

## 6

# LOVE OF THE WOLF

*Translated by Keith Cohen*

'L'amour du loup' was first published in *La Métaphore (Revue)* 2 (1994), *La Différence*: 13–37.

*This is a bo(u)nd for a wolf.*

On November 11, 1967, Clarice Lispector wrote in favor of fear: 'I am certain that in the Stone Age I was exactly mistreated by some man or other's love. A certain fright, which is secret, goes back to that time.'<sup>1</sup>

Some paleolithic man or other, a sort of ravishing monkey. Another woman, Marina Tsvetaeva for example, would say a wolf, and another a tiger.

The Stone Age, for Tsvetaeva, is the age of blood and passions, the age of the garden at the Convent of the Flagellants. First blood. Game of blood: the blood rushes up and down, one grows pale, one blushes, the blood rushes away, called back, disobedient.

The landscape of that age is one of anguish and nostalgia. The little girl is running. You can't tell if she's running away. Or if she's lost. If she's running after the tiger. Or if the tiger is running after her.

Following in Tsvetaeva's footsteps, this reading *is a bo(u)nd for a secret wolf.*

\* \* \*

Tsvetaeva is 'descended' from Pushkin, according to her own version of her genealogy. She comes running from every direction out of the works of Pushkin.

The initial fright that inspires Tsvetaeva comes from Pushkin's fear.

And out of all of Pushkin, her first Pushkin was 'The Bohemians.'

I had never heard such names: Aleko, Zemfira or—the Old Man. As for old men, I knew only one: Ossip, in the Chapel of Taroussa, One-armed-Ossip—his arm was like an oxbow because he had killed his brother—with a cucumber. Because my grandfather, A.D.Meyn, was no old man: you don't talk to old men, they live in the street. I had never seen any Bohemians, but I had heard of a Bohemian woman—she nursed me.<sup>2</sup>

Her first Pushkin was on the shelf, it was fat, she would read it in the dark. Her Pushkin, her source, her strange origin. He would always come from outside, that stranger, the one who carries her away. There is a door. The door opens, in comes the Outside, even inside he remains the outside, the Outside in person, that which I do not know, who strikes me very hard and loves me, thinks Tsvetaeva, the woman who loves the devils who carry her away. They are always beings who remain in hiding, who attract and then flee, who flee while attracting, who attract while fleeing, who escape and who call—bizarre beings, cossacks, funny words, clicks of the tongue; they have common, ordinary and yet extraordinary names, terrible names that sound like nothing, *kid*, *the guide*—they pass,

and in their footsteps comes the word that the little girl had read in books, those foreign lands—

Here's a brand new word—love. When it burns in one's breast, there, right in the middle (who doesn't understand me?).<sup>3</sup>

The parenthesis divides the world between those who understand and those who don't. Love always sets up its parentheses in the middle of the sentence, pitches its tents of silence.

...when you don't say anything to anybody, it's love. From the beginning it burned in my breast, but I didn't know its name—love. I said to myself: it's the same for everybody, always the same. No: that existed only among the Bohemians.<sup>4</sup>

One day, I don't know when, it was decided to call *love* a set of strange, indescribable physical phenomena, is it pain?—but from the moment that the name is given to that burning in one's breast, the violence of the strangeness is interrupted and the ancient horror, hidden behind the new word, begins to be forgotten. Let's go back to before language, that's what Tsvetaeva does, let's go back to that disturbing age, the age of myths and of folktales, the age of stone, of fire, of knives. Before language there is the fire that bites but doesn't kill, the evil that, like all pain, separates us, the dehiscence that opens in us closed organs, making us seem strange to ourselves—and all that begins with: 'when you don't say anything to anybody—that's it—it's love.' It begins with the kept secret, with the silent separation from the rest of the world. You love yourself [*on s'aime*]: you sow [*on sème*]. You throw the others off track. You go underground. You leave the world in broad daylight. You betray it. You're cheating. It's a crime. It's a kind of glory. Love abjures in order to adore. It burns in your breast and the world is burned.

