

IN RUSSIAN, THE NAME FOR WOLF IS VOLK

LANA RAKHMAN

A ceramic woman
floats in the Volga,

either swimming or drowning [can you

hear the locusts?]
she sings of forgotten

poets [Tsvetaeva, do you see her?] she
wants to touch the bottom, the rocks

[fish bones under the sand] get stuck

in her mouth, but her
throat [that pearl

of a tongue] submerges,
tastes salt. Now

cleaner, quietly [she
waves or paddles]

against the current, the Volk-matushka

[wolf-mother] holds
her feet close.

Reservoirs will be named after that

voice [Gorky, please
help her]. Curves

on body and bank; indistinguishable

from air [they wear her down, down
into] a picture of momentary life—then

back under, collecting
the Caspian sea.