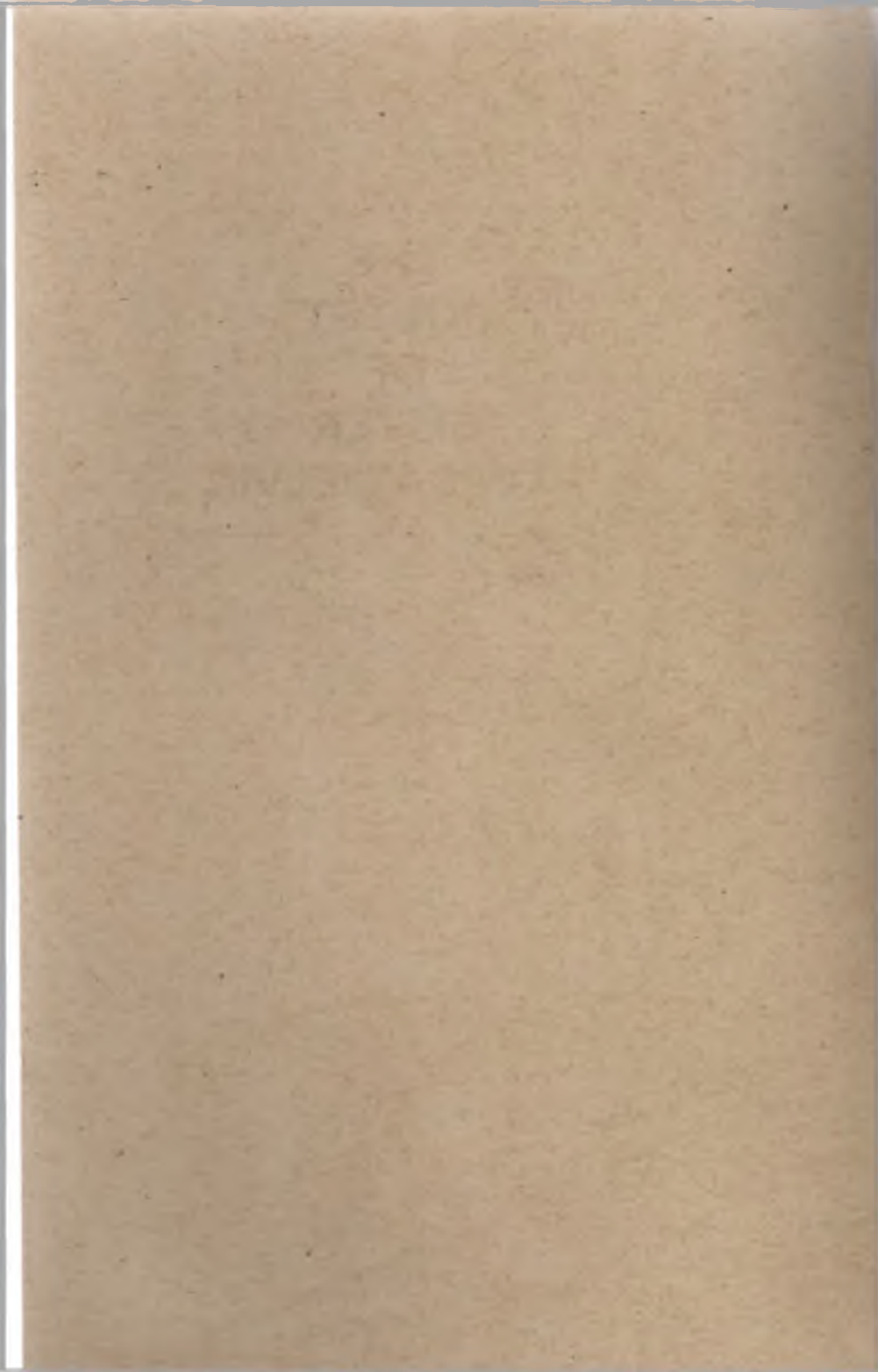


**THE
POETRY
OF
SISTER
MONICA MELVIN**





**THE
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OF
SISTER
MONICA MELVIN**

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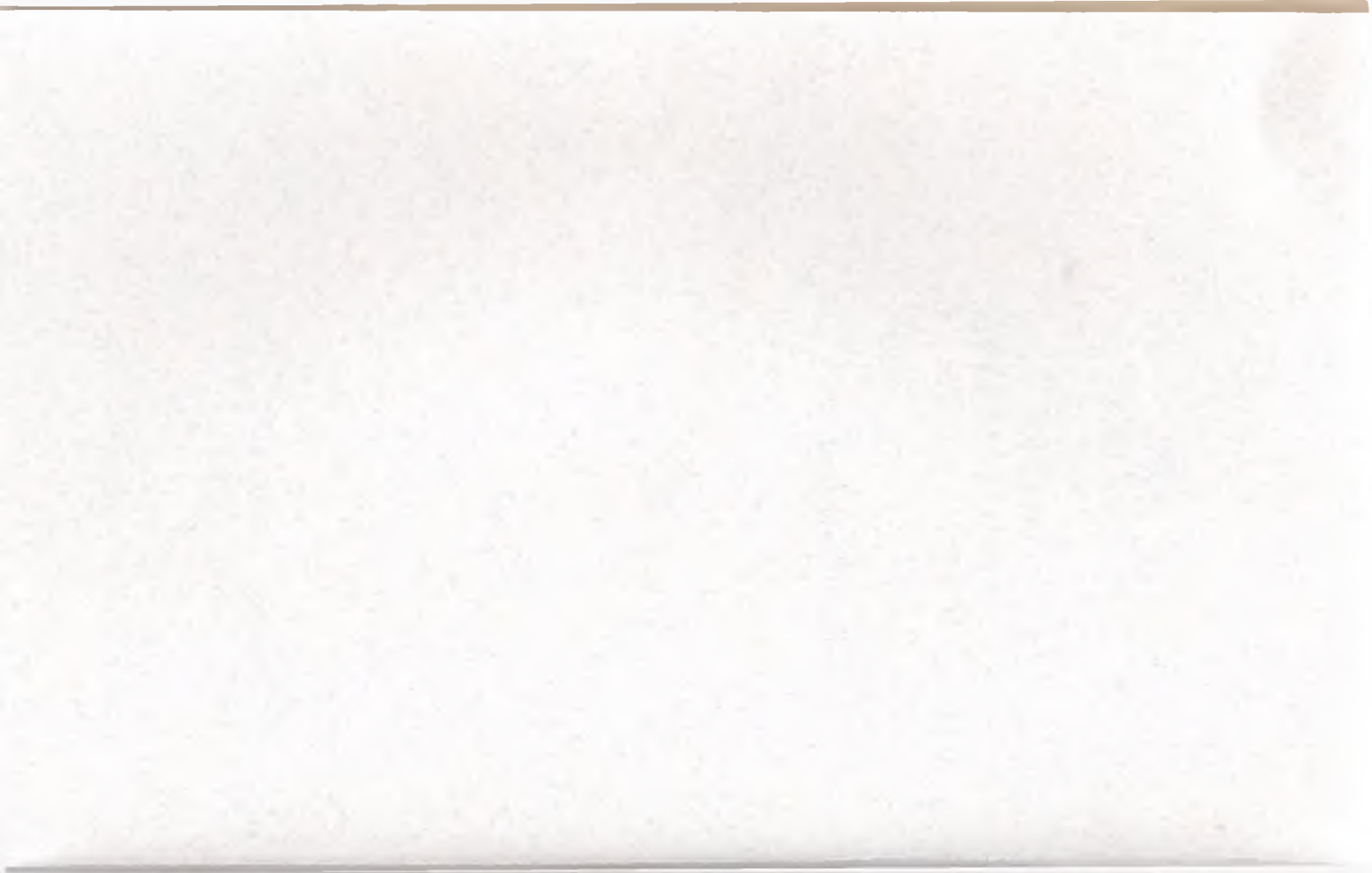
Sister Monica Melvin

Pilgrimage ©2003, 2005

Sister Monica Melvin

Sojourn ©2012

Sister Monica Melvin



Preface

Sister Monica Melvin found God everywhere she looked; seeing our capacity for joy and greatness as well as our struggles, in our day-to-day existence here on Earth.

She had the ability to look at life with:

- gratitude,
- humor,
- courage,
- fear,
- humility,
- sadness,
- joy and commitment.

It is evident that Sr. Monica was truly an astute and sensitive observer of the human condition and the human spirit. She reminds us of so many things that we already know, but that we so easily forget!

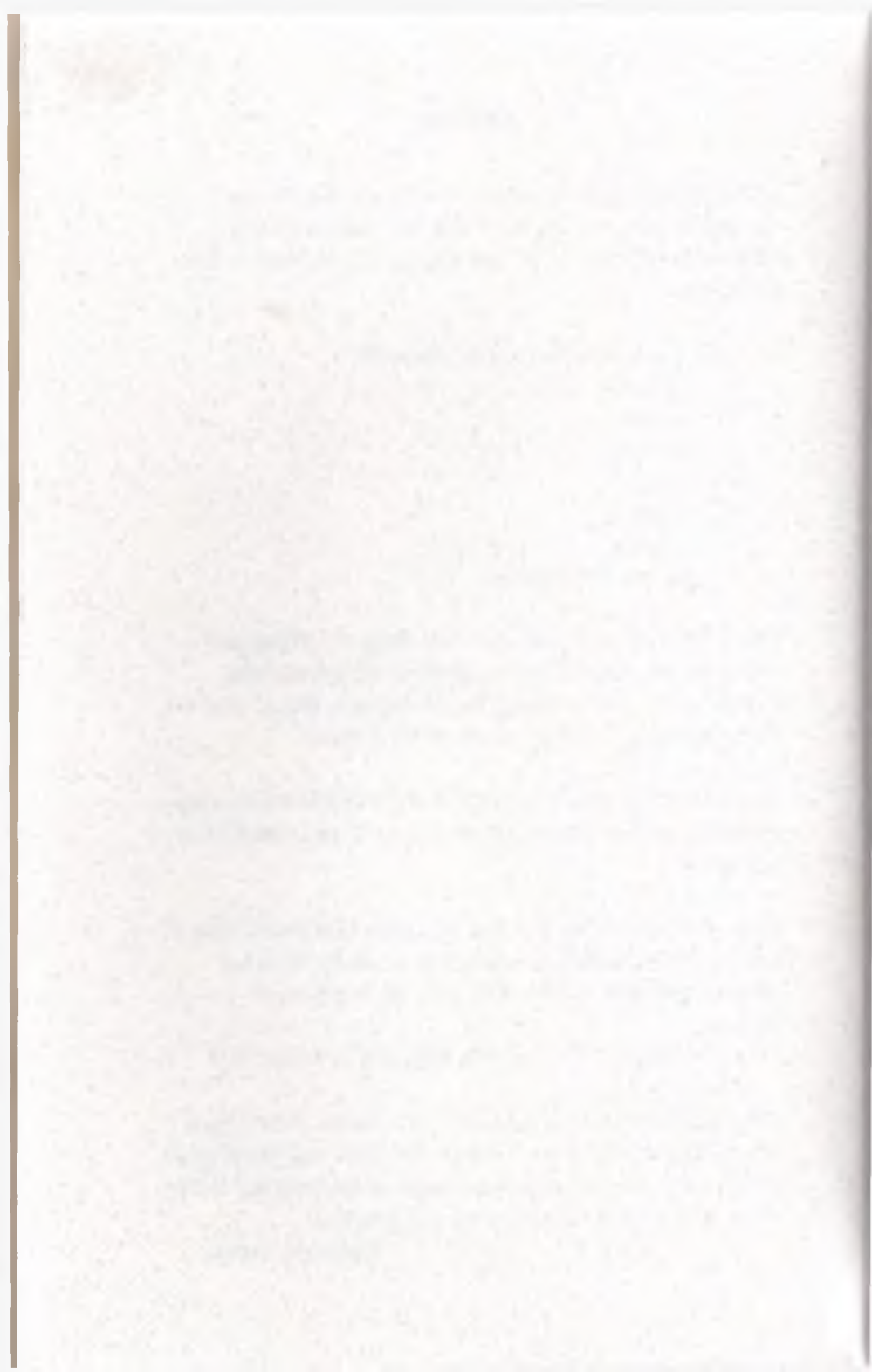
In her first collection of poems, **PILGRIMAGE**, many readers found pleasure, healing, solace and comfort in her words.

How wonderful that she has written a new collection of poems, **SOJOURN**, published here along with her original collection, **PILGRIMAGE** in this new volume:

THE POETRY OF SR. MONICA MELVIN

I hope these poems touch you; your heart, your mind, your funny-bone, your hopes, your fears and your spirit; and that you be reminded, as many of her readers have been, that we are not alone on our journey.

Norman Trager



INTRODUCTION.

Each of us has a story to tell, and no matter the mode of the telling, in the telling we are healed.