Don't say anything to anybody—because it's forbidden? That would be the case of Romeo and Juliet. No—it is allowed, but you won't say anything to anybody anyway. One says nothing to anybody because one rises to the absolute; one begins speaking the language that no one else speaks—a language spoken only by two. By these two undivided individuals, a language [*langue*] that makes of two but one, especially when it's your tongue [*langue*] that I have in my mouth.

(N.B. Ah, I shall always regret in French the absence of those words that in other languages name the set of one made by two when it fuses two individuals who from then on are no longer two; I shall always regret *both, ambos, beide*....)

Joyfully you become incomprehensible—two strangers together. You begin to adore a god that nobody else bows down to. A very powerful and very fragile god, very threatening and very threatened. Nobody else believes in you except me. This very-much-god must be well hidden in order to protect it from incredulity. My god is made of glass, poof! and it's broken. But so long as it's intact it gives the universe. Invisible transparent god made of glass [*verre*]. I meant to say of verse [*vers*].

But the amorous break also speaks of the danger of winning. The danger is when you create a world, designed as a whole and for a whole people, made up of two individuals. This world-of-two depends for its survival on a single other person. The world-of-two is

immediately surrounded and threatened by death. Death closes in around it tightly. Love immortalizes me. Only that which gives me life can take it away from me. That which gives, gives to enjoy, that which gives to enjoy, gives to fear its loss. Give to lose. The gift and its opposite.

It is on the basis of love that one recalls mortality. We are mortal only in that high region of love. In ordinary life we are immortal, we think about death, but it doesn't gnaw at us, it is down there, for later, it is weak, forgettable. But as soon as I love, death is there, it camps out right in the middle of my body, in daylight, getting mixed up with my food, dispatching from the far-off future its prophetic presence, taking the bread out of my mouth. It's because I love the beloved more than I love myself, you are dearer to me than I am to myself, you are not me, you don't obey me, I was sure that I was myself immortal, otherwise I couldn't live, I live only on that assurance, but what about you? I do not order your immortality. I can no longer live without you. That need overwhelms us. That's why anguish bursts forth: because the need pushes us toward the realization—no matter what, yes, I must die.

In *The Kid* nothing—not need, not infinity—can stop it. That's what the prose of the text says at the opening:

And this is again the story of an old mother who knew too much about  
future things<sup>5</sup>

Go, go, little girl!

Youth has but one time<sup>6</sup>

Maroussia: Dance, mother,

Smashing into everything!...

The mother: Your senses are eager

Your heart is blind.<sup>7</sup>

Knowledge from experience: the heart goes blind because the need is stronger than anything else. Your ego is blind, your id is eager. It will get to the point of smashing everything. When there is a danger from outside, you bolt, but when the danger comes from inside, how can you bolt? The danger from inside is that complicated thing, the love of the wolf, the complicity that attaches us to that which threatens us.

When the I-ego and the I-id are adversaries and friends, inseparably, like the wolf and the infant, flight becomes unthinkable. When hatred and resentment show their teeth, we flee—but when it's love, tortuous love, who shows us their teeth?

Don't say it to anybody, love is so delicate, it's mortally fragile. A passerby could pulverize that god made of glass. But if you don't say (it) to anybody, this departure, this madness, you're at the mercy of the god. Nobody will come to your rescue the day the god takes on the aura of devil.

'Don't say it to anybody,' it's the same refrain that runs through a splendid text by Ingeborg Bachmann, *Der Gute Gott von Manhattan*. Don't say it—

– to anybody. Not even to yourself? Not even to the other person? But who is the other person? For Tsvetaeva?

The one whom you keep secret even from your mother, the one you don't name, not even to him? The one you keep. The one you kee—Shhh!—

Without being wary of him. The one whom Tsvetaeva, in her poem,<sup>8</sup> is careful not to call anything but *The Kid*. The Kid [*Le Gars*], one word, one syllable—a brief sparkle, a single phoneme, the very one for whom the glory tolls between Genêt and Derrida. But in the off-stage commentaries it takes place differently. From afar, from outside, it names:

