

Eva Colombo, *The blessing of the red wood*, third chapter: *Three women and three wolves* (*Trois femmes et trois loups*, watercolour and gold on paper by Eugène Grasset, 1892)

I'm walking alone, it is almost dark. My lips are cold and the moon accompanies me. I'm wearing black – leather top – boots that induce measured treads. Maybe they could be really hunt – boots... for a ghost – hunt. Yes, who passes by me would say that I'm chasing ghosts if only he or she would look at me. But nobody looks at me. I mean: they look at me but they don't see me. And yet I'm very tall with this boots, and yet I'm objectively well visible for human eyes...Instead, nothing. When someone passes by me I experience the feeling of being made of air. Of being a ghost. Of being a ghost who is escaping from those that look without see. It seems to me that everyone who passes by me belongs to the category of those that look without see. All of them are plunged in their private elsewhere, none of them is aware of being here now. None of them is aware that I am here now hoping that the visual faculty of ghosts were more powerful than that of incarnated human beings, that at least ghosts see me. I am hoping that at least ghosts approaching me without requiring, as incarnated human beings do, that I were a white sheet on which projecting their private ghosts...I pass by, my unexpressed tears cannot evaporate. I pass by, my unspoken words cannot shake the air. My steps shake dead leaves instead and the contact with dead leaves gives me the feeling of being alive...of existing, at least. I'm walking alone, it is almost dark. My lips are cold and the moon accompanies me. I never feel alone when there is the moon in the sky. She too goes out when it is dark and she looks for nobody, she waits for nobody...But I'm not in the sky. But I'm not made of air. Here below lamps wound darkness, human eyes wound my loneliness looking at me with malevolent curiosity. The gates are now closed, the protection of trees is now denied to me. I'm forced to pass by knots of people that don't look at the moon, knots of people that don't see me. I admit: I'm frightened by this people. They always talk,

they often laugh and they never walk alone. To them I am incomprehensible, inconceivable. To them I shouldn't even exist. And yet I exist and I can't be different. And I'm forced to exist close to them, to them that frighten me because they don't know – they don't want to know, they don't care to know – that I can't be different. If I could be different, when I pass by this people I would really be made of air. I would be one of those women in the picture *Three women and three wolves* by Eugène Grasset. They too, as me, are frightened by someone. But they, unlike me, can come off from the ground and become clouds that shelter themselves among red trees. Neither closed gates nor boots forced to trample down a road they don't want to run along. They are beautiful, these three women: their beauty is dim but not mortified by their clouds – clothes, their beauty exists even if their clouds – clothes are not white sheets on which projecting the ghosts of someone else. They are escaping from this someone else who was chasing them even with a hunting horn. On the threshold of the wood of the red trees the hunters have thrown to the ground the horn and they have abandoned the chase: their preys have turned into clouds, they have turned into ghosts. And yet they exist: they are beautiful and frightened, they are alive and panting. The hunters are disappeared into thin air, wounded to death by the burning eyes of the three wolves that are taking care of the loneliness of the three clouds – women in the shade of the red trees. I'm walking alone, by now it is dark. My lips are cold, the moon looks at me and sees me.