

Karoline von Günderode, *Der Dom zu Cölln* (c. 1802, first published 1899)

Abstract

Karoline von Günderode (1780-1806) was born into a noble family in Karlsruhe, Hesse. The eldest of six children, she lost her father at the age of six, which worsened her family's financial situation. At the instigation of her mother, Karoline entered a secular convent [Damenstift] for unmarried Protestant noblewomen of limited means at age 17. At the convent she read widely, studying works of literature, mythology, philosophy, and history, and began to write Romantic poetry, which she published under a pseudonym. She forged a friendship with fellow writer Bettina von Arnim, who later wrote an epistolary novel titled *Die Günderode* that was based on their correspondence. While Karoline's literary talent was recognized by the circle around the Brentanos, her tragically short and emotionally unsettled life overshadowed her work. After a love affair with Friedrich Creuzer, a married professor of philology, had ended, Karoline took her own life at age 26.

This poem, titled *Der Dom zu Cölln* [The Cologne Cathedral] was written around 1802 and first printed in 1899. Describing the author's impressions during a visit to the magnificent Cologne Cathedral, the poem celebrates the power of poetry to breathe life and soul even into long-dead figures of history.

Source

Source: Karoline von Günderode, *Der Dom zu Cölln*. Ein Fragment. In: *Gesammelte Werke*. Band 1–3, Band 3, Berlin-Wilmersdorf 1920–1922, p. 7-9. Read by Insa Kummer.

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