The mode of poetry is as old as our ancestors who sat around their cooking fires and watched the stars and talked of their days and times in prose and poetry.

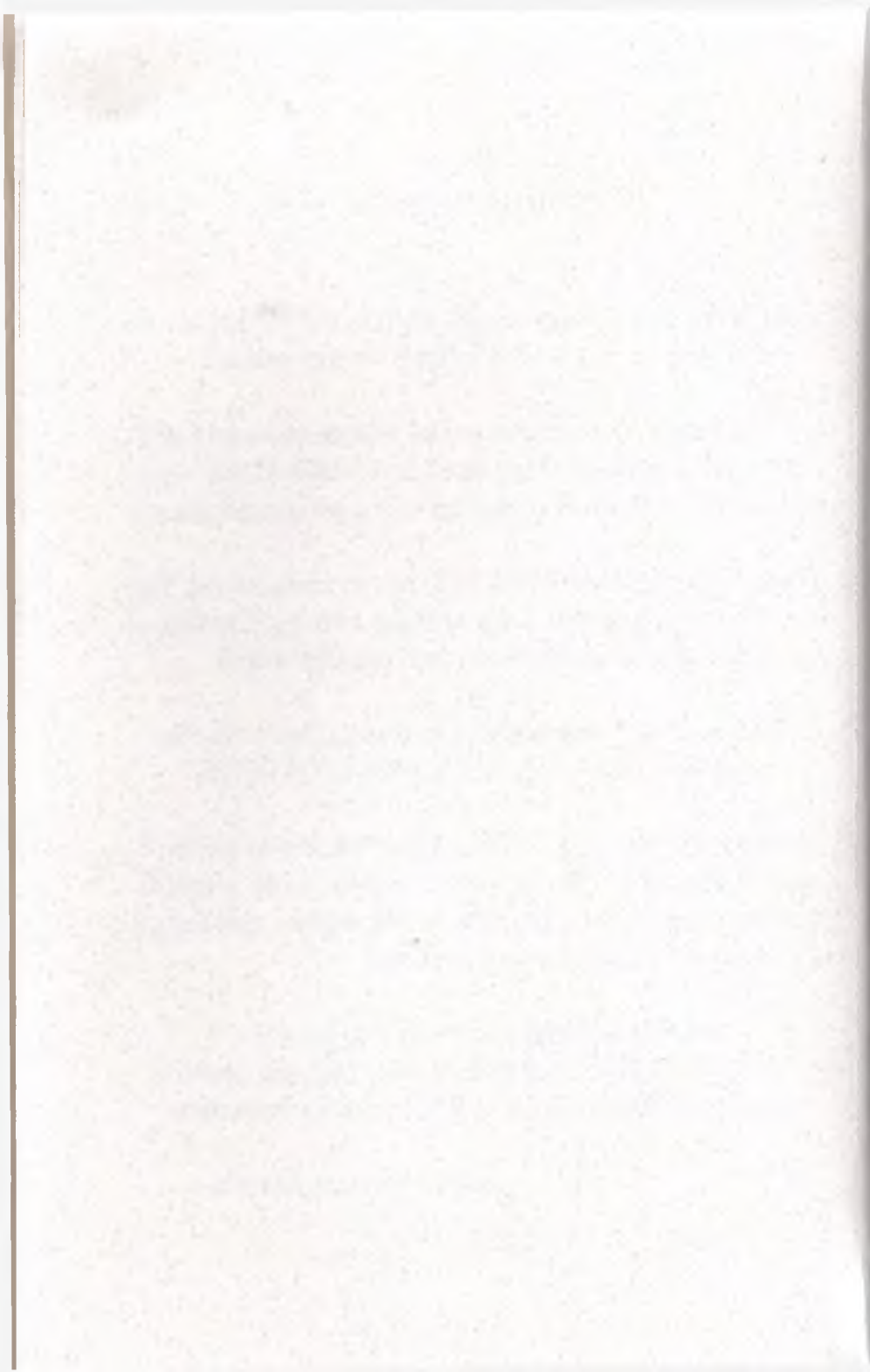
Poetry of other times was difficult to understand, full of references to mythology and the ancient Greeks, or filled with pretentious and erudite words.

That is why I was amazed and gratified with the reception of my first book, "PILGRIMAGE."

Someone once said, "Write about what you know," and that is what I do in simple words. I am grateful that so many people listened to the words, and found meaning in them!

In this volume there are two books: "PILGRIMAGE" republished by request, and the second volume "SOJOURN," a new collection.

Sister Monica Melvin



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Sister Beatrice McMahon
for her help and her friendship.

I would also like to acknowledge the help of
Sister Georgette Lawton for the many times she 'fixed' my
computer and especially for her friendship
over many years.

I would like to thank Sr. Edith Hart for the photo.

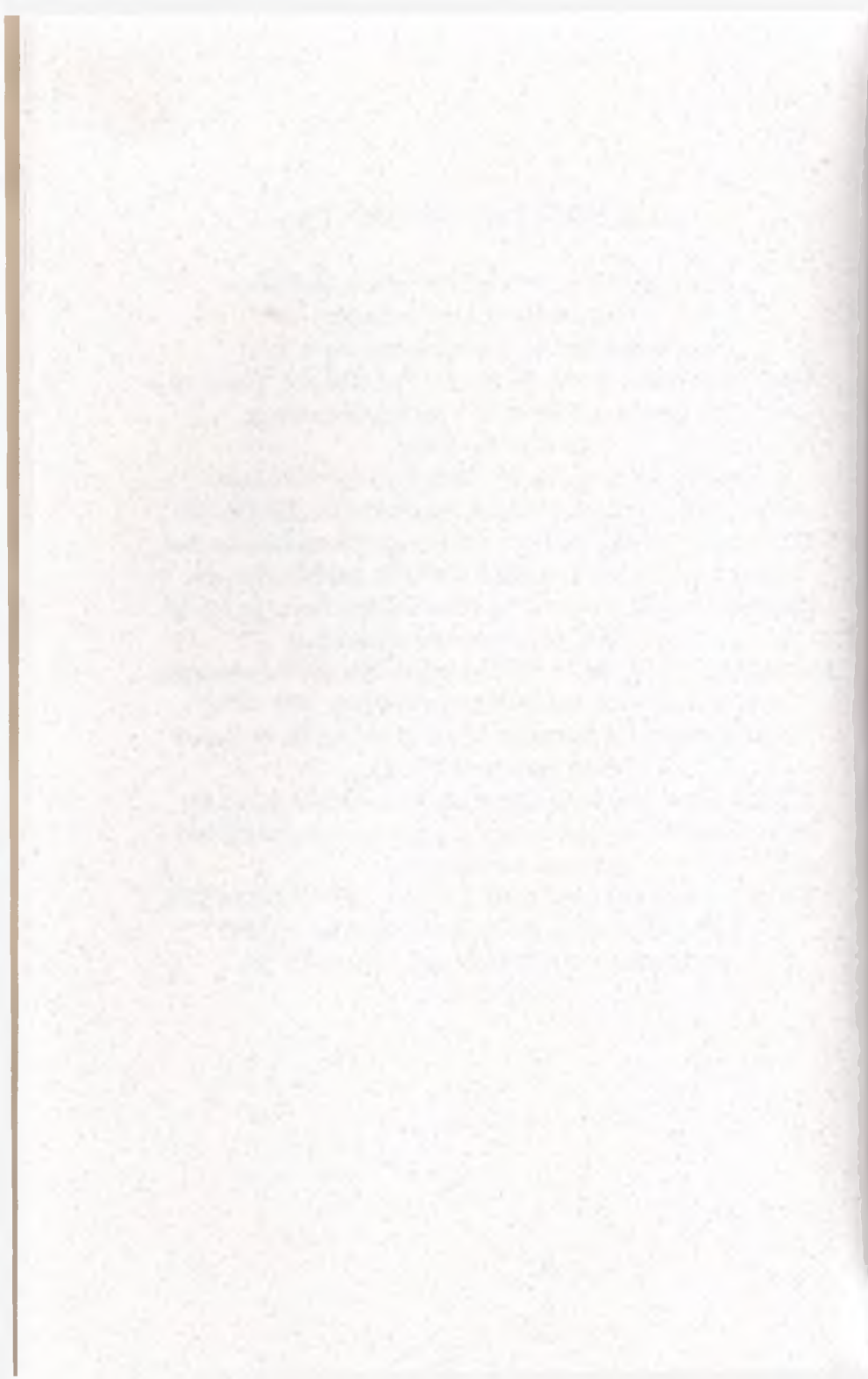
I would like to thank Norman Trager for his mechanical
skills, his excellent editing, and his gentle persuasion that
convinced me that this book could be published in my
lifetime. I would also wish to acknowledge his sage advice
over many years, and his friendship.

I would like to thank the following persons for the generous
gift of their time and their superb ability with office
machines: Donna Cascone, Maria Domingues, Vanessa
Moya and Andrea Miller.

To all those who encouraged me to write and asked for
more, and to those who helped me believe my poetry had a
value, I am grateful.

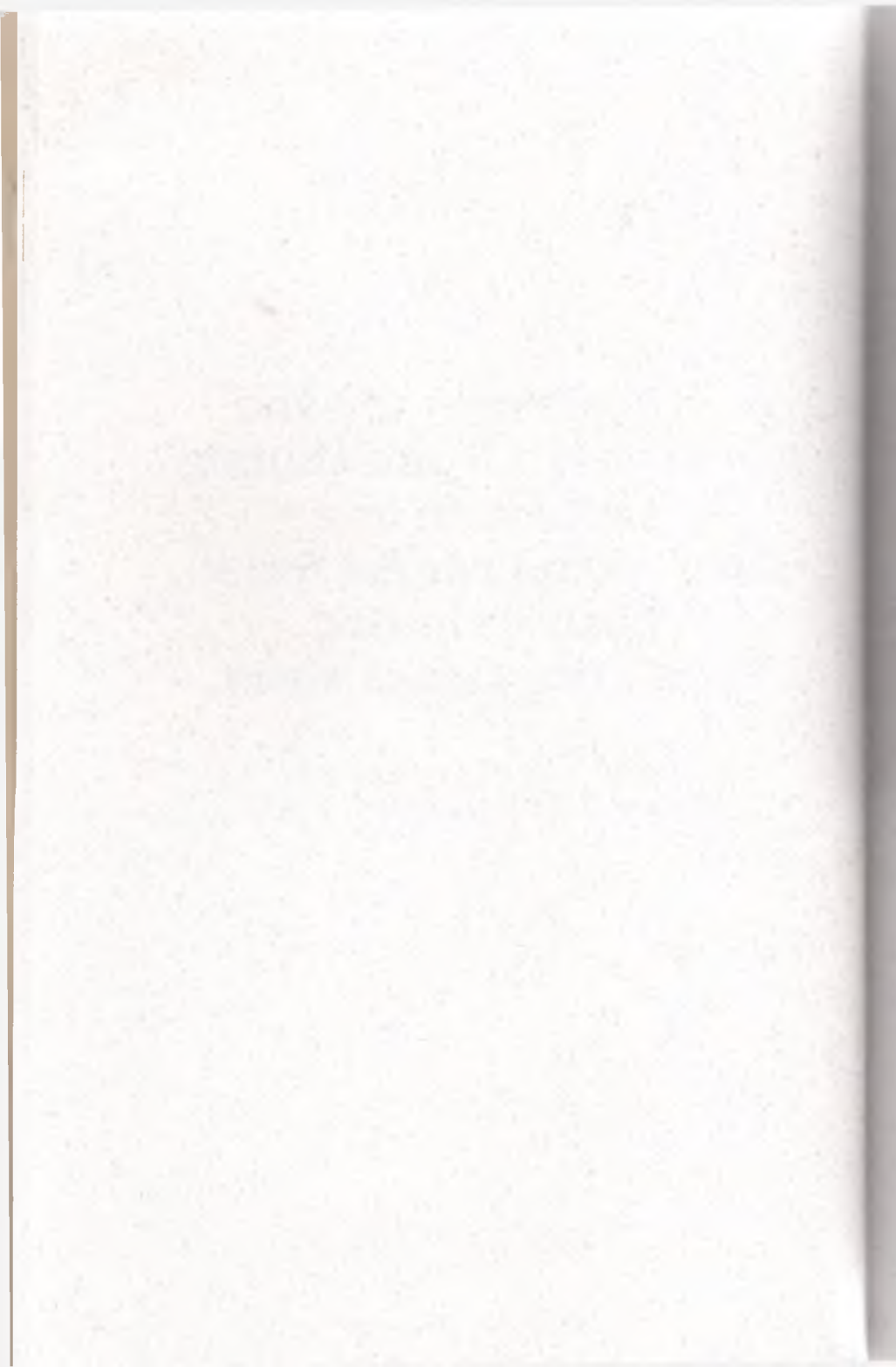
To each reader of these words I wish a biblical SHALOM
which is not only a greeting of peace but implies
completeness, wholeness, and fullness of life.

