (*Sein*) with an entity or God, this work adopts Stambaugh's habit of translating *Sein* with the English lowercase 'being'. Quotations which opt to use the uppercase 'Being' in translation will be left unchanged.

[89] Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 1977, 56.

[90] Original quote is found in Heidegger's lecture *Hölderlin's Hymne.* Quoted in, Vycinas, *Earth and Gods*, 149.

[91] Mark Wrathall, "Between the Earth and Sky," in *Religion After Metaphysics*, ed. Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 212.

[92] In his commentary on Hölderlin's verse, Heidegger writes: "The poet knows that when he calls the reserved "the real find" that is, something he has found, he says something that runs counter to common sense. To say that something is near while it remains distant means, after all, either violating a fundamental rule of ordinary thought, the principle of contradiction, or else playing with empty words, or else making an outrageous statement. That is why the poet, almost as soon as he has brought himself to say his words about the mystery of the reserving nearness, interrupts himself: 'I talk like a fool'." Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 43.

[93] Maurice Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, trans. Lycette Nelson (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 69.

[94] Vycinas, *Earth and Gods*, 171. Translation adapted.

[95] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 90–91.

[96] Heidegger, "What Are Poets For?," 89–90.

[97] Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Remembrance,"* trans. William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2018), 58.

[98] Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 130.

[99] St Gregory Palamas, *The Triads in Defence of the Holy Hesychasts*, ed. Jean Meyendorff, trans. Nicholas Gendle (New York: Paulist Press, 1956), 38.

[100] Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* (New York: Noonday, 1990), 5.

[101] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 2013, 157–58.

[102] Heidegger, 149–57.

[103] Heidegger, "The Thing," 164–75.

[104] Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 1996), 361.

[105] Adam Sharr, *Heidegger's Hut* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2017).

[106] According to Heidegger, the peasants do not build houses at odds with other entities, but practice what the Greeks called '*Techne*'. This is the notion of revealing the essence of entities, in contrast to bending entities to suit the will of human beings. Thus the peasant's house lets the surrounding landscape appear as landscape; letting appear the different seasons of earth's yearly cycle, and letting the sky appear as the sustainer all things that live upon the earth. As Heidegger explains: "To the Greeks *techne* means neither art nor handicraft but rather: to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way. The Greeks conceived of *techne*, producing, in terms of letting appear." Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 2013, 157.

[107] The following sections draw on Heidegger's notion of the Fourfold. I do not mention the notion specifically, but offer a phenomenological exploration. For an overview of the fourfold, Andrew Mitchell's description is helpful: "The members of the fourfold name the conditions by which the thing extends into a world of relations (as appearances, as mediated, as meaningful, as with others), they coalesce in the emergence of the thing into this world. But this relationality would not be possible for 'objects' as self-contained pieces of material, as sturdy 'furniture' of a pre-existing world. Things are never the building blocks of reality, they are never solid enough for this. For the thing to be a thing of the sort described, it must surrender itself into a play of relations, exist as a cluster and conglomeration of relations. The fourfold allows Heidegger a way of articulating the desolidification or dis-closure of the thing, the interruption of the thing's self-presence and self-identity whereby that thing passes into the world. Rather than an underlying substantial existence, things are thought in terms of a 'gathering' (*Versammlung*) of the fourfold. The fourfold is 'gathered' (*versammelt*) into things … The fourfold gathers around the thing in a tenuous convergence … *Each of these grants the thing a place within a particular cluster of relations and supportive connections. The thing is nestled within a context."* .Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 12–13.

[109] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 1996, 362.

[110] Lee Braver, *Heidegger's Later Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 105.

[111] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 205.

[112] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 1996, 362.

[113] Heidegger, 356; 362.

[114] Heidegger, 362.

[115] Mark Wrathall, *Heidegger* (London: Granta, 2005), 109.

[116] Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), 56.

[117] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 1996, 362.

