



Russia Washed in Blood

A Novel in Fragments

By *Artyom Vesoly*; Translated by *Kevin Windle*, With an introduction by *Kevin Windle and Elena Govor*

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First English translation of *Artyom Vesoly's* vivid fictionalised account of the Russian Civil War of 1918–1921

'Artyom Vesoly's harrowing novel belongs on the shelf beside the works of Isaac Babel, Mikhail Bulgakov and other modernist masters of the early Soviet period. Translator Kevin Windle's flawless command of idiom and sensitivity to the slightest nuances of tone impresses on every page.' — Boris Dralyuk, Executive Editor, Los Angeles Review of Books

'This translation is a gift to anyone interested in Russian history and to readers in general. The immediacy of Vesoly's account of the Civil War is reminiscent of Babel's *Red Cavalry* but conveys to an intense degree a sense of having been lived. This is a gem, presented here in full for the first time. Kevin Windle's translation gives the impression of detracting nothing from the vivid authenticity of Vesoly's experience as rendered in these arresting tales.' — Tom Keneally, Novelist

Russia Washed in Blood, first published in full in 1932, is the longest and best-known work by Nikolai Kochkurov (1899–1938), who wrote under the pen-name Artyom Vesoly. The novel, more a series of extended episodes than a connected narrative with a plot and a hero, is a vivid fictionalised account of the events from the viewpoint of the ordinary soldier. The title of the novel came to symbolise the tragic history of Russia in the 20th century.

Born in Samara, on the banks of the Volga, the son of a waterside worker, Artyom Vesoly was the first member of his family to learn to read and write. He took part in the Civil War of 1918–1921 on the Red side, and at its conclusion began a prolific literary career. Vesoly took as his main theme the horrific events he had witnessed and participated in during the fierce fighting in Southern Russia between the contending forces – Red, White, Cossack, anarchist and others – and the effects of these on the participants and unfortunate civilians caught between them.

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