In his 2014 distinguished lecture for the American Anthropological Association, Bruno Latour argued that even if poisoned, the anthropocene is a deep gift to anthropology, challenging the field to invent new approaches to citizenship and responsibility. This lecture takes up Latour’s challenge through acoustemology, the study of sound as a way of knowing. I present three stories entangling cicadas and humans, poetics and politics, mediation and affect. The first story utilizes ethnographic field recordings to explore the significance of singing with cicadas in rainforest histories of eco-aesthetics and environmental havoc in Papua New Guinea. The second story utilizes film soundtracks and installation sound art to explore cicadas as the traumatized voice of acoustic memory for post-nuclear Japan. The third story utilizes ambient video art to explore cicadas and mytho-phonologos in ancient and contemporary Greece, listening equally to Plato’s Phaedrus and the rising mercury of austerity indignation. These three stories reveal how cicadas sound as bio-political archives, and how ethnographic and sound art recordings can recompose listening histories with companion species.

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