[118] Heidegger, "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?"

[119] Günter Figal, "Chronology of Heidegger's Life," in *The Heidegger Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 336–37.

[120] Heidegger, "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?," 18.

[121] Heidegger, 16–17.

[122] Heidegger, 17–18.

[123] Heidegger, 16.

[124] Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 156.

[125] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 204–10.

[126] It is interesting to note the similarities between this late piece of writing and an earlier lecture on Heraclitus Fragment B 50. Both quotes set forth a challenge to think being from within the fray of life, rather than as an abstract idea. In the Heraclitus lecture, Heidegger writes: "We see this lightning [the flash of Being] only when we station ourselves in the storm of Being. Yet everything today betrays the fact that we bestir ourselves only to drive storms away. We organize all available means for cloud-seeding and storm dispersal in order to have calm in the face of the storm. But this calm is no tranquility. It is only anesthesia; more precisely, the narcotization of anxiety in the face of thinking." Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (Harper and Row, 1984), 78.

[127] Heidegger, "Why Do I Stay in the Provinces?," 17.

[128] Heidegger, 17.

[129] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 12.

[130] Heidegger, *Remembrance*, 65–68.

[131] Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 88.

[132] Martin Heidegger, "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)," in *Early Greek Thinking: The Dawn of Western Philosophy*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1984), 116.

[133] Jacques Derrida, "Aletheia," *The Oxford Literary Review* 32, no. 2 (2010): 171.

[134] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 97. The notion of 'light' and 'lightness' is also discussed in chapters 6 and 7of Capobianco's *Engaging Heidegger*. Richard Capobianco, *Engaging Heidegger* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

[135] Capobianco has shown how the related notions of light/lightly (*licht/leicht*) became important for Heidegger's articulation of the nature of being: "To recover what Heidegger calls 'the experience of Being' is also for us to come to an appreciation of the ultimate simplicity and lightness' of our own being … in his later thinking Heidegger learned that the German word *Lichtung* was derived not only from the word for shining 'light' (*Licht*)—but also from the word *leicht*, 'light' in the sense of 'free and easy and unburdened.' … To think Being as *die Lichtung* in terms of *leicht* is to be mindful of how all beings and things—including ourselves—are unencumbered, freed up, released, set free and set moving again." Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 97.

[136] Martin Heidegger, *Four Seminars*, trans. Andrew Mitchell and François Raffoul (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 59.

[137] Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, 7.

[138] Blanchot, *The Book to Come*, 201.

[139] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 203.

[140] Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone*, 36.

[141] Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 171–73.

[142] Heidegger argues: "Art lets truth originate. Art, founding preserving, is the spring that leaps to the truth of what is, in the work. To originate something by a leap, to bring something into being from out of the source of its nature in a founding leap—this is what the word origin (German *Ursprung*, literally, primal leap) means." Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art," 75.

[143] Blanchot, *The Step Not Beyond*, 6.

[144] Williams, *Edge of Words*.

[145] Martin Heidegger, *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 42/55.

[146] Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art," 75.

[147] bid., 56/38–39.

[148] Michel Harr, *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History-of-Being*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 72–73.

[149] Karsten Harries, *Art Matters: A Critical Commentary on Heidegger's "The Origin of the Work of Art,"* Contributions of Phenomenology 57 (New York: Springer, 2009), 24.

[150] Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 56-59/38-41.

[151] Heidegger, 173/119.

[152] In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes: "Resoluteness has turned out to be a kind of existing which is primordial and authentic. Proximally and for the most part, to be sure, Dasein remains irresolute; that is to say, it remains closed off in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, to which it brings itself only when it has been individualized." Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 386/336.

[153] Harries, *Art Matters*, 24.

[154] For example, Heidegger states: "Poetry makes beings more beingful. Poetry—not just any writing!" See, Martin Heidegger, "The Projection of Being in Science and Art," in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 107. Also, Martin Heidegger, "On the Origin of the Work of Art (First Version)," in *The Heidegger Reader*, ed. Günter Figal, trans. Jerome Veith (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007), 144–45.