I read a story by Afanassiev, 'The Vampire,' and I couldn't figure out why Maroussia who was afraid of the vampire insisted on denying what she had seen, all the while knowing that naming it meant salvation for her. Why instead of yes, no? Out of fear? ... No, not fear. Maybe fear, but—what else? Fear—and what? [...] Maroussia loved the vampire...and that's why she lost, one after the other, her mother, her brother, her life.<sup>9</sup>

Why instead of yes, no? Out of fear. But the kid also says clearly to his lover: if you don't tell that I'm a vampire, your brother is going to die, then your mother is going to die, and then you're going to die. What Maroussia wishes to hold onto is love as fear, and fear as love. They are inseparable. This is one of the most obscure experiences that we can ever have. Some of us really like what scares us. Just to be scared. It's appalling. O my love, my terror. 'O my son, my terror,' says Akhmatova in one of her poems. There is no love except where there is fear. Love run by fear, escorted by fear.

We love the wolf. We love the love of the wolf. We love the fear of the wolf. We're afraid of the wolf: there is love in our fear. Fear is in love with the wolf. Fear loves. Or rather: we are afraid of the person we love. Love terrorizes us. Or else the person we love we call our wolf or our tiger, or our lamb in the manger. We are full of trembling and ready to wolf down.

Love is vertical. First you go up. There is a ladder. Maroussia climbs up. Once you're at the top, you see, you fall. You've seen what you've seen. Seeing the other knocks us over. Seeing the wolf. Fear makes us fall from the top to the bottom, taking us back to the age of blood, in infancy, as we crawl among the odors, the appetites, the food, the earthworms and the dead.

'I loved a wolf,' says the little heroine of a text by Selma Lagerlöf, 'Herr Arne's Treasure.' And in the end of course, it kills her, or else it's she who kills herself for it.

As soon as one speaks of loving, it is there.

Love begins with a cat. A lost, accidental, fuzzy baby appears. A kitten one might think. A kitten *par excellence*: the found beast, the abandoned creature meowing—as in Aeschylus's *Agamemnon*. It comes into our home one fine morning, a poignant, mysteriously poignant figure of the unplanned child, and without any need of biological mother, or of father for that matter.

This kitten given by nobody, a gracious creature, is loved without being asked its name.

One day a man reared in his house  
A lion cub still suckling, and he weaned it.  
The beginning of its life was full of charm.  
A friend to children. a iov to the elderlv.

Fed in one's arms, like a baby,  
 Its ardent eye kept watch on the hand,  
 Its appetite for food making it cuddly.  
 But the time came  
 When it showed its hereditary character.  
 And to recompense the ones who'd nourished it,  
 Needing no invitation, it feasts  
 On a flock of sheep it massacred.  
 The house is flooded with blood,  
 Endless sorrow for the people of that house.  
 Vast, devastating hecatomb.  
 Sent by a god, an acolyte of Misfortune  
 Had come into the dwelling  
 To have a hand in the breeding.<sup>10</sup>

Eternally cruel seduction of the Foundling, whose frequent figure haunts those texts tormented by the riddle. Who is this child born without pain but bearer of a pain that we cannot help but suffer, in whom we cannot help but recognize ourselves, whom our narcissism nurses, who, at first feeding on our need, begins to devour us? And who is named at one time Oedipus, at another Heathcliff, and at another Nicolo alias Colino?

A stiff, black, withdrawn, silent savage, all the more loved in that he turns upon love with an appalling look. How is it that we love him—him of all people? What have we found in this foundling who fascinates us?

As soon as we embrace, we salivate, one of us wants to eat, one of us is going to be swallowed up in little pieces, we all want to be eaten, in the beginning we were all formerly born-to-eat, wolfing it down, eating like a horse; we are starved, full of whetted appetites—but better not say it, or else we'll never dare to love. Or to be loved.

Love is always a little wol-f-ishy [*loup-che*]—a little peckish, it's not nice to say, but....

(How) can a wolf be loved? By instinct, says Tsvetaeva. In what way is the wolf lovable? It's not the race of wolves that we love, it's not the wolf. It's about a wolf, a certain wolf, a wolf-but, a wolf-surprise.