Monica



I believe in the sun
Even when it is not shining,
I believe in love
Even when I cannot feel it.
I believe in God
Even when God is silent.

Written on a wall by a Jewish
Prisoner in Cologne, Germany 1942



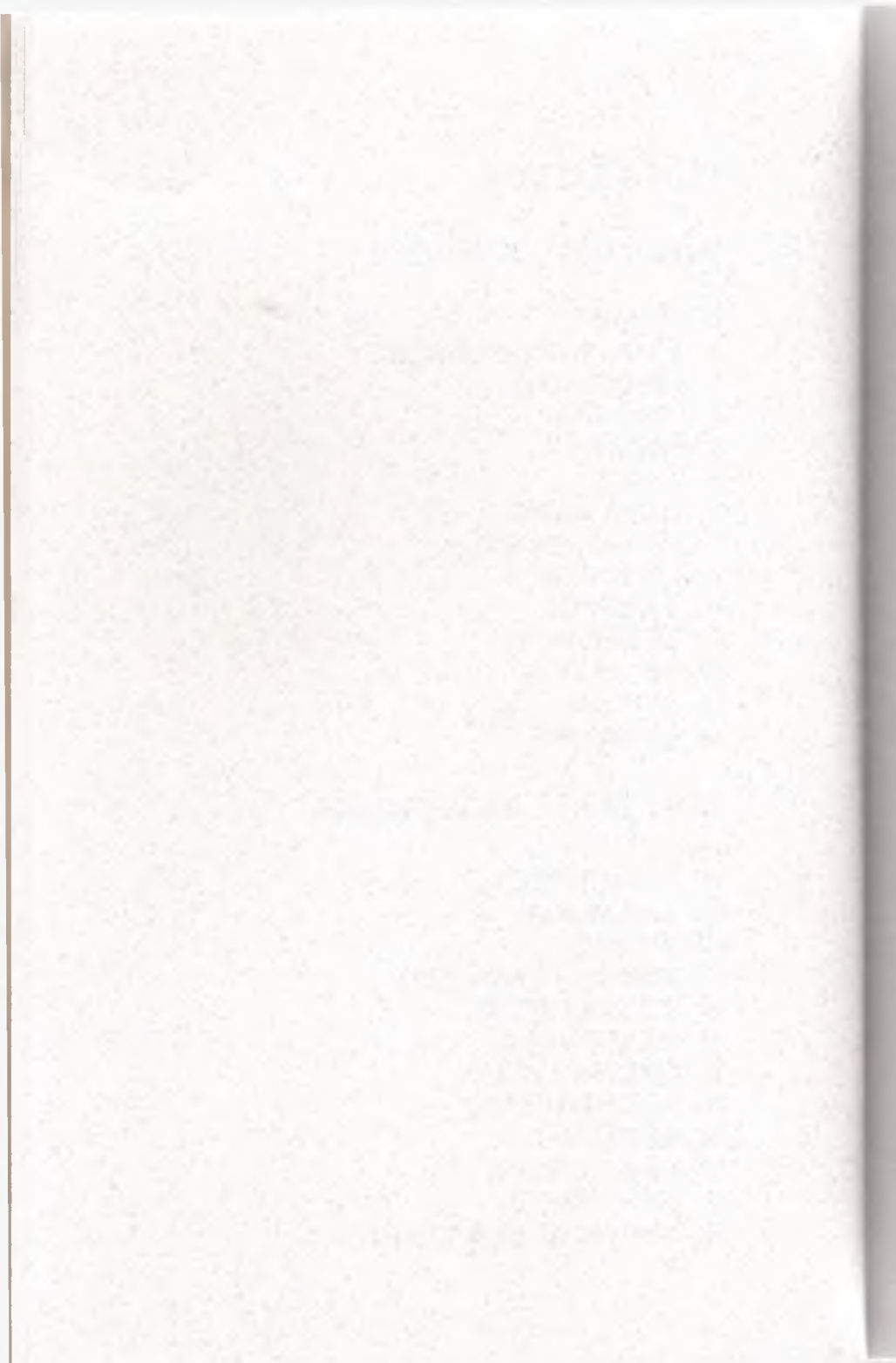
PILGRIMAGE

PART ONE CHOICES

- 1. LEGACY.**
- 2. A SOLITARY PASSAGE.**
- 3. AWAKENING.**
- 4. CHANGES.**
- 5. DECISION.**
- 6. QUEST.**
- 7. NIGHTMARE.**
- 8. APPEARANCES.**
- 9. DARKNESS.**
- 10. LAMENT.**
- 11. DEPRESSION.**
- 12. MY CLOUD.**
- 13. SUICIDE.**
- 14. BARGAINS.**

PART TWO MOVING ON.

- 15. RETROSPECT.**
- 16. A NEW DAY.**
- 17. WISHES.**
- 18. THE WAITING GAME.**
- 19. THE STARFISH.**
- 20. HEART SONG.**
- 21. OBSERVATIONS.**
- 22. MAGNIFICENCE.**
- 23. BETRAYAL.**
- 24. OUR HEROES.**
- 25. THE VOWED.**
- 26. MYTHS OF OUR TIME.**

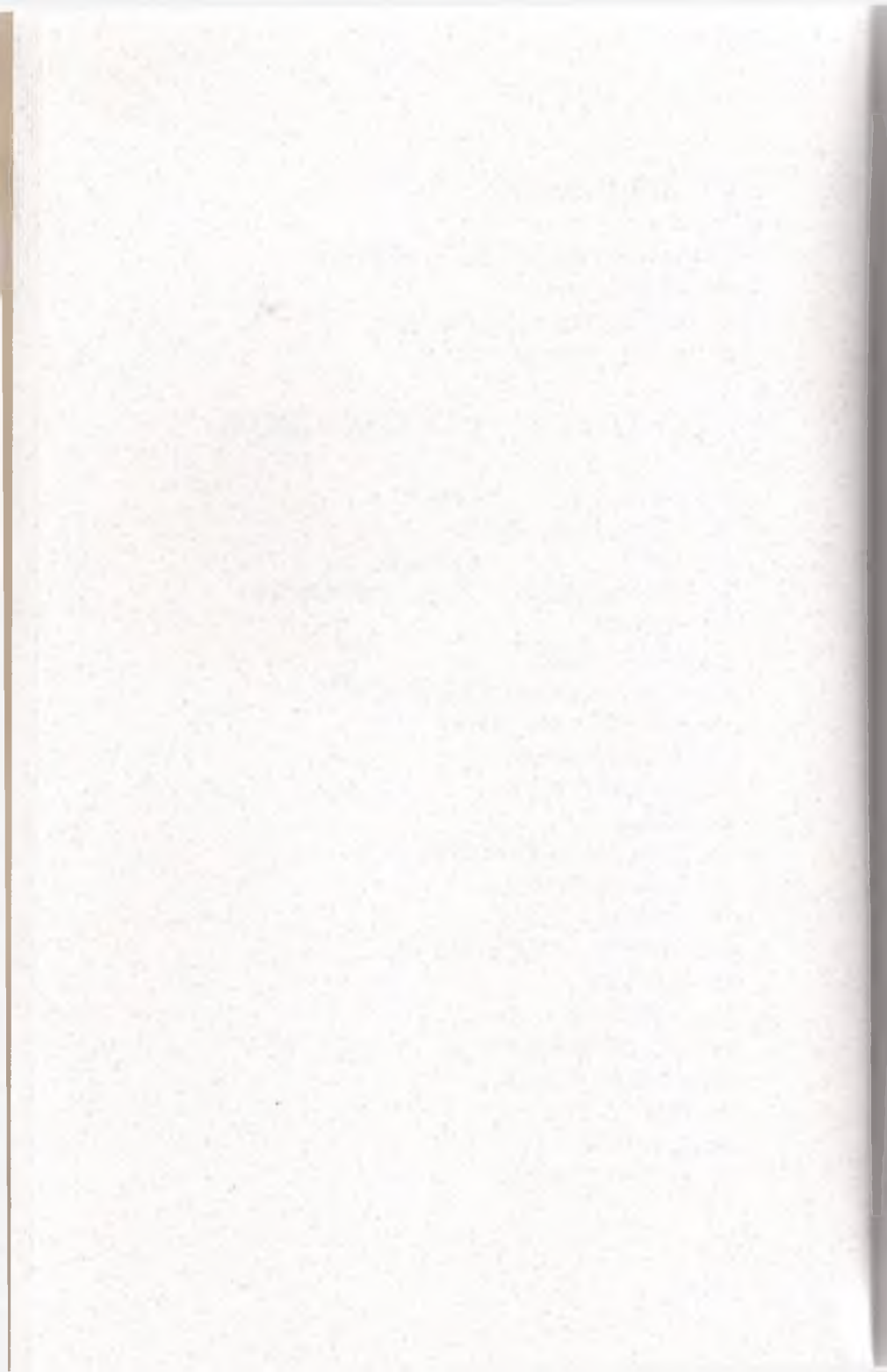


PILGRIMAGE

27. **THE COMING OF WINTER.**
28. **TUESDAYS.**
29. **MOMENT IN AUTUMN.**
30. **SOUL SONG.**

PART THREE LETTING GROW.

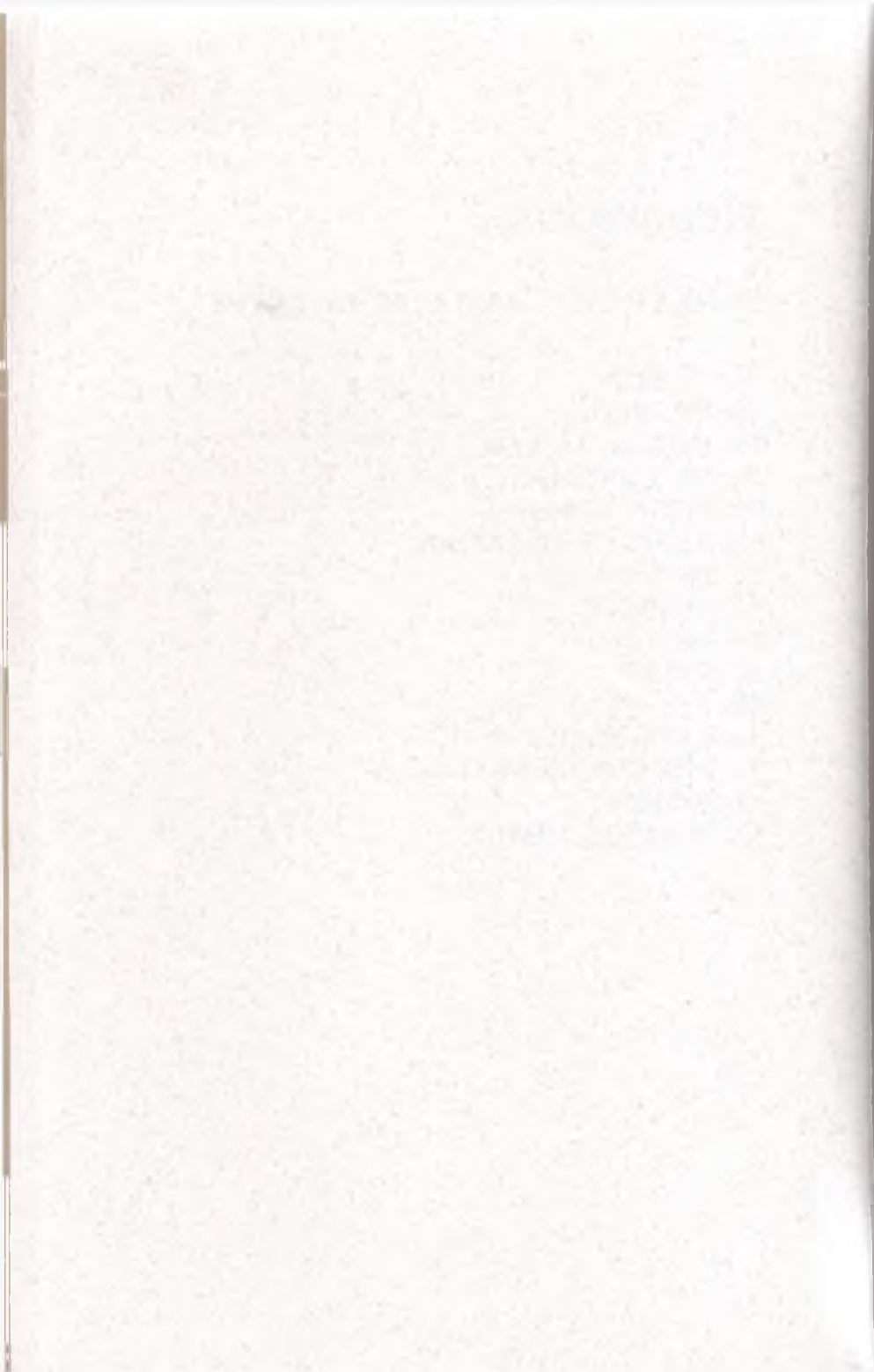
31. **ENIGMA. WHAT?**
32. **ABOUT DIETING.**
33. **JULY ALONE.**
34. **MONSTERS. DISCERNMENT.**
35. **MAYBE.**
36. **NEW YEAR.**
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38. **EXITS.**
39. **THE TEACHER.**
40. **TRANSITION.**
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43. **VARIATIONS.**
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45. **TIPPING THE SCALES.**
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48. **SECOND CHANCE.**
49. **A NEW ROAD.**
50. **NO.**
51. **IMAGES.**
52. **JOURNEYING.**