[155] Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "Germania" and "The Rhine,"* trans. William McNeill and Julia Ireland (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 17.

[156] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 285. Emphasis added.

[157] Vycinas, *Earth and Gods*, 159. Emphasis added.

[158] Heidegger explains the aim of the lectures was to step back from metaphysical thought by going back to the beginning of philosophical thinking and to "experience, from a distance, something of the region of the ground of the 'inception' of 'philosophy' (i.e., metaphysics) … [and] to experience something of the 'inception' in the word of Heraclitus's." Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 4.

[159] The first story is found in Aristotle's *De Partibus Animalium* (*Parts of Animals*), I, 5, 645a, 17ff; the second story is found in Diogenes Laërtius, IX, 3. Aristotle, *Parts of Animals, Movement of Animals, Progression of Animals*, trans. A. L. Peck and E. S. Forster (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937); Diogenes Laërtius, "Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers," trans. R. D. Hicks, Perseus Digital Library, 2021, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0258%3Abook%3D9.

[160] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 8.

[161] Heidegger, 19.

[162] Heidegger, 19.

[163] Heidegger, 19.

[164] Heidegger, 19.

[165] Heidegger's two lectures on Heraclitus are among his most remarkable on the Presocrates and he returned to themes covered there—*kosmos*, *physis*, *hen, logos,* and *aletheia*—throughout the rest of his life. But the story of Heraclitus warming himself at the oven before his surprised visitors seems to have held a particular interest for Heidegger during the 1940s. The story, I believe, offers a crucial insight into understanding the relationship between human beings and the gods. Heidegger's other notable works on the Presocrates include, Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking*; Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992).

[166] In comparison to other notable elucidations of the story, Heidegger offers a highly novel interpretation as to precisely what the story of Heraclitus at the oven reveals. Pavel Gregoric offers a critical and comparative reading of Heidegger's commentary of the story alongside a number of other well-known readings, see: Pavel Gregoric, "The Heraclitus Anecdote: De Partibus Animalium i 5.645a17-23," *Ancient Philosophy* 21 (2001): 1–13.

[167] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 8.

[168] Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, trans. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 256.

[169] Heidegger's highly novel use of language and wordplay is explored in the following studies. Herman Rapaport, *Heidegger and Derrida: Reflections on Time and Language* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991); Dieter Tomä, "The Name on the Edge of Language: A Complication in Heidegger's Theory of Language and Its Consequences," in *A Companion to Heidegger's Introduction to Metaphysics*, ed. Richard Polt and Gregory Fried (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 103–22; Martin Travers, *The Writing of Aletheia: Martin Heidegger in Language* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019).

[170] Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996).

[171] Heidegger, 67.

[172] Heidegger, 105.

[173] Heidegger, 105.

[174] "Außergewöhnliche," in *Oxford Duden German Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[175] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 257.

[176] The philosopher, Donald Robertson, maintains that "the expression 'to warm oneself by the oven' is a polite euphemism for visiting the lavatory, which, if true, indeed explains why the visitors hesitated to come in." Quoted in, Gregoric, "The Heraclitus Anecdote," 4.

[177] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 257.

[178] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 9.

[179] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 25.

[180] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 9.

[181] Capobianco, *Heidegger's Way of Being*, 26.

[182] Alves, *The Poet, The Warrior, The Prophet*, 79–80.

[183] Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 5.

[184] U. Edward McDougall, "Everydayness, Divinity, and the Sacred: Shinto and Heidegger," *Philosophy East & West* 66, no. 3 (2016): 885.

[185] Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art," 53.

[186] Jacques Derrida, "Che Cos'è La Poesia?," in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. and trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 229.

[187] Heidegger, *The Event*, 112.

[188] Heinrich, *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger*, 61.