*I said 'the wolf'—I name the Guide. I say 'the Guide,' I name Pougatchov: the Wolf which—just this once won't hurt—spared its lamb, carried it off in the deep forest to love it....*

*I'd say I loved that Guide more than all my own, more than the strangers, more than my favorite dogs, more than all the balls that rolled down the cellar, more than all the lost penknives, more even than my mysterious red armoire—where he was kept secret, mystery incarnate.*

*More than the Bohemians, because he was blacker—darker than the Bohemians. And if I could say loud and clear that Pushkin lived in the secret armoire, today it's scarcely with a whisper that I can affirm: not Pushkin...the Guide.<sup>11</sup>*

'I said "the wolf," I name the Guide... I loved that Guide more than all my own.' I love my ball because it rolls down the cellar, we experience love through the loss it inflicts upon us: whether the ball is in the cellar or in the house, the ball is the possibility of rolling down the cellar. A penknife you have you don't love, but the lost penknife, yes.

O ancient pleasures of hide-and-seek, the first game of all, the game inscribed in our flesh (kitten flesh, newborn flesh) for millennia before our being born.

O the mystery of the mystery-game, that all of us, of all species, children, felines, dogs, celebrate.

Crying 'look for me I'm hidden I'm lost find me.' How good it feels to be lost, to be looked for, to be found, to tremble with all those fears together: fear of not being discovered, fear of being discovered, fear of not trembling with fear.

I can't find the word to name the essence of these frightful delights. Look for me, says the hidden thing. Let's say I find it: that's *losability*. Not a very pretty word, but this concept is life itself. We feel like we're alive only through the painful excitation of our seventh sense, the sense of loss.

There is a connection between love and *being lost*. In familiar metaphoric terms, when it's a question of passion, we get lost, we run wild with a panting metonymy, we are lost, all the more so by being helped by the personage posted there to produce objectively being lost: that's the case of Pougatchov, known as the Guide. The guide leads astray. Guide to getting lost. Guide to the secret.

Let's follow the Wolf—that is, The Kid—that is, the Guide—whose name in the end will be Pougatchov. Careful because if we follow him closely, 'the Guide' could lead us to the deepest, the most remote place, down to where the roots of good and evil are gripped together in a single root, down to that depth at which we are all mixed together, the guide and I, *Pushkin and Pougatchov*, where Tsvetaeva is Pushkin, where Pougatchov is Tsvetaeva. The Guide, therefore, the one whom Tsvetaeva loves, makes appearances and disappearances in these little autobiographical texts in prose, mirrors of Tsvetaeva's unconscious, in the figure—not of a person—but of a scintillating Signifier, magic word, beacon beam, allusion, *promise*, let's say 'thing.' A strange sudden appearance, comparable to the sudden primitive appearance effected, at first indecipherably, in the mother-text, Pushkin's.

It is in a whole lineage of Pushkin's amorous mysteries that Tsvetaeva inscribes the genealogy of her own imaginary. This always involves duels, dual relations that are so intense, so red-hot, so white-hot, that the dimension of sexual difference, in the dazzle, is actually forgotten.

Such as the Pushkin and Pougatchov couple. *Pushkin and Pougatchov* is a title that sings of the passionate relation that Pushkin—himself the literary mother of Tsvetaeva—had with an ambivalent personage, an impostor, a cossack. One of those messianic figures from Russian history, a popular cavalryman who has come from the steppes to try to take the tsar's place. Now Pushkin wrote two texts inspired by Pougatchov: on the one hand, a historical piece, written for the tsar, and entitled *The History of Pougatchov*, on the other hand, a fiction, the short novel *The Captain's Daughter*. As an occasional historian, Pushkin describes the cossack just as the archives reveal him, a vile, cowardly personage complete with all the vices. But in *The Captain's Daughter* a complex

Pougatchov surfaces—cruel, destructive, yet at the same time capable of an unexpected love for the little young man Griniov. This sixteen-year-old hero, Pushkin's creation, arouses in Pougatchov a tenderness such that the wicked creature will remain loyal to the boy till the end of his days. Pougatchov appears first as a 'black thing' that draws near during a storm in which everyone is lost, trapped in a *murky whirlpool*, bereft of all landmarks, in which everything comes loose, shapes are seen disconnected from their origins, everything is swallowed up in a huge white whirlpool, nothing is recognizable any longer: it is in the midst of this turmoil that all of a sudden there appears—a *what*—