PILGRIMAGE

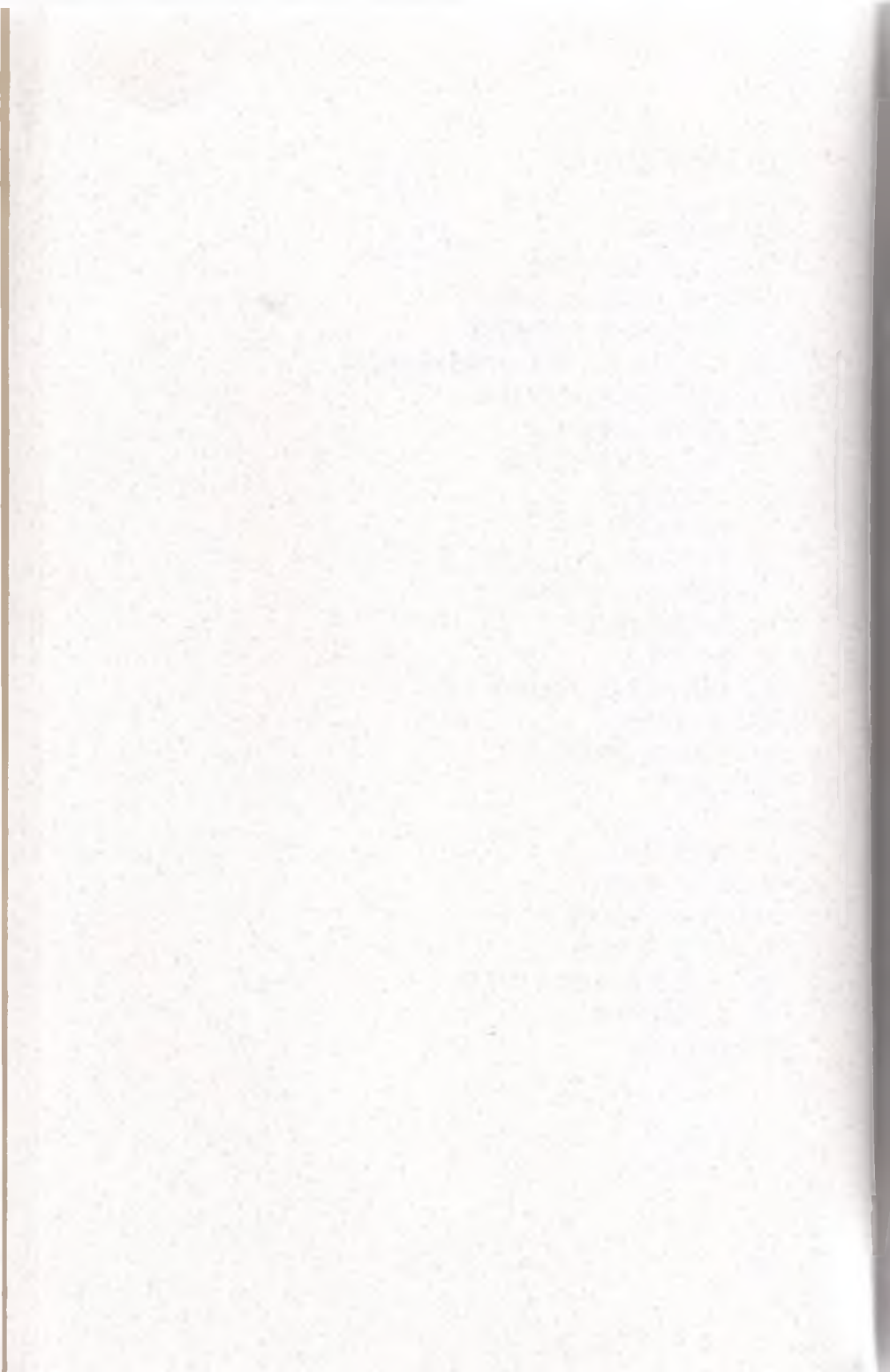
PART FOUR AND LIFE GOES ON.

- 53. GOSSIP.**
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- 57. HARD AS NAILS.**
- 58. STOPS ON THE ROAD.**
- 59. IF ONLY.....**
- 60. MUSINGS.**
- 61. TABLES.**
- 62. TREES.**
- 63. THE WIND.**
- 64. DEEP SPACE.**
- 65. THE CIRCLE OF SORROW.**
- 66. PASSING.**
- 67. MAGICAL MUSIC.**



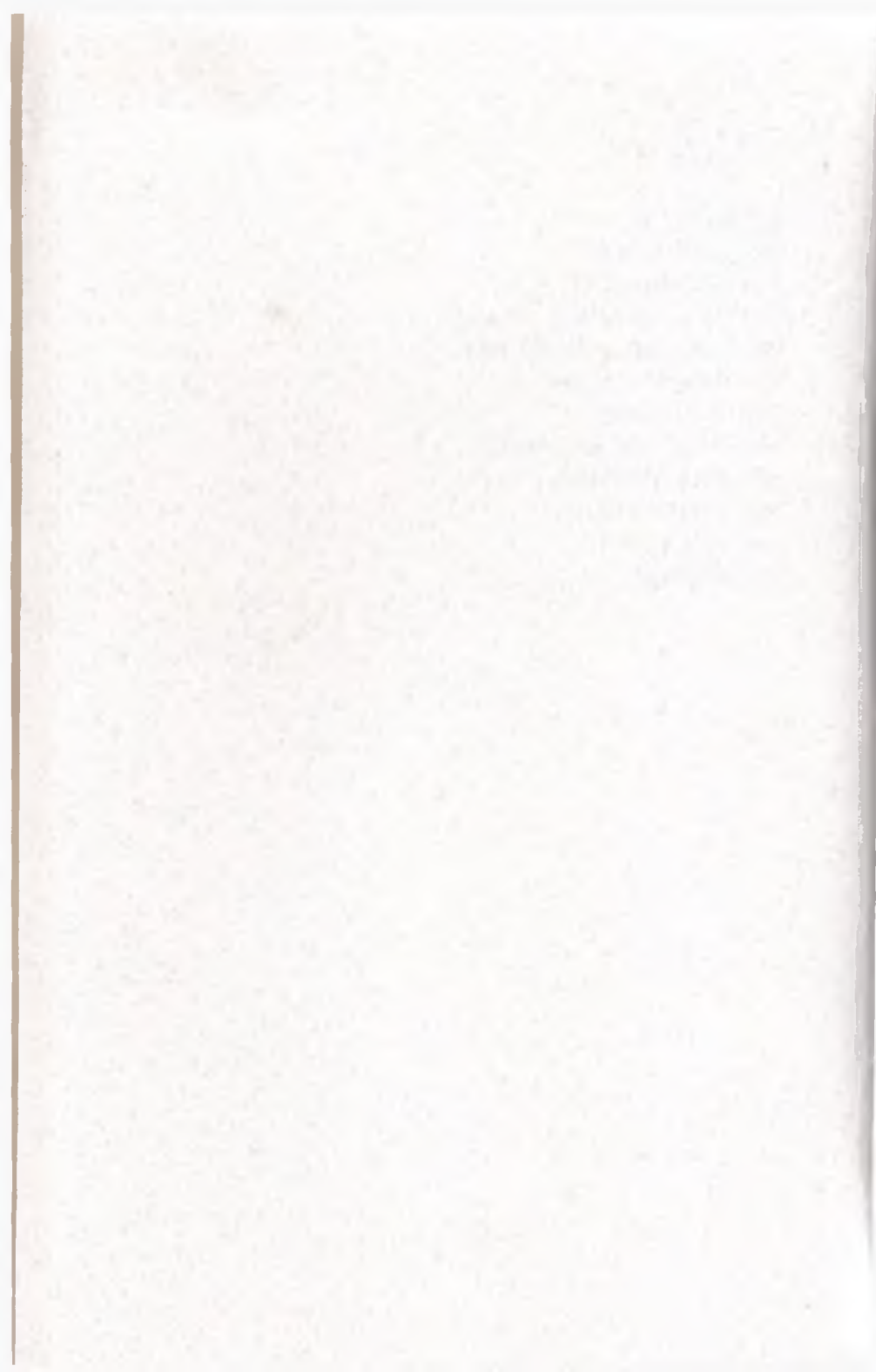
SOJOURN

- 68. POEMS**
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- 91. ONCE UPON A TIME**
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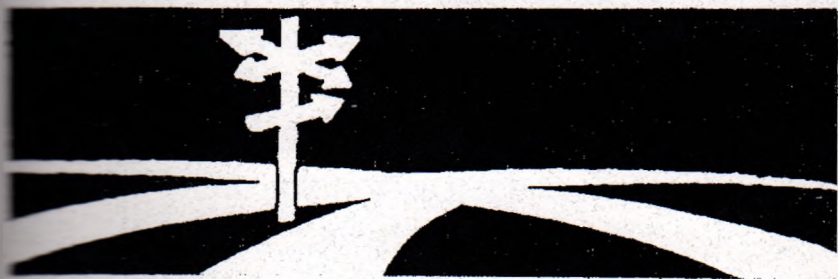
SOJOURN

- 94. ROADS**
- 95. ROMANCE**
- 96. THE BENCH**
- 97. THE GOLDEN YEARS**
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- 99. TRANSITIONS**
- 100. WEEKEND**
- 101. WINTER EVENING**
- 102. THE WISHER**
- 103. THE WORD**
- 104. FINALITY**
- 105. ENDING**



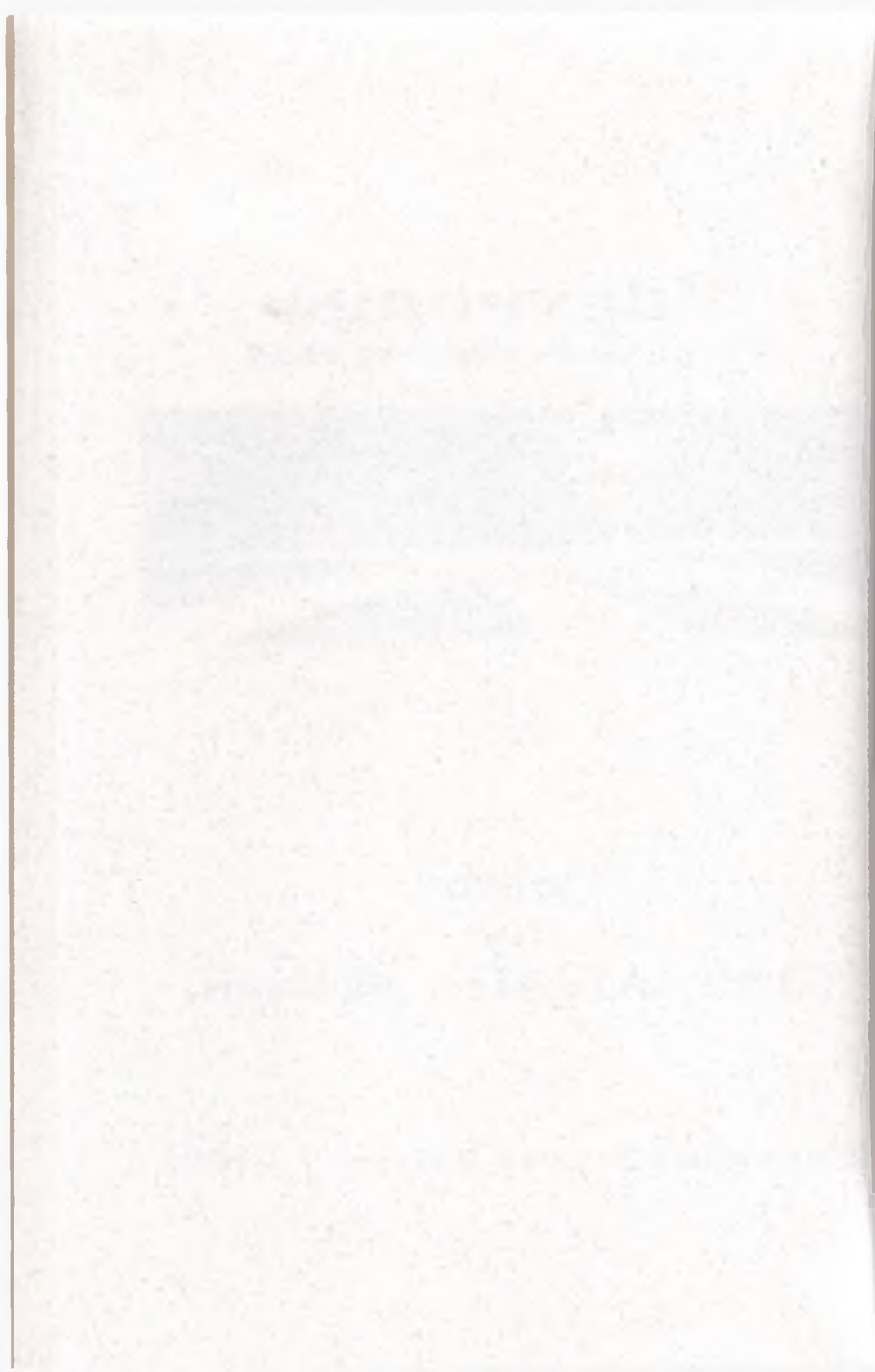
Pilgrimage

A long and rambling road.



