Coup de Grâce

Trianon, August 1811

Josephine,

I send to know how you are, for Hortense tells me you were in bed yesterday. I was annoyed with you about your debts. Nevertheless, never doubt my affection for you, and don’t worry any more about the present embarrassment.

— Napoleon

Sometimes I follow you slowly in my car because I know you no longer love me. You said it was for want of a window that Zhivago deserted the campaign, Lara was all pretense.

Either way he abandons Tonya. And that’s the real problem—now I have to be a fool for this story to work. Everything that came before becomes a lie. Not because it wasn’t true.

Isn’t that what you meant? Say no, I’ll shave my head and demand more unreasonables. I know what I look like though even the dogs have forgotten my scent.

My heart has two pains now: a loss and a slant. The wolves are so thick and so close. Mind your fingers, you might lose one in the snap.