[189] Heidegger, *"Germania" and "The Rhine,"* 234.

[190] Heinrich, *Encounters and Dialogues with Martin Heidegger*, 61.

[191] Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 198.

[192] Blanchot, 21.

[193] Yael Cameron Klangwisan, *Jouissance: A Cixousian Encounter with the Song of Songs* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015), xii.

[194] Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, 199.

[195] Blanchot, 22.

[196] Jane Hirshfield, *Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 177–78.

[197] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 187.

[198] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 87.

[199] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 226.

[200] Heidegger, *The Ister*, 63.

[201] Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 187.

[202] Heidegger, *"Germania" and "The Rhine,"* 18. Timothy Clark has rightly observed: "For Heidegger the primary task of the reader in preserving a poem [contrary of treating the poem as a work of 'literature] is to become attuned, non-conceptually, to the fundamental tone: 'At the heart of the sphere of power of the poetry, we should first determine the place from which and towards which the power of the poetry opens itself and remains powerful'. This is simultaneously a transformation of our attitudes to language and a putting into question ourselves, the readers, as uses of language. We should no longer be thinking of the poem as something we can know as being 'about' something, but as opening a space of its own projection for us to inhabit, possessing us like a dance or a walk to music." Clark, *Martin Heidegger*, 115.

[203] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 143.

[204] Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected "Problems" of "Logic,"* ed. John Sallis, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 7.

[205] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 55–56.

[206] According to William J. Richardson, Heidegger was fond of quoting a line from Hölderlin's *Rhine Hymn* when explaining his singular preoccupation with the question of being throughout his career: "As you began, so you will remain." According to Heidegger, the question was first ignited for him in 1907 on receiving a copy of Franz Brentano's book *On the Manifold Sense of Being According to Aristotle*. Richardson, "Heidegger and the Problem of Thought," 58.

[207] Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy*, 4–6.

[208] Rowan Williams, *A Silent Action: Engagements with Thomas Merton* (London: SPCK, 2013), 175.

[209] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 143.

[210] Regarding Heidegger's fundamental ontology, John Macquarrie says: "*Dasein* is never complete in its Being. To exist is to always be on the way, so that one can never, as it were, pin down the existent at any precise moment and give an exhaustive description. He is constituted by possibilities rather than properties." Macquarrie, *Martin Heidegger*, 12–13.

[211] Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 320.

[212] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 210. Translation altered.

[213] Heidegger, "Logos," 66–67.

[214] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 1996, 344..

[215] Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," 265.

[216]Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 488/437.

[217] T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), 12.

[218] Eliot, 12.

[219] Michel Foucault, "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from Outside," in *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Brian Massumi (New York: Zone Books, 1987), 12; Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 5.

[220] Annie Dillard, *Holy the Firm* (New York: Perennial Library, 1988), 80.

[221] Heidegger and Fink, *Heraclitus Seminar*.

[222] Heidegger and Fink, 4.

[223] Heidegger and Fink, 5.

[224] Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, 274.

[225] Quoted in, Anton Wessels, *Van Gogh and the Art of Living: The Gospel According to Vincent van Gogh*, trans. Henry Jansen (Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 94.

[226] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Theory of Colours*, trans. Charles Lock Eastlake (London: Project Gutenberg, 2015).

[227] Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 109–11.

[228] Brann, *Homeric Moments: Clues to Delight in Reading the Odyssey*, 35–45.

[229] David Wellbery, "Stimmung," trans. Rebecca Pohl, *New Formations* 93 (2017): 7.

[230] Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 111.

[231] Frank Schalow and Alfred Denker, *Historical Dictionary of Heidegger's Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2010), 191.

[232] Randall Teal, "The Place of Divinities" (Architecture, Culture and Spirituality Symposium, University of Idaho, 2009), 1.

[233] Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper One, 1971), 57.

[234] Teal, "The Place of Divinities," 2.