Poems
by
Sister Monica Melvin.

Expanded Second Edition 2005

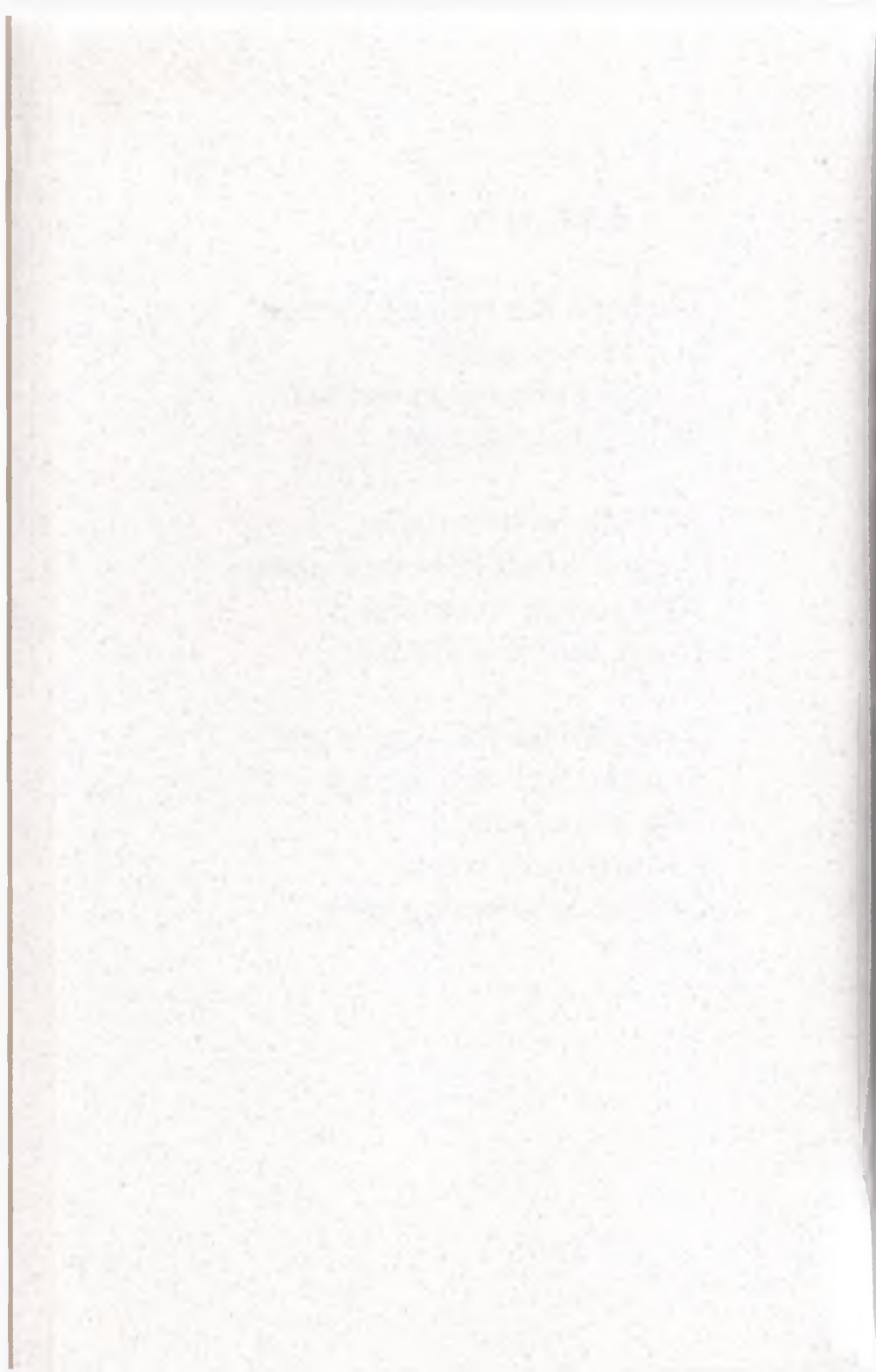


LEGACY.

The heart has hiding places,
In it's many ways.
It tucks away our memories,
Of long bygone days.

With stories never told,
Our memories keep their place,
They stay in secret places,
To age well and to wait.

If for a while you stop to rest,
And you feel very strong,
Take pen in hand
And write and write,
Of tales of love long gone.



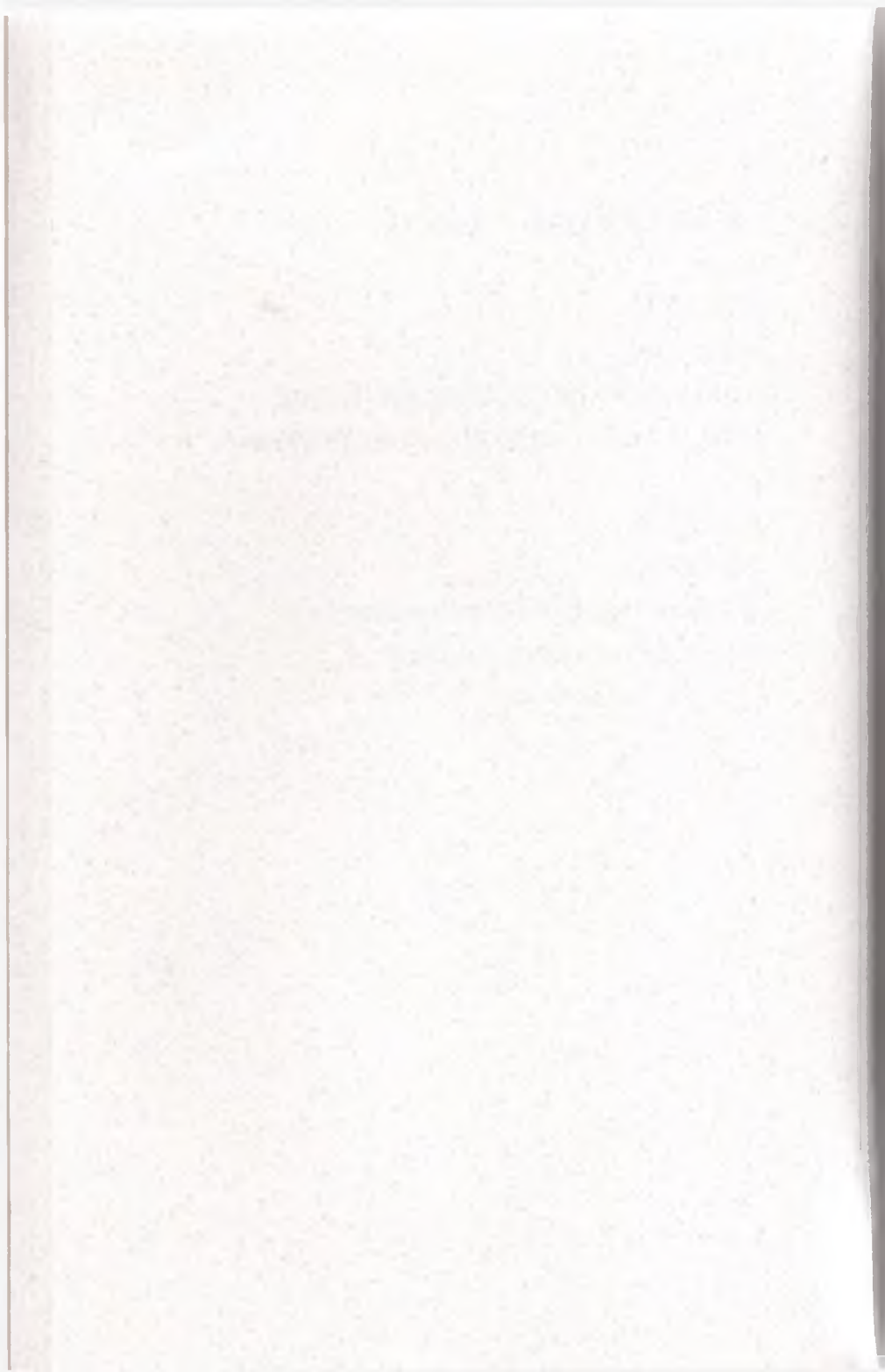
A SOLITARY PASSAGE.

ALONE

We come
Courageously entering the future.
With a cry to announce our presence.

ALONE

We leave,
Silently our life breath ceases.
We begin another journey
Into the unknown.

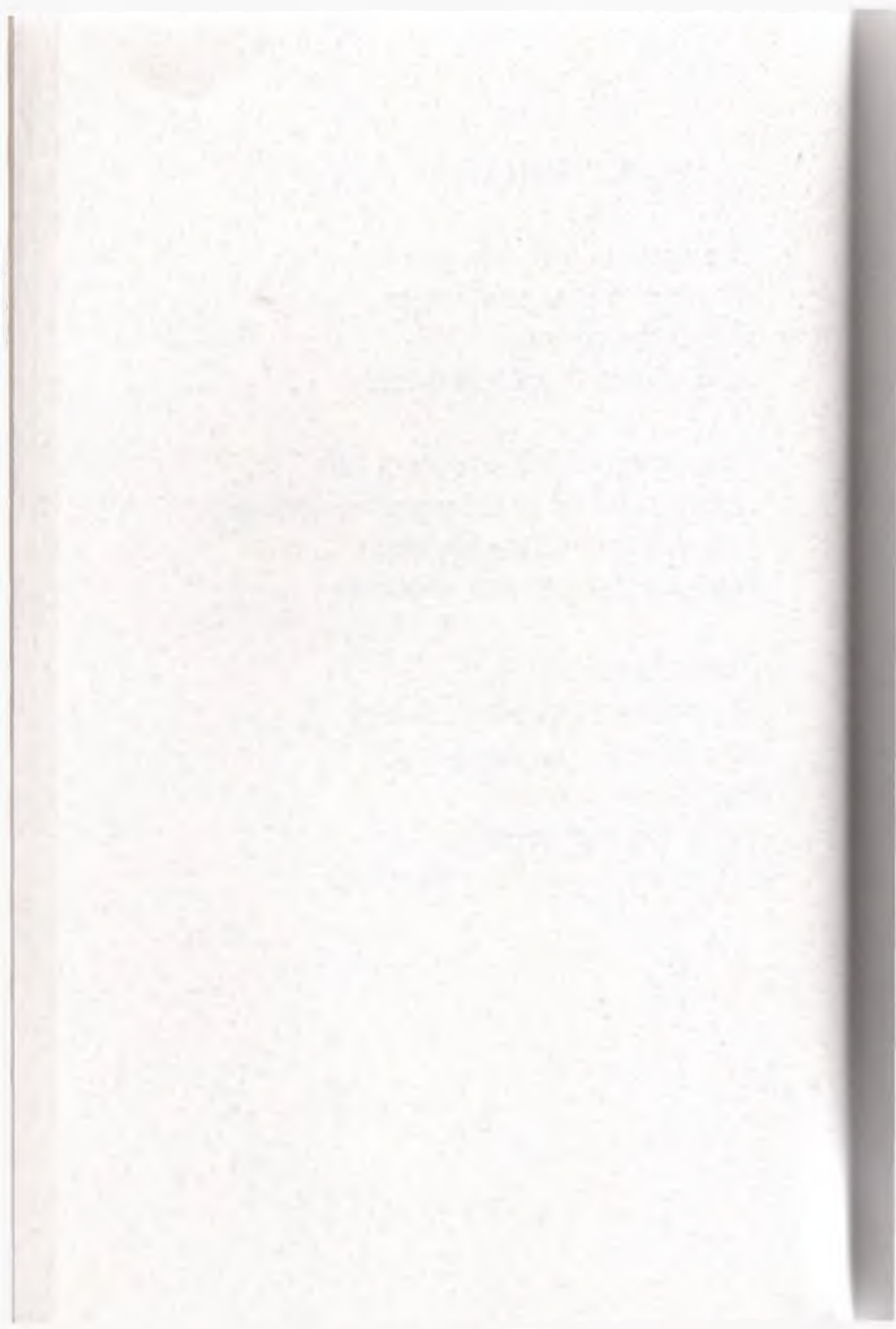


AWAKENING.

