

**Two Poems by Marina Tsvetaeva (1892-1941)¹
Translated from the Russian by Jena Woodhouse**

2

From these hands, my strange, my beautiful brother,
Receive this city not wrought by men's hands.

All forty churches multiplied by forty
And countless pigeons cooing from above;

Spassky Cathedral, with its bud-like gates,
Where Orthodox believers doff their caps;

The starry chapel, sanctuary from evil,
Its floor wiped clean by reverential lips;

Five cathedrals, this unrivalled ring
Accept from me, inspired, eternal friend.

The garden of the Unexpected Joy
Is where I'll lead my guest come from afar.

Bronze cupolas will gleam resplendently,
The bells will thunder endlessly of glory,

From crimson clouds, upon you will descend
Raiments from the Holy Mother's hands,

And filled with wondrous powers, you will rise ...
- You shall not repent, that you loved me.²

6

Above the deep-blue girdle of her groves
Moscow's church-bells drizzle rainy notes.
Along Kaluga road the blind men rove -

¹ The poems translated here are from the cycle of nine 'Poems about Moscow,' composed between 31 March and 16 August, 1916, on the eve of the Russian revolution (1917) which was to bring irrevocable change to the physical and metaphysical milieu of these texts (Translator's note).

² This is a free translation, since I have not been able to rhyme the couplets in English, as in the original. The poem is addressed to Osip Mandelstam (Translator's note).

A road steeped in Kaluga's songs and ways,
Erasing and erasing all the names
Of pilgrims, who in darkness hymn God's praise.

And I reflect: the time will come when I,
Grown weary of you, friends, and of you, foes,
And of the pliancy of Russian speech,

Upon my breast a silver crucifix,
Shall cross myself - and quietly set my feet
Upon the hallowed old Kaluga road.