[235] Heidegger's involvement with National Socialism is a scandal. The debate is not whether or not Heidegger was a supporter of the Nazi regime, it is clear from his lectures and public addresses from this period and the recent publications of his 'Black Notebooks' that he was a willing participant. The question remains however over whether or not Heidegger's philosophy is fascist. Like any philosophy, the reader brings to the work their own history and biases. In the case of Heidegger's work, the reader must decide for themselves if Heidegger's thinking is guilty of participating in the atrocities of the Second World War. I believe Heidegger's thinking goes beyond the shallow vision of National Socialism and touches on something far more profound and essential. The question I face then, is how to write about a disaster like the Holocaust without falling into reductions. In this work, the Holocaust and Heidegger's involvement is met with silence, but this is a silence that condemns and laments. In this work, I wait in silence to hear Heidegger's confession, whose own silence on the matter cements his personal culpability. And I lament the millions of voices who cannot cry out, but whose silence speaks louder than my own words could ever hope to. Concerning the relationship of Heidegger's thinking to National Socialism see Heidegger's own Black Notebooks and the subsequent academic discussions, Martin Heidegger, *Ponderings II-VI: Black Notebooks 1931-1938*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014); Martin Heidegger, *Ponderings XII-XV: Black Notebooks 1939-1941*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2014); Ingo Farin and Jeff Malpas, eds., *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931-1941* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016); Andrew Mitchell and Peter Trawny, eds., *Heidegger's Black Notebooks: Responses to Anti-Semitism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

[236] Heidegger, "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)," 120.

[237] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 46–47.

[238] Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Back Bay, 1961), 506.

[239] Andrew Mitchell argues that to have received the gods' message implies one has accepted the world disclosed by the light of the gods. To refuse this world, is not to have accepted or understood the gods' message. Mitchell writes: "The divinities who message to us only ever offer us the invitation of this [the gods'] world. To receive the message is already to have entered it …" Mitchell, *The Fourfold*, 204.

[240] Heidegger, *"Germania" and "The Rhine,"* 226–27.

[241] Heidegger, *Heraclitus*, 297.

[242] Benjamin D. Crowe, "Heidegger's Gods," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 15, no. 2 (2007): 239. For an unusual reading of Heidegger's use of the plural "gods" in regards to multiple ways the gods can manifest, see Jeff Owen Purdhomme's account that the "gods" indicate Heidegger's undecidability as to the "last God". Jeff Owen Prudhomme, "The Passing-By of the Ultimate God: The Theological Assessment of Modernity in Heidegger's 'Beiträge Zur Philosophie,'" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 61, no. 3 (1993): 449.

[243] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 48.

[244] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage Books, 1978).

[245] The intense moment of a poetic encounter is beautifully expressed by Yael Cameron Klangwisan: "My greatest *jouissance* comes when I am most vulnerable. When I am undone by the text, when it has stripped me bare of my defences, my practiced denials … It is this moment when I am most abject and least worthy that I become recipient of the eternal love of the text." Klangwisan, *Jouissance: A Cixousian Encounter with the Song of Songs*, 37.

[246] Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone*, 73.

[247] Vycinas, *Earth and Gods*, 286.

[248] The first line from the haiku by Teishitsu. The haiku appears in Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel: Lecture Courses and Seminars at the College de France (1978-1979 and 1979-1980)*, trans. Kate Briggs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 386. Emphasis added.

[249] Henry Vaughan, "Friends Departed," in *Poetry and Selected Prose of Henry Vaughan*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 318–19.

[250] Clark, *Martin Heidegger*, 113.

[251] Capobianco, "Heidegger on Heraclitus," 475.

