

1740: My 7th Great-grandfather

by Nonnie Augustine

Above the spire of Notre Dame du Cap,
as a half-moon hung straight up and down,
young Alexis Turcot sang his new ballad of love
as his horse picked his way through elm, ash, and oak.

He'd come from an evening with gentlefolk,
there met Marie Madeleine Duteau Dutaut.
She was the wife he wanted, he promised he'd try,
when he spotted baleful, black and yellow eyes.

The giant wolf snarled and leapt to attack,
the horse reared from teeth wide open to bite,
the man drew his knife, and spilled the blood
of the Devil's own Wolf, the Loup-garou.

As the Legend said—he became one too:
A man by day, but useless, ill, turns to beast at nightfall
driven to kill animals, children, women, men.
For one hundred and one days he'd be under the spell.

If he spoke of the curse, he'd live as a Wolf every night of his life.
Alexis vowed he'd hide deep in the woods, survive
his sick days, beastly nights all alone, fight this evil,
hunt deer, moose, and elk, but spare his own kind.

Late, this same May night, in Trois Rivieres
when the half-moon hung straight up and down
young Marie Madeleine Duteau Dutaut,

left her house for a walk in the cool night air.

The rose silk of her gown whispered, rustled,
the light wind carried the song she trilled,
over the farmlands to the dangerous forest,
where the new Loup-garou, listened, yearned.

From five miles away, his unnatural senses
smelled her lavender soap, saw the drift of her lace,
and the glint of the pearls sewn onto the bodice,
of Marie Madeleine's first grown-woman's gown.

During cruel months of torment and wild lust,
he kept far from the hunters he could easily kill,
fought sickness each day, the devil each night,
and so survived the spell and reclaimed his soul.

The first day he was free, in red maple September,
he paid a visit to the wealthy farmer, Dutaut,
got his blessing to court Marie Madeleine.

And so Alexis married, became a father, farmed his land,
fought against the British, lived eighty nine years,
had nightmares all his long life of the Wolf, Loup-garou.

