

A Note for English-speakers on how to pronounce the name 'Tsvetaeva'

Marina Tsvetaeva (also spelt Tsvetayeva), 1892-1941, is one of the great Russian poets of the twentieth century.

To speakers of English, her surname looks hard to pronounce.
I suggest the following method.

Bear in mind that stress falls only on the sound of the sixth letter, 'a' (as in 'ardent').

(i) *Tsve-*

Forget the 'T' and start with 'sve-' (as in English 'svelte') without stressing this syllable.

(ii) *-tàe-* OR: *-tàye-* (Russian 'e' is pronounced 'ye', as in English 'yes'.)

Say the English word 'tyre', allowing it its almost-two syllables (cp 'higher') and stressing the first of them (*tà-ye*).

(iii) *-va-*

Pronounce as '-ver' in English 'river' or as first syllable of 'vener'; do not give it any stress.

Result: sve-tỳre-va

= [T]sve-tà-ye-va

= Tsvetaeva! [Цветаева]

Notes

In Cyrillic, the sound 'Ts' is represented by one letter – Ц. /Her name is not written with an initial 'T'./

Of course pronounce the sound 'T' if you *can*, just don't let it be a problem.

'Tsvet' (цвет) means 'colour' or (colloquially) 'flower'.