What is a what? It is not a shaft. It is not a wolf. It might be a kind of peasant who will guide those gone astray, the little young man and his coachman, toward an invisible inn. And that's the beginning of the love story between Pougatchov—because it's him—and the little Griniov. The guide who rescues people from being lost will reappear, later in the tale, in an inversed form. In historical 'reality,' the guide leads astray all of Russia, and all those who follow him, and does not lead them toward salvation. The one who, in the completely white turmoil, is a tiny black, shiny point, will dissolve, become murky, incomprehensible, yet will remain *the thing*, this obscure, unanalyzable link between the young man and Pougatchov. At the very moment of the encounter, a tremendous thing, Pushkin recounts the dream that little Griniov has in this inn where he has been rescued by the guide—the one that leads up and down, toward death and toward life: in the dream the little Griniov goes home. His mother is anxiously waiting for him because his father is going to die. In the father's bedroom the young man draws near the bed of the person he so dearly loves. Then the father gets up suddenly and pounces on the little Griniov brandishing a hatchet. We are overwhelmed by fear. At that point what the little Griniov sees is the look, at once gleaming and incredibly tender, of the paternal assassin, who turns out to be Pougatchov in person, the 'guide' who loves him and whom he loves, the crazed, bloodthirsty one, the monster of love.

Tsvetaeva takes note of the history of the two narratives and points out that Pushkin wrote *The History of Pougatchov* BEFORE he wrote *The Captain's Daughter*.

In other words, the poet is aware of who Pougatchov was when he writes his fiction. He thus paints *his* Pougatchov in glowing colors—and his is perhaps the true one. We don't know. In any case, it's the one that Russia, the peasants, and the cossacks loved, loved to invent and invented to love, as one should be loved: without telling anyone except in dreams. And for her part, Tsvetaeva—Griniov—Pushkin:

Oh that guide—I fell in love with him right away, from the moment when, in the dream, the usurping father, the black-bearded peasant found in the bed in place of Griniov's father, looked at me gleefully. And when the peasant brandished his hatchet, when he started waving it around in every direction, I knew in advance that we—Griniov and I—had nothing to fear, and if I was entirely over-whelmed by fear, it was a dream fear, the fortunate fear of being inconsequential through and through—fortunate for me not to have fear to go through inconsequentially. (Thus in dreams we slow down—on purpose to scoff at the assassin, knowing that at the last second we'll grow wings.) And when the peasant—the monster—started to call to me tenderly, saying: 'Have no fear!...come let me give you my blessing!...'—there I was already blessed by his blessing!...there

I was before him, pushing toward him with all my little girl might—Grinirov.—‘Now go ahead, now, go ahead! Love him!’ I’m ready to burst into bitter tears because Grinirov doesn’t understand (Grinirov is in general the tight-fisted type) that the other loves him, that he’ll massacre everybody else, but that him he’ll love—as if the wolf suddenly held out his paw, and this paw...you refused.<sup>12</sup>

Yes, love of the wolf is indistinguishable from love of fear. When we were little, how we loved to be scared silly! That was an extremely pure fear. The child is capable of two things at once, first to believe absolutely in the danger, and then at the same time not to believe in it. That’s the way he gets his pleasure. Later we hold on to no more than half of these beliefs—it’s either/or, and farewell dear wolf: either we believe absolutely in the danger, or else we don’t believe in it at all.