The cocoon of many years
Of silent births and deaths,
Is slowly parting
And begins to split and tear.

I shimmer, tremble toward life,
Out of my bed of hibernating darkness.
I stretch and watch the light
Coming through my window.

I stretch and move
My delicate gossamer wings.
I tremble on the edge of life
For I have to want
Light beyond darkness,
Life over death, love over fear.

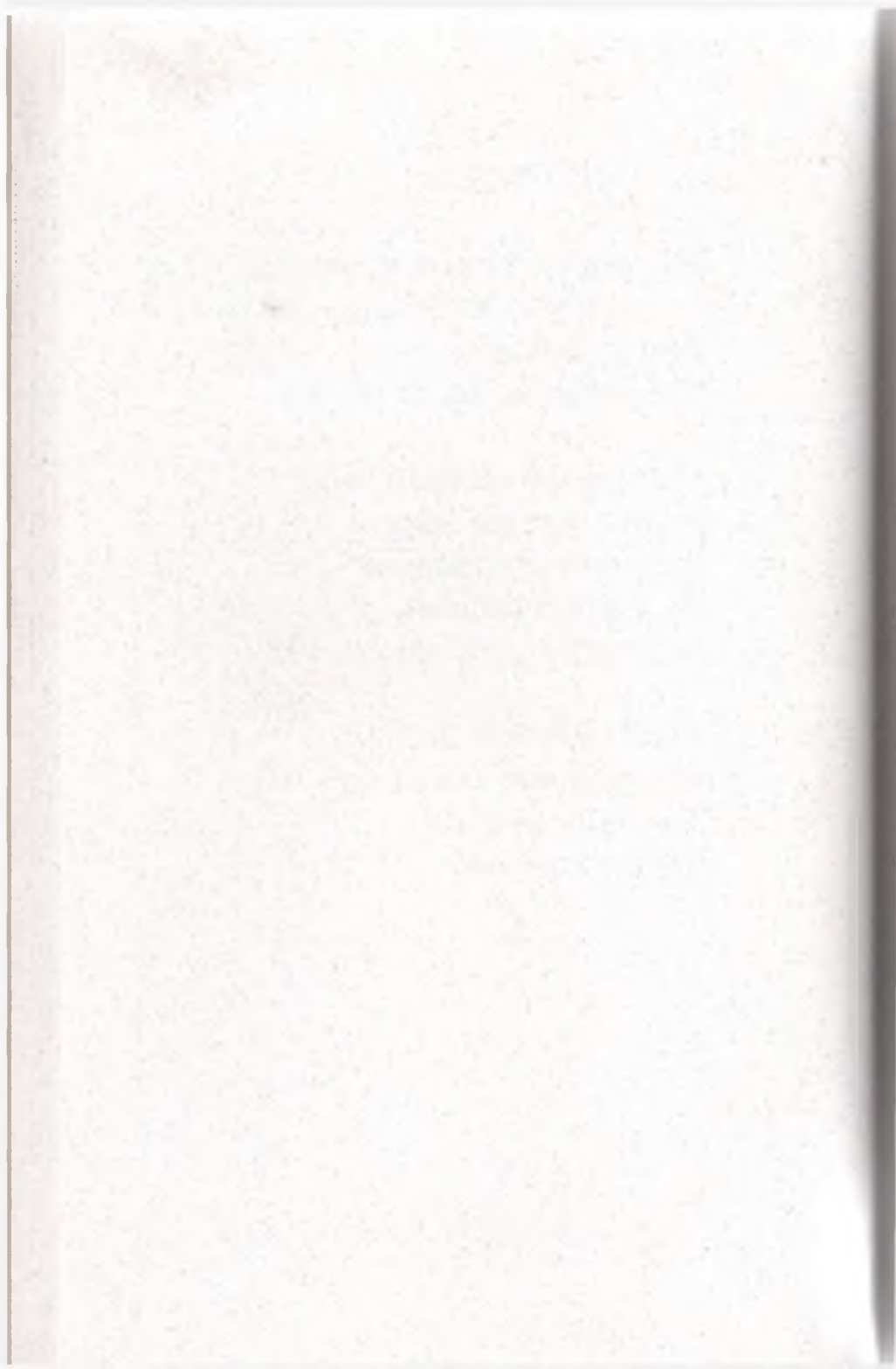


CHANGES.

The way we change the world,
Lives only in our minds.
And it goes on forever,
Not just once, but all the time.

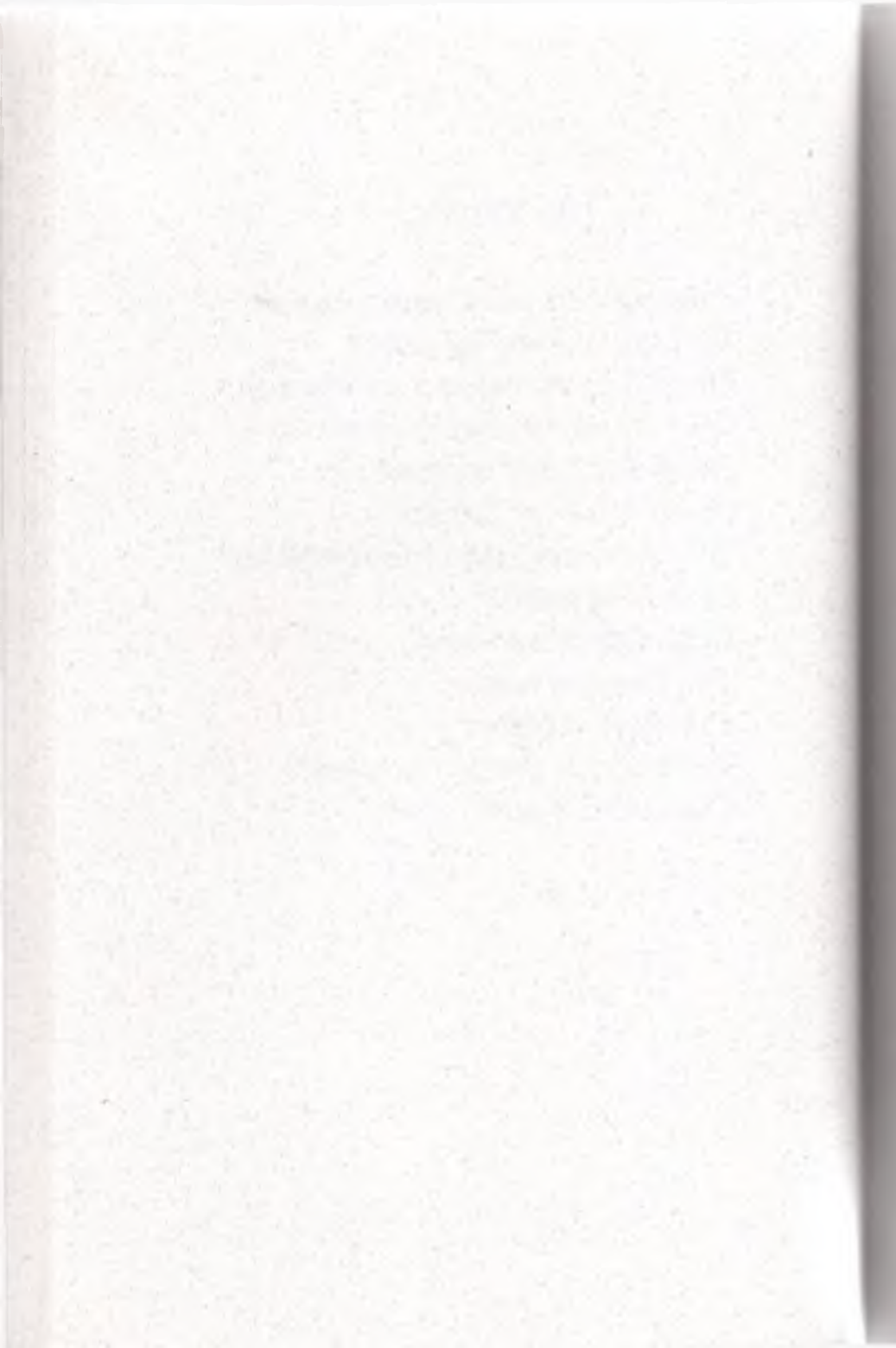
The way we change a habit,
Is not a onetime leap.
It consists of a moment
By moment decision
A creational upkeep.

So all there is to do
Is change one's mind
It is really simple,
But not very easy.



DECISION.

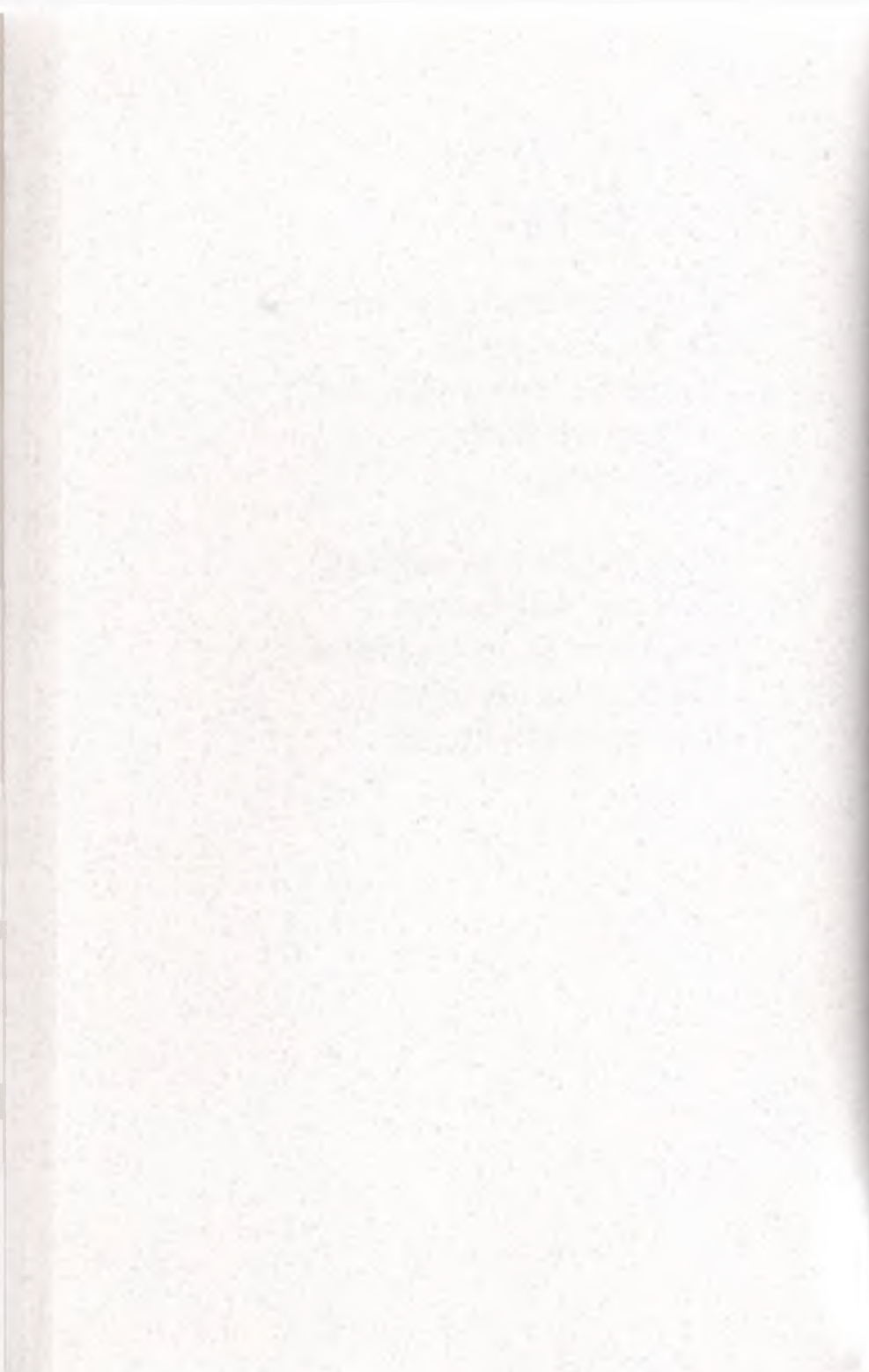
Outstretched hand, empty cup,
Will it fill penny by penny
Or with extravagant overflowing?
Will the moment of decision
Bring more self destruction
Or hope for the future?
Will the decision be life sustaining
Or lead to more
Degradation and pain?
The future is now.
The cup overflows
But where is the commitment?
The future is now.



