

# August Stramm, “Storm” and “Battle” (1914)

## Abstract

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August Stramm (1874–1915) was a civil servant and reserve officer with a predilection for experimental poetry. He was an enthusiastic supporter of war and saw the violence of war as a restorative property. He died on the eastern front in 1915; prior to his death he attained the rank of battalion commander. Stramm captured the sights and sounds of war with a thoroughly modernist sensibility, evoking the symbolism of Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine.

## Source

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### I. “Storm” (1914)

Black bares itself in white  
The playfully gay blue mists scowl yellow like hail.  
Brightness flares  
Presses to the ground.  
Raging  
Stoned  
Shut!  
Deathly mad clings to the night.  
Feebly opening its veins  
Extending out in blue  
Trembling in the trees  
Weighs heavily  
Lifts itself  
Bares its fists  
Square-edged, hard and sharp  
Clouds ring out  
Fears light up  
It stands and stretches itself  
Seizes the gurgling  
And chokes it  
Lunging towards it  
Stifling itself  
Gobbling, rolling  
Into  
The  
Void!  
Eye  
Lids open and wail!  
Tears  
Waves  
Loosening  
Terror!  
Lights  
Glare

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High in the arch!  
Sounds  
Pulsate  
Free  
Strong  
Winning sounds of the sun!

II. "Battle" (1914)

Moaning wrestles  
And  
Stomps into the earth  
Grappling chokes  
Wriggles, ransacks and heaves  
The heavens stand  
And  
Clasp torn by convulsions  
Slashing crashes  
And  
Rings out piercingly to the ground  
Knowledge stagnates  
Hope trembles and scowls  
Anticipation bleeds  
Screaming advances upward  
Life goes up in flames  
The last fires  
Sputter  
Beasts  
Sink their claws into  
Death  
Rising up  
To the heavens.  
Daylight dies  
The night  
Blooms around  
The funeral shroud  
The earth covers  
And  
Love forces open the womb  
The stars tremble  
Radiance bridges across  
Time climbs up  
And  
Smiling collects drops  
And  
Collecting smiling  
Smiling collecting striding  
And  
Collecting strides  
Smiling striding fading away  
And

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Striding fades away  
Fading away smiling striding  
And  
Fading away strides towards  
The obstinate space.

Source: August Stramm, “Gewitter” and “Schlacht” (1914), in *Das Werk* edited by René Radrizzani. Wiesbaden: Limes Verlag, 1963, pp. 111–12, 77–78.

Translation: Richard Pettit

Recommended Citation: August Stramm, “Storm” and “Battle” (1914), published in: German History in Documents and Images,  
<<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/wilhelmine-germany-and-the-first-world-war-1890-1918/ghdi:document-728>> [September 26, 2025].