

**Title:** A Name in the Hand: Tsvetaeva's *Verses to Blok*  
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Poetic authority looms large in Tsvetaeva's *Verses to Blok*. Scholars have described diverse tactics Tsvetaeva employs here to gain poetic ground. But a key resource she deploys—Orthodox liturgical tradition—has received little attention. In the cycle Tsvetaeva invokes ultimate authority to delegate a distinct and near-sacred role for her endeavors. An attentive look at her use of liturgical motifs clarifies how she positions herself vis-à-vis Blok.

In this paper the author considers how Tsvetaeva deploys a narrative of Lent in a poetic power bid. Tsvetaeva presents Blok in this cycle in numerous embodiments—angel, saint, knight, Christ. In every form, though, he is ever dead. Throughout, Tsvetaeva embeds him in a chronotope of Holy Saturday—the day marking Christ's time in the grave. This day can be seen as a telescoped version of Lent, the darkness before Paschal resurrection. Correspondingly, Tsvetaeva relegates Blok to a realm of suspense, but here the Christ-figure's resurrection is unsure and his poetic viability uncertain. Tsvetaeva began the cycle in 1916, portraying Blok as a corpse well before his death. She renews her endeavor in the wake of his death on August 7, 1921. This second part of the cycle has at times been viewed as of secondary importance. But in reading the cycle through a liturgical framework, we discover how Tsvetaeva builds upon the first portion in order to position herself as a witness whose vision of sacred-poetic history contains and exceeds Blok's view.

Names—of the poet Blok and of God (Bog)—take center stage here. Tsvetaeva's cycle recalls the *imiaslavie* debates of 1912–1913, when blood was shed over whether speaking God's name invoked his power. Here the poet explores the ramifications of invoking ultimate forms of authority through heterodox modern poetic language.

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