The secret of the fortunate fear is in the strange scene in which Grinirov throws himself on his dying father who is in the grandmother-wolf’s bed. Today the reason the children’s version of the story of Little Red Riding Hood probably has no pay-off for us is that the split between grandmother and wolf has taken place in advance of the story’s narrative. On the one hand, there’s the grandmother whom Little Red Riding Hood loves and is bringing food to (but then the grandmother has been eaten by the wolf), and on the other hand, there’s the wolf. When we are told this story, when Little Red Riding Hood is in the bedroom with the grandmother in bed, we children who are listening are horrified by the grandmother in that bed, because we know it’s the wolf. Now, this is not right in terms of the truth of love. The truth of love is both-at-once: from one perspective, as little red riding hoods, we jump into the wolf’s mouth, we think it’s our grandmother, but it’s no longer grandmother pure, and we love grandmother all the more so because she’s the wolf—for loving a candy granny is easy; but from the other perspective, it turns out this grandmother-wolf who eats everybody up makes an exception and doesn’t eat us: we are the grandmother-wolf’s favorite, the wolf’s chosen one. Now that’s the escalating value of love. There is no greater love than the love the wolf feels for the lamb-it-doesn’t-eat. The other side of the scene is the paradoxical, refined, magnificent love of the wolf.

It’s not difficult for the ewe to love the lamb. But for the wolf? The wolf’s love for the lamb is such a renunciation, it’s a Christ-like love, it’s the wolf’s sacrifice—it’s a love that could never be requited. This wolf that sacrifices its very definition for the lamb, this wolf that doesn’t eat the lamb, is it a wolf? Is it still a wolf? Isn’t it a delupinized wolf, a non-wolf, an invalidated wolf? If it were a false wolf, there’d be no interest. No, we’ve made no mistake, this wolf is a real wolf: right up to the last second it could eat us, the axe doesn’t stop hissing past us, up to the last second, with the little child’s faith, true faith, we believe in the wolf and we’re afraid. Then the grandmother holds out a furry paw and we are bowled over by the solemn honor. Thus the wolf, double-wolf, more-than-grandmother, sacrifices itself herself to us. And we triumph without ever having gone to battle!

Grown-ups pretend, but children get a thrill. The wolf says to the child: I’m going to eat you up. Nothing tickles the child more. That’s the mystery: why does the idea that you’re going to eat me up fill me with such pleasure and such terror? It’s to get this pleasure that you need the wolf. The wolf is the truth of love, its cruelty, its fangs, its



claws, our aptitude for ferocity. Love is when you suddenly wake up as a cannibal, and not just any old cannibal, or else wake up destined for devourment.

But happiness is when a real wolf suddenly refrains from eating us. The lamb's burst of laughter comes when it's about to be devoured, and then, at the last second, is not eaten. Hallelujah comes to mind. To have almost been eaten yet not to have been eaten: that is the triumph of life. But you've got to have the two instants, just before the teeth and just after, you've got to hear the jaws coming down on nothing for there to be jubilation. Even the wolf is surprised.

I've just described the lamb's laughter. What about the wolf? Where is its joy? I'm getting to that.

In Aeschylus's *Eumenides* the Furies pursuing Orestes, their prey, spend years saying to him: I'm going to eat you. The victim believes it, knows that at one time or another it just could happen. The horror of the situation is that it drags on and on; and the person being pursued bolts, knowing he's just a piece of meat. But in that case, it's a question of satisfying anti-love, really shattering the boundary between flesh and meat.

For us, eating and being eaten belong to the terrible secret of love. We love *only* the person we can eat. The person we hate we 'can't swallow.' That one makes us vomit. Even our friends are inedible. If we were asked to dig into our friend's flesh we would be disgusted. The person we love we dream only of eating. That is, we slide down that razor's edge of ambivalence. The story of torment itself is a very beautiful one. Because loving is wanting and being able to eat up and yet to stop at the boundary. And there, at the tiniest beat between springing and stopping, in rushes fear. The spring is already in mid-air. The heart stops. The heart takes off again. Everything in love is oriented toward this absorption. At the same time real love is a don't-touch, yet still an almost-touching. *Tact itself: a phantom touching*. Eat me up, my love, or else I'm going to eat you up. Fear of eating, fear of the edible, fear on the part of the one of them who feels loved, desired, who wants to be loved, desired, who desires to be desired, who knows that there is no greater proof of love than the other's appetite, who is dying to be eaten up yet scared to death by the idea of being eaten up, who says or doesn't say, but who signifies: I beg you, eat me up. Want me down to the marrow. And yet manage it so as to keep me alive. But I often turn about or compromise, because I know that you won't eat me up, in the end, and I urge you: bite me. Sign my death with your teeth.