[252] The Greek *mysterion* is translated into English as *mystery*. The word carries the sense of a 'secret' or something unutterable in both Greek and English. However, the Greek *mysterion* carries more nuance than the English *mystery*. In Greek, the word suggests a mystery is encounterable despite its essence remaining hidden. To encounter a *mysterion* is to experience hiddenness itself. In this sense, a mystery is knowable but never fully revealed, something always remains concealed. Thus, to 'know' a mystery is to participate in the concealment of what is being revealed and simultaneously hidden. In like manner, Heidegger frequently employs the notion of a 'true' mystery to speak about being. For a Greek reading of the notion of mystery see, Andrew Louth, *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 2013), 98–100. To read Heidegger employing the notion of mystery to speak of being see, Heidegger, "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)."

[253] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 43. Emphasis added.

[254] Heidegger, 90–91.

[255] Heidegger, "Language," 204–5.

[256] Heidegger, *Elucidations of Hölderlin's Poetry*, 47.

[257] Heidegger, 43.

[258] Henry Vaughan, *Poetry and Selected Prose of Henry Vaughan*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford University Press, 1963), 318–19.

[259] The philosopher, Iain McGilchrist, laments this can happen in academia when poetry is compared with the sciences, which have a bias towards empirical, utilitarian results. McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary*, 158.

[260] Heidegger saw the growing demand in science and technology for verifiable results as implicit in the fatal metaphysical drive. Heidegger claims: "The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word 'picture' [*Bild*] now means the structured image [*Gebild*] that is the creature of man's producing which represents and sets before. In such producing, man contends for the position in which he can be that *particular being who gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is*." Emphasis mine, Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 1977, 134.

[261] Heidegger, "Aletheia (Heraclitus, Fragment B 16)," 121.

[262] Maurice Blanchot, "Literature and the Right to Death," in *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader: Fiction and Literary Essays*, trans. Lydia Davis (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1999), 330.

[263] Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 342.

[264] Ullrich Haase and William Large, *Maurice Blanchot* (London: Routledge, 2001), 14.

[265] The notion of language I am proposing here is in contrast to the idea that language functions merely as a container of thought, a model of language known as "information transfer." According to L. David Ritchie, the function of language in the information transfer model "is to maintain and improve our representation of the world, where 'representation' refers to the set of truth conditions we understand and know to be either true or false. This describes a 'task based' view of language, where language use is meaningful only if and to the extent that it serves the accomplishment of some informational task, such as inquiring, informing, persuading, commanding, and so on." In contrast, according to Maurice Blanchot, (and arguably for Heidegger too), the poetic moves beyond such simple models of representation. In fact, the poetic actively eludes the grip of the reduction of language inherent in the information transfer model. L. David Ritchie, *Metaphor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 19.

[266] Regarding the relation of the familiar to the unfamiliar in the work of art, Heidegger says: "The setting-into-work of truth thrusts up the unfamiliar and extraordinary and at the same time thrusts down the ordinary and what we believe to be such. The truth that discloses itself in the work can never be proved or derived from what went before. What went before is refuted in its exclusive reality by the work. What art founds can therefore never be compensated

and made up for by what is already resent and available. Founding is an overflow, an endowing, a bestowal." Heidegger, "Origin of the Work of Art," 72–73.

[267] Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," 2013, 148. Translation modified.

[268] Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, 302.

[269] Terrence Malick, "Translator's Introduction," in *The Essence of Reasons* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), xiv–xv.

[270] Capobianco, "Heidegger on Heraclitus," 474.

[271] Clark, *Martin Heidegger*, 16.

[272] Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*, 23.

[273] Braver, *Heidegger's Later Writings*, 20.

[274] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 232/187; Aidan Nichols, *The Word Has Been Abroad: A Guide Through Balthasar's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 181.

[275] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1962, 233/189.

[276] Lee Braver, *Heidegger: Thinking of Being*, Key Contemporary Thinkers (Cambridge: Polity, 2014), 66.

[277] Taylor Carman, "Forward," in *Being and Time* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2008), xix.

[278] Carman, xix.

[279] Hirshfield, *Ten Windows*, vii.

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