

# Friedrich Hölderlin, *Andenken* (1803)

## Abstract

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Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843), now considered one of Germany's greatest poets, was largely unrecognized in his lifetime. Plagued by self-doubt, restlessness, and inner conflict, Hölderlin found himself caught between the great German literary currents of his age, Classicism and Romanticism. He studied theology in Tübingen (1788-93), where he came to know both Hegel and Schelling. He was also in contact with Schiller, Herder, and Goethe. Hölderlin only published two works during his lifetime: the lyrical epistolary novel *Hyperion* (published as a fragment in 1797) and a collection of poems glorifying Greek antiquity (published in 1826 and reissued in 1842). Hölderlin suffered from acute mental illness, and in 1807, he moved into a small room in a tower on the banks of the Neckar River in Tübingen, where spent the remainder of his life. Largely unknown until the twentieth century, he is now remembered as one of the great poets of the German Romantic era.

Hölderlin worked as a private tutor for wealthy families for several years. The poem "Andenken" [Remembrance] is a reflection on his memories of the landscape in Bordeaux, France, where he worked as a tutor for several months. A political interpretation of the poem suggests that it was inspired by Hölderlin's disillusionment with the ideals of the French Revolution, which he enthusiastically supported, during Napoleon's violent reign. Finally, the poem can be interpreted as a more personal farewell to his former lover, Susette Gontard, who had died in 1802.

## Source

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