We love, we fall into the jaws of the fire. We can't escape it.

Open arms  
Facing forward—  
Red blaze, white birch<sup>13</sup>

This is the portrait of Maroussia hit at point-blank range, a portrait in green, red and white. It's the fall of Maroussia, struck by a mouth shooting off, by a shirt going off, and hit, pierced by the kid's gunshots.

That's what love is: falling into the jaws of fire. It opens up. There it is:

The door opens,  
– Hello. evervbody!

Cheers, have a good evening!

Neither gleam,  
Nor flash—  
Kid in red shirt.  
Neither ember,  
Nor blaze—  
Fire-red shirt.

Greetings all around,  
Purse on the table,  
Shiny money streaming down.<sup>14</sup>

It happens so fast, much faster than lightning, so much faster than lightning that I don't know how I can tell about it. The way she does it: forcing, with gusts of wind, shots, signifiers, axe-blows, with the tiniest metrical denominator imaginable, tri-syllabically (not even in threes—in fewer than two beats), skipping causes, the effect remains, paring away, leaving out, pruning, syncopating, equivocating.

The door opens, in comes—someone? no, in comes the word—in two words—

Hello, everybody!

The telegraphic utterance, the tonic accent strikes, sets the beat.

Neither gleam,  
Nor flash—

In four words, a dazzling scene of bedazzlement.

'Neither gleam nor flash' means also yes-gleam, yes-flash, that's what Maroussia thought she saw, the dazzle of the dancer and the complicity of the narration—neither feminine nor masculine, lighting effect, neither gleam nor flash then it's kid in red shirt, kid no article, neither the nor a, as soon as she gets rid of the semantic function, which allows the substantive to pass from the level of discourse to the level of language.

It's therefore possible to do without the article.

The a is missing. A kid? A could designate the first appearance. Once upon a time there was a kid. No. It's: Kid without a. Thus no first appearance. Kid as though he had always been there, always or forever, kid like God.—Red kid—or were(wolf)kid? There's still the shirt to cover up the wolf. O the shirt, that's what's so fascinating to the glares and the gazes—that's all that can be seen in it, just its red. A round in three times, mine, yours, his, in three persons, mine yours his, the third figures the space, the third wins, whether I dance or you dance, it's nothing just a blank. But the kid dances on fire.

The kid fires. Three times.

Mouth, shirt, eyes—  
Fire! Fire! Fire!<sup>15</sup>

All that can be seen—all that can be heard—is fire

Into which falls, open arms, the woman who is now nothing more than fuel for the blaze.

Fire! It's the order to shoot. Who gave it?

The wolf. Wolf, who are you?

The kid says:

Fire—I am,  
Hungry—I am,  
Fire—I am,  
Ashes—I shall be!<sup>16</sup>

A disturbing lover who tells not his name but his impulse, his appetite, his choice of object, his food

– Her I shall choose  
A fresh-faced one among the fresh<sup>17</sup>

Time watches  
Over all the graves it digs.  
At the edge of the ear:  
– It is I, my sleeping one!<sup>18</sup>

It's the angelic-demonic voice of the Kid. The person who remains nameless and whose voice one hears—that's the Kid. 'It is I' proclaims in terms of absolute intimacy that *the person who does not give his name is right now inside the person who is listening*: it is I. I read also 'It is I, my sleeping one,' as if in apposition: my sleeping one is me.

Hot cry from the womb:  
—It is I, my promised one!<sup>19</sup>

– Wolf, who are you?—Kid. The Kid says one time:

At the edge of the ear:  
—It is I, my sleeping one!...  
Hot cry from the womb:  
—It is I, my promised one!

The only one who can say *that* is the kid—and the internalized kid, the voice from the womb. Who cries? Is it the womb that utters the cry, or does the cry come from the womb? It could be the kid transformed into fruit of the womb.