QUEST.

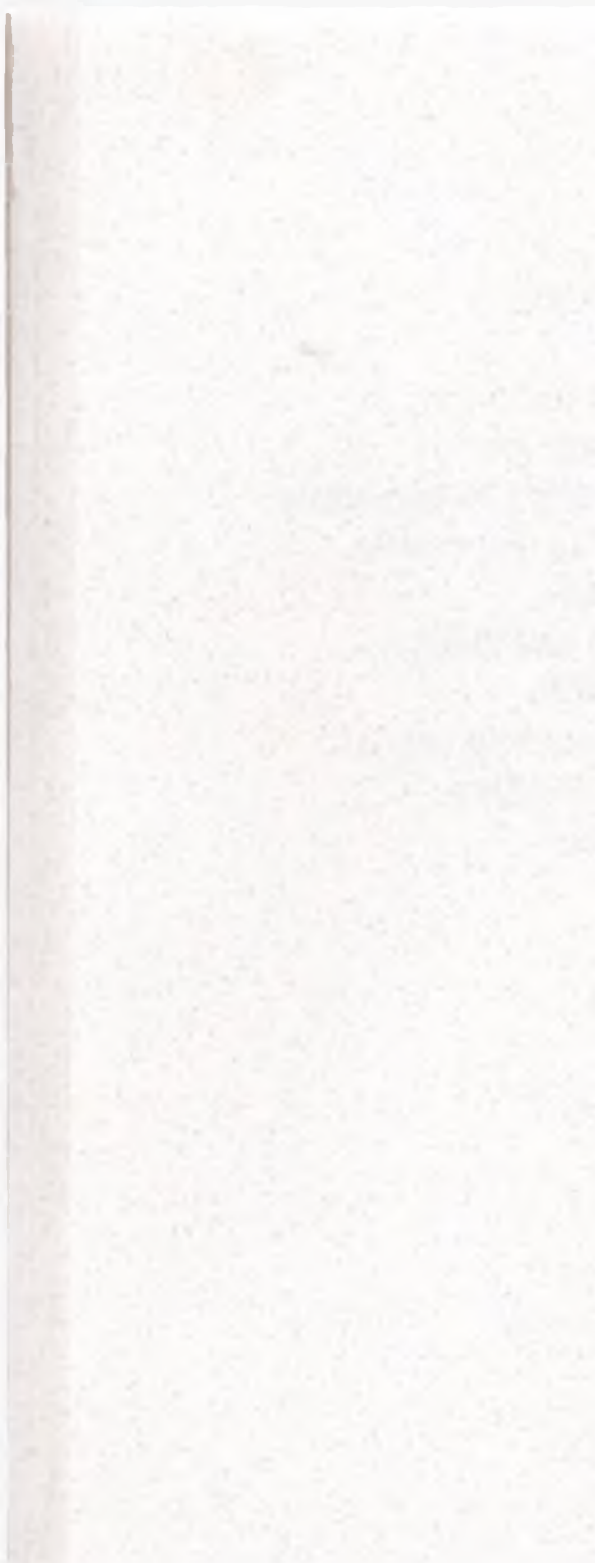
Keep your heart from worry,
Do not rush ahead.
Remember this is your time,
All you are given,
To act upon.

Why spoil it with neglect?
That can wait forever.
Be present to your moment
Your golden opportunity,
Your once in a lifetime.



NIGHTMARE.

Gears shrieking at midnight,
The rattle of garbage cans,
The sudden awakening to harshness.
The feeling of being disposable.
Flawed refuse of life.
Carrying one here and there.....
Dropped in a landfill,
Weary, afraid, Struggling on.....
To fulfill one's life calling.
Struggling to hope.



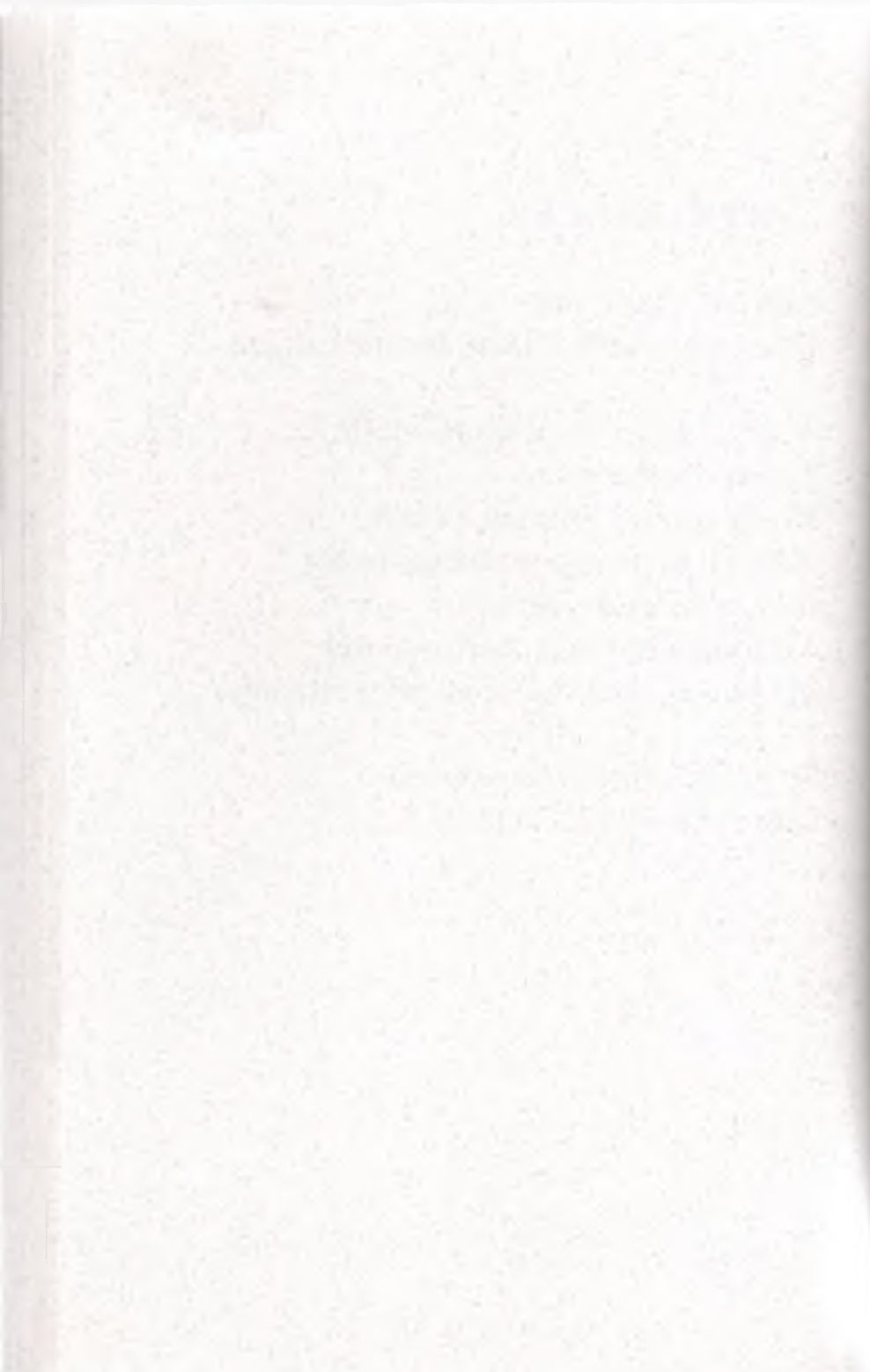
APPEARANCES.

I am not who I seem to be,
There are secrets hidden no one can see.

Walking away from responsibility,
Years of secret pain,
Words spoken forming a chain,
Have all gone into who I am today
Joys, wonder or regret,
All form ambitions untried as yet.
My now is made up of all my yesterdays.

So when we meet remember
I am not who I seem to be.

:



DARKNESS.

Waking at morn it is black
Outside and in.
Daylight holds no hope or promise,
Only endurance of my journey here.

How long will this journey be
And how steadfast the endurance?
Will blackness totally envelop me?
Will it embrace
And I shall perish in its depths?

Black despair embraces
My soul as I travel,
It mocks me at every turn.
: Asking where are you going?
And for what reason?

It insinuates itself into my thoughts,
Asking always why,
Mocking me with
A meaningless journey,
On a path not yet walked.

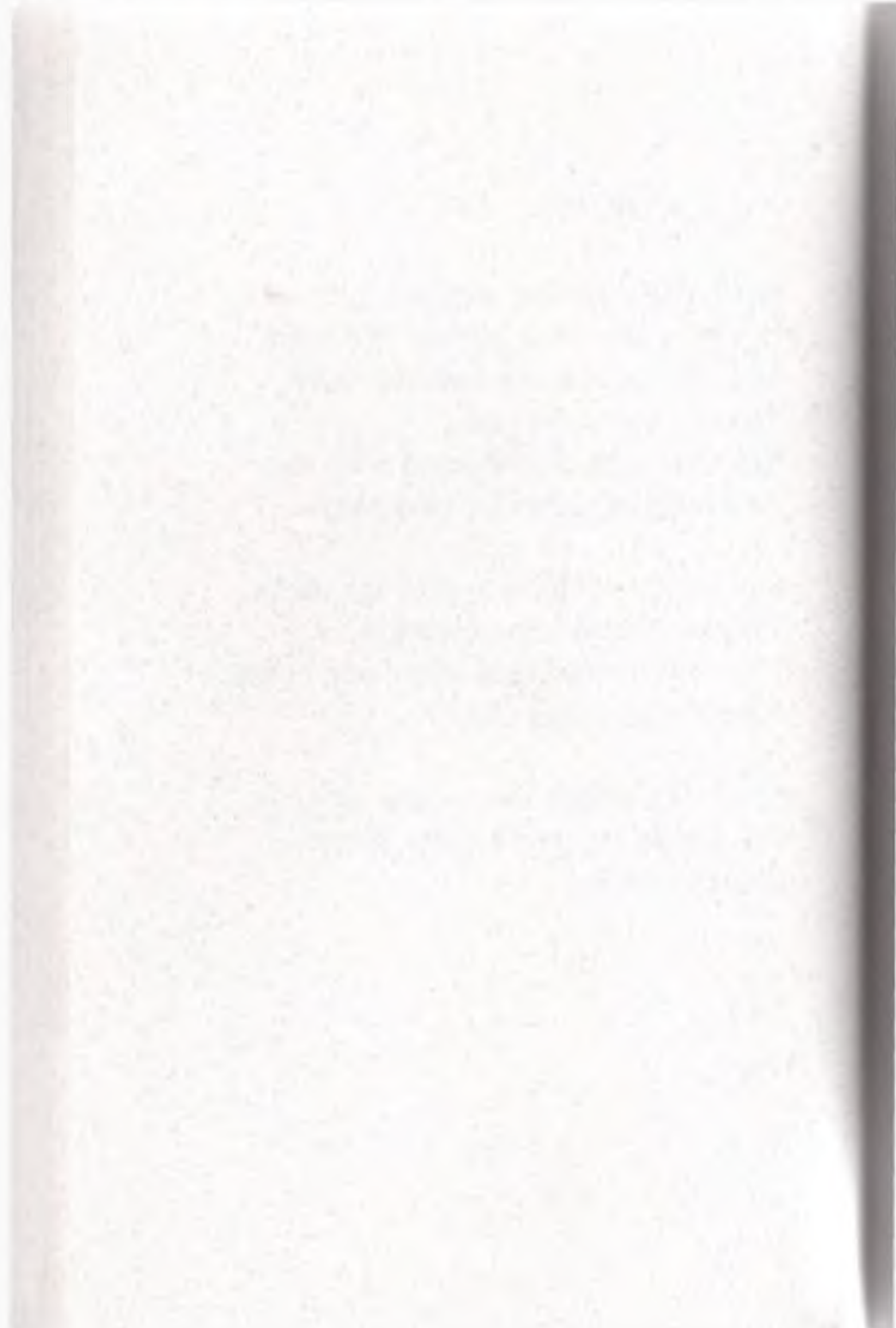


LAMENT.

She never sang her songs to me,
Nor held me close against her heart,
She did not read me bedtime tales,
To keep away the dark.
She did not walk the lanes with me,
And hold my hand for company.

She taught me how to pick-up sticks,
Play jacks and hopscotch too,
She kept me fed, and warm and clean,
Like most mothers do.

My being weeps most every day,
For all the lovely Mommy things
She did not do.

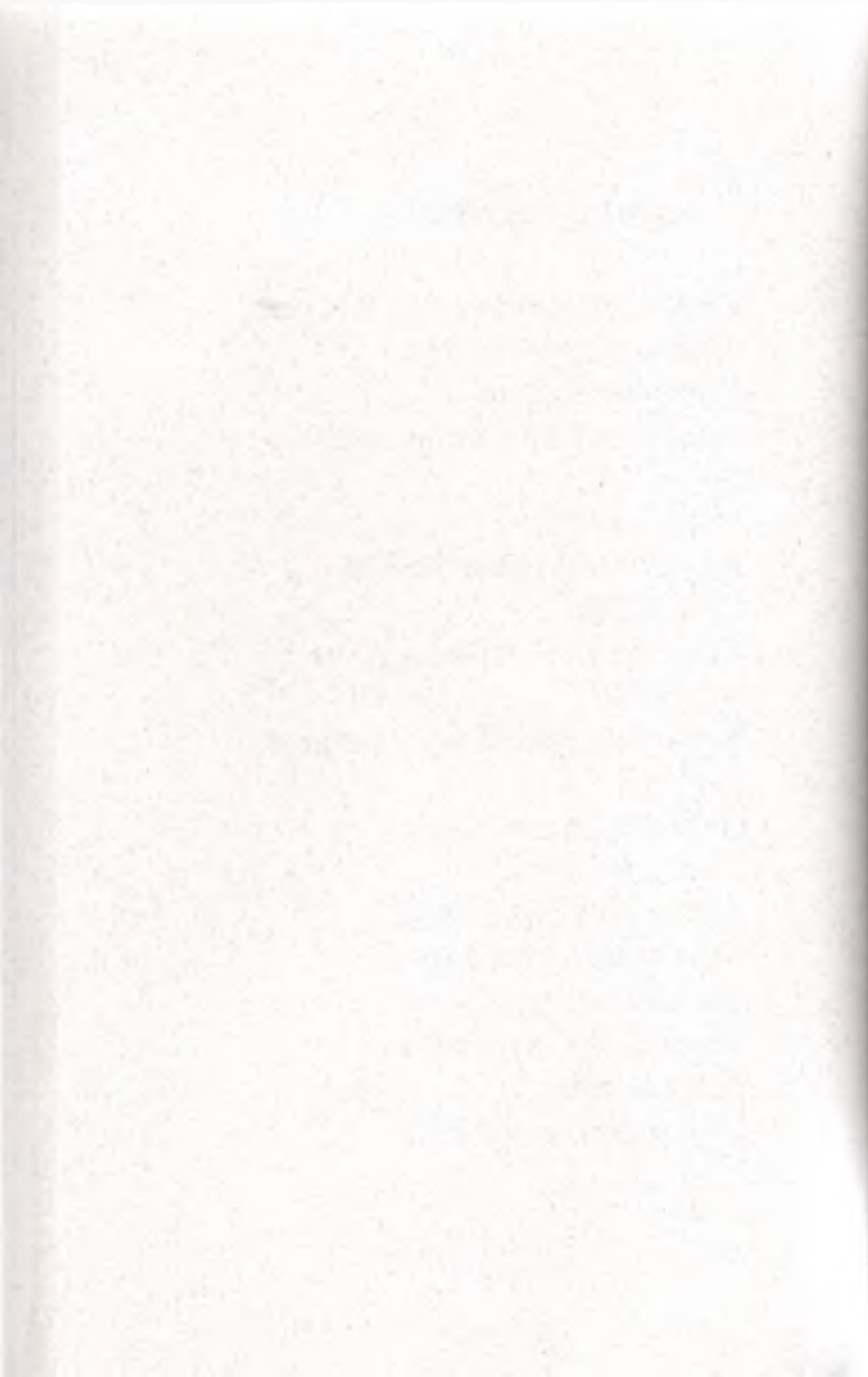


DEPRESSION.

I don't rejoice in spring this year,
Seeing the new leaves
Come forth again
No new life stirs in my soul.

I feel as bleak
As the cloud-covered days
Chilled like
The cold wind blowing,
Miserable
In the cold rain of my existence.

Old resentments, angers,
Pain, grief for
What might have been,
Separations from friends
Old and newer,
These cover my heart
And my spirit,
Like a mist on the hills.



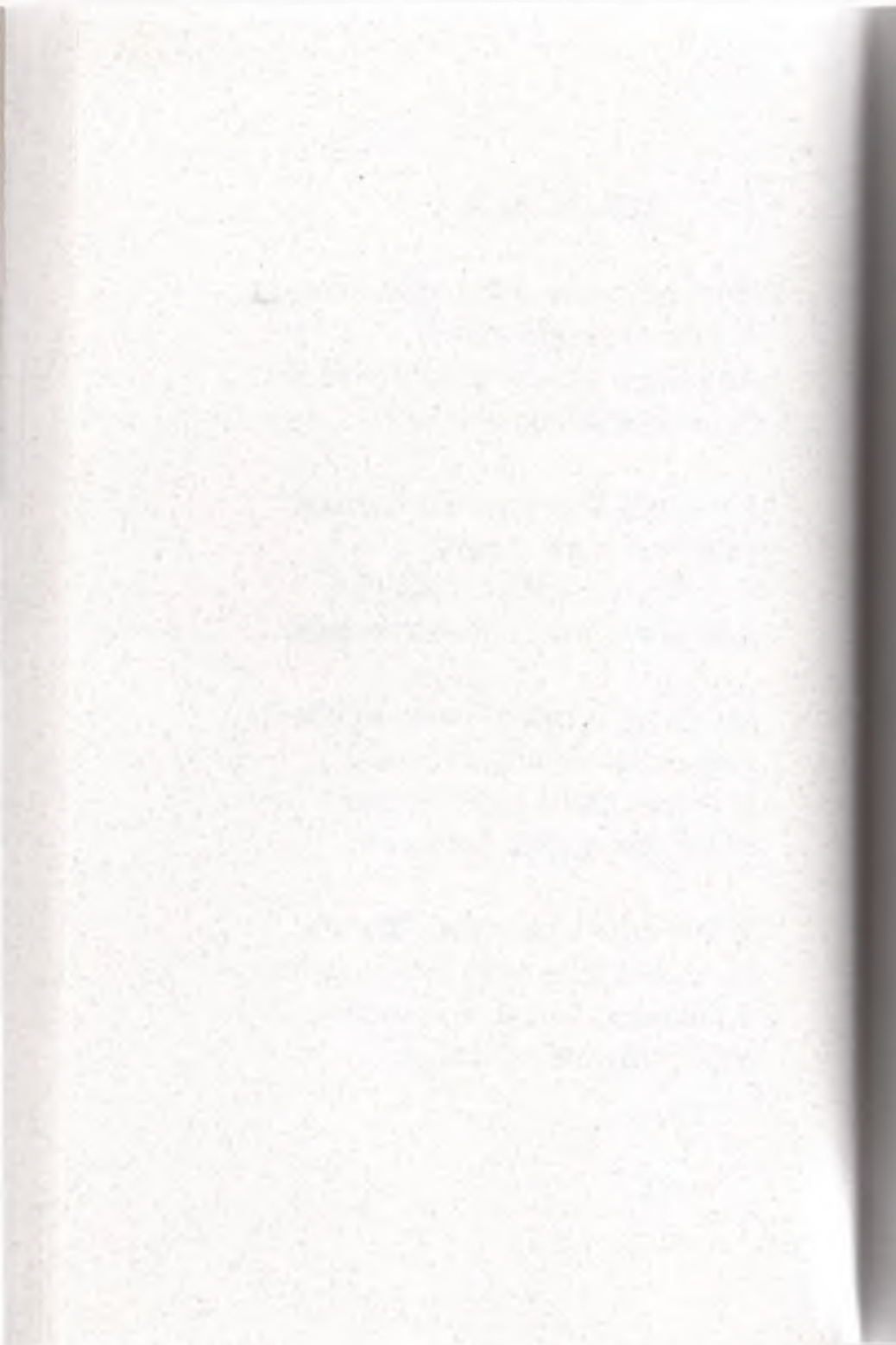
MY CLOUD.

Go screw your cloud, dear Monica,
A wise man said to me,
And I don't know should it be so
Or what will come to be.

My cloud slips over the horizon,
And rises high above,
It covers me with it's delight,
And draws me to another world.

My cloud is full of many lights,
And many sounds and hues,
It always shifts and changes,
; With light and darker news.

While others have their clouds,
No doubt none is so fine as mine,
As teacher, friend, and enemy,
In it's rise and in decline.



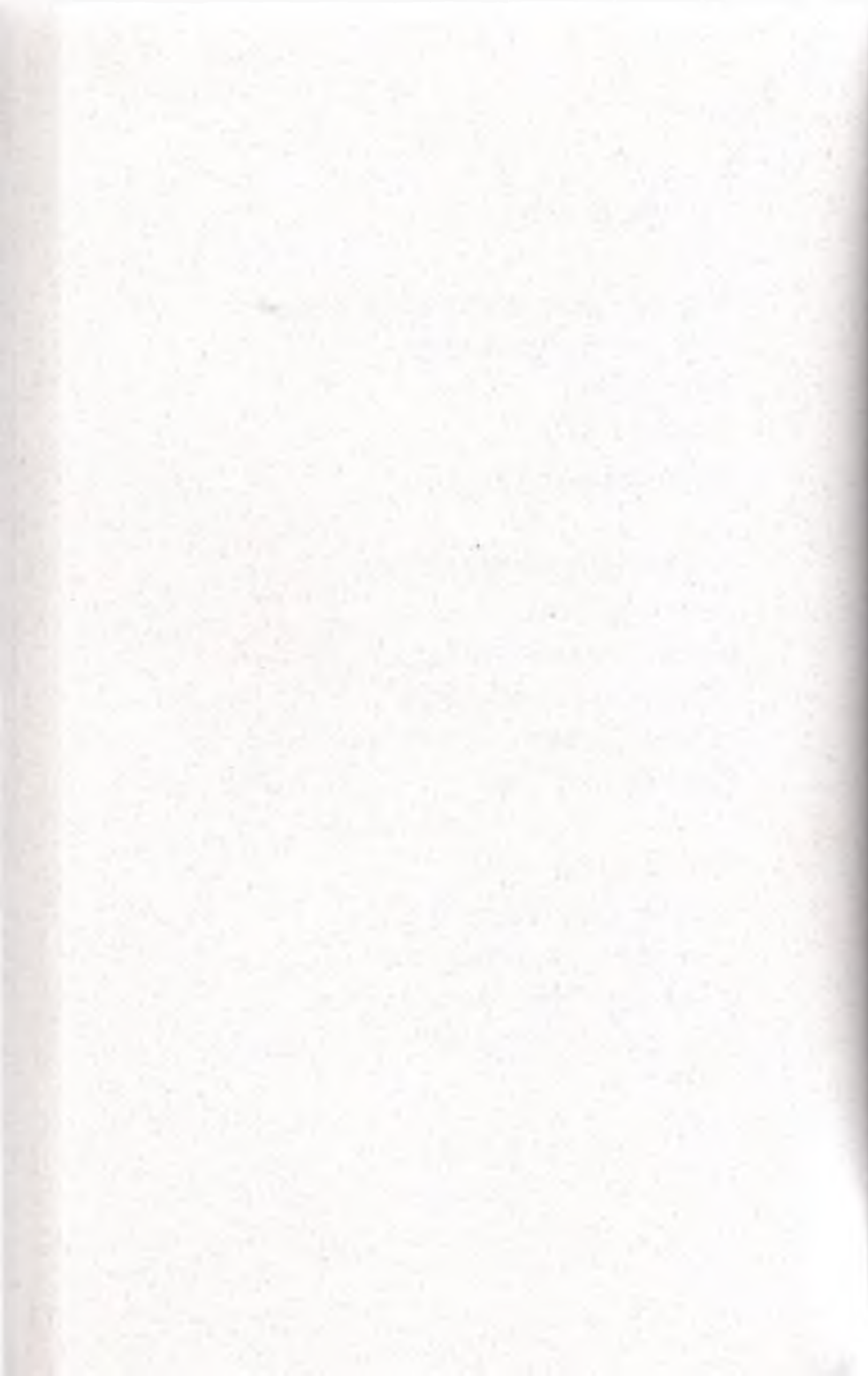
SUICIDE.

You can absorb someone else,
You can fill your time
With crisis,
So that life is
What happens to you.

A good way to quit living
Is to take on
More responsibility
Than you are asked to.
Go into debt.
Gamble and lose.

You can take pills,
Refuse to solve problems.
You can stay someplace
After your time there is over.
You can refuse to open your heart.

CONT.



SUICIDE CONT.

You can sacrifice every minute
To another,
Or a pet,
Or a career.
You can kill yourself
With guilt,
Fear or hate.

Some people use guns,
Some walk in front of
Cars or trains.
Some create wars.

There are all kinds
Of ways to die.



BARGAINS.

Bargains are not necessarily
One day sales.
Bargains can be
Life long structures.

We bargain for love,
We bargain for power,
We bargain for acceptance,
We bargain for care.

Relationships can be bargains,
For what we need or want,
An exchange for some love,
A compromise of the heart.

Bargains can be invisible
Bonds that link us together.
Bargains are the hurting
Distresses that need healing.