No first name. Just this word, this single syllable, *Kid* (or fire, or soot), just a phoneme, a stifled sigh. One hell of a signifier this kid [*gars*]—who, being just one 1 away, if I let it slip, could sound Derrida's knell [*glas*]. Nameless kid, abrupt, sharp-edged, clear-cut at times by enjambment with hag-/gard-, playing, aggravating, flirtatious, chilling, burning, gnawing the text everywhere, leading the dance that throws you off, drives you crazy. Not counting the double-play that arises from the difference between this kid [*gars*] which literally posts a warning and, when sounded aloud, as *ga*, suppresses it.<sup>20</sup>

He's irresistible—the kid, the wolf, the fire. And for good reason: fire catches *before* you've even had a chance to see it, you can't get away, it bursts into flames and you're already in it, in the wolf, in the circle, in the dance, in the red, or else you're drowned in the devil's gray river. She can no longer extricate herself from him. We are born-eaten.

\* \* \*

But sometimes it's the wolf that falls into the jaws of the lamb. The wolf, out of love, falls backwards into the circle of fire. It goes around so fast, it just so happens that the lamb catches the wolf, the double. A marvelous occasion for Tsvetaeva to plunge into the wolf's heart and to contemplate herself in there, she along with us as well, as in the mirror of a subtle narcissism: a mixture of heart throbs and nostalgia for our own goodness.

What ties this wolf to this lamb, she figures, is the fact that it hasn't eaten it. Painful mystery of the gift that returns through reflection: what the wolf loves in the lamb is its own goodness. It's thanks to the lamb that the wolf accedes to the plane of love—the love that gives of itself without hope, without calculation, without response, *but* that nevertheless gives *of itself*, seeing itself give of itself. The wolf given to a lamb of the Griniov type who doesn't even notice the enormity of the gift—that's really love. There remains the infinite solitude of the wolf, invisible and unrecognized except by itself. What interest does Pougatchov have in not eating the lamb? The ascetic and dangerous interest of self-love. The lover loves the beloved, which is the occasion for generous love. But thereafter—thereafter there is the aftermath. Now the wolf can no longer break away from the lamb, for the lamb retains, for better or worse, traces of the gift. That which is given in love can never be taken back. It is me my entire self that I give with the gift of love. This is why the wolf can't stop loving the lamb, the chosen one. Repository of the wolf. All of the wolf. That's how love can ruin the lover.

And this is not the end of it. What else? One more riddle: 'The black thing that loves the frail whiteness.' Me loves non-me. Othello loves Desdemona. But Desdemona loves the black thing as well. The round goes on. The lamb loves its wolf. The wolf turns all white and starts quivering out of love of the lamb. The lamb loves the wolf's fragility, and the wolf loves the frail one's force. The wolf is now the lamb's lamb and the lamb has tamed the wolf. Love blackens the lamb.

Wolf, whom do you love?

If only I knew!...

Love—that's: it. That's id. That idself [*ça même*]. And it/id loves me [*Ça m'aime*]. And the fable is called the Wolf is the Lamb.

## NOTES

- 1 Clarice Lispector, 'A favor do medo,' in *A Descoberta do mundo* (Rio de Janeiro: Noveira Fronteira, 1987), p. 42.
- 2 Marina Tsvetaeva, *Mon Pouchkine*, followed by *Pouchkine et Pougatchov*, trans. André Markowicz and Clémence Hiver (Paris, 1987), p. 26.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Marina Tsvetaeva, *Le Gars* (Paris: Des femmes, 1992), p. 129.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 26.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 8 Written in 1922 after having read the folktale 'The Vampire' in Afanassiev's collection.
- 9 *Le Gars*, *op cit.*, pp. 16–17.
- 10 Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, from translation by Ariane Mnouchkine (New York: Viking, 1975), p. 135.
- 11 *Mon Pouchkine*, *op cit.*, pp. 32–3.
- 12 *Pushkin et Pougatchov*, *op cit.*, pp. 78–9.
- 13 *Le Gars*, *op cit.*, p. 28.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 26–7.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 29.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 28.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- 20 The French word 'gars,' or 'kid,' is pronounced without sounding either the 's' or the 'r,' hence 'ga.' Consequently, the signifier *gars*, when pronounced sounding all its phonemes means 'beware,' a warning which, when the word is pronounced ordinarily, is suppressed. (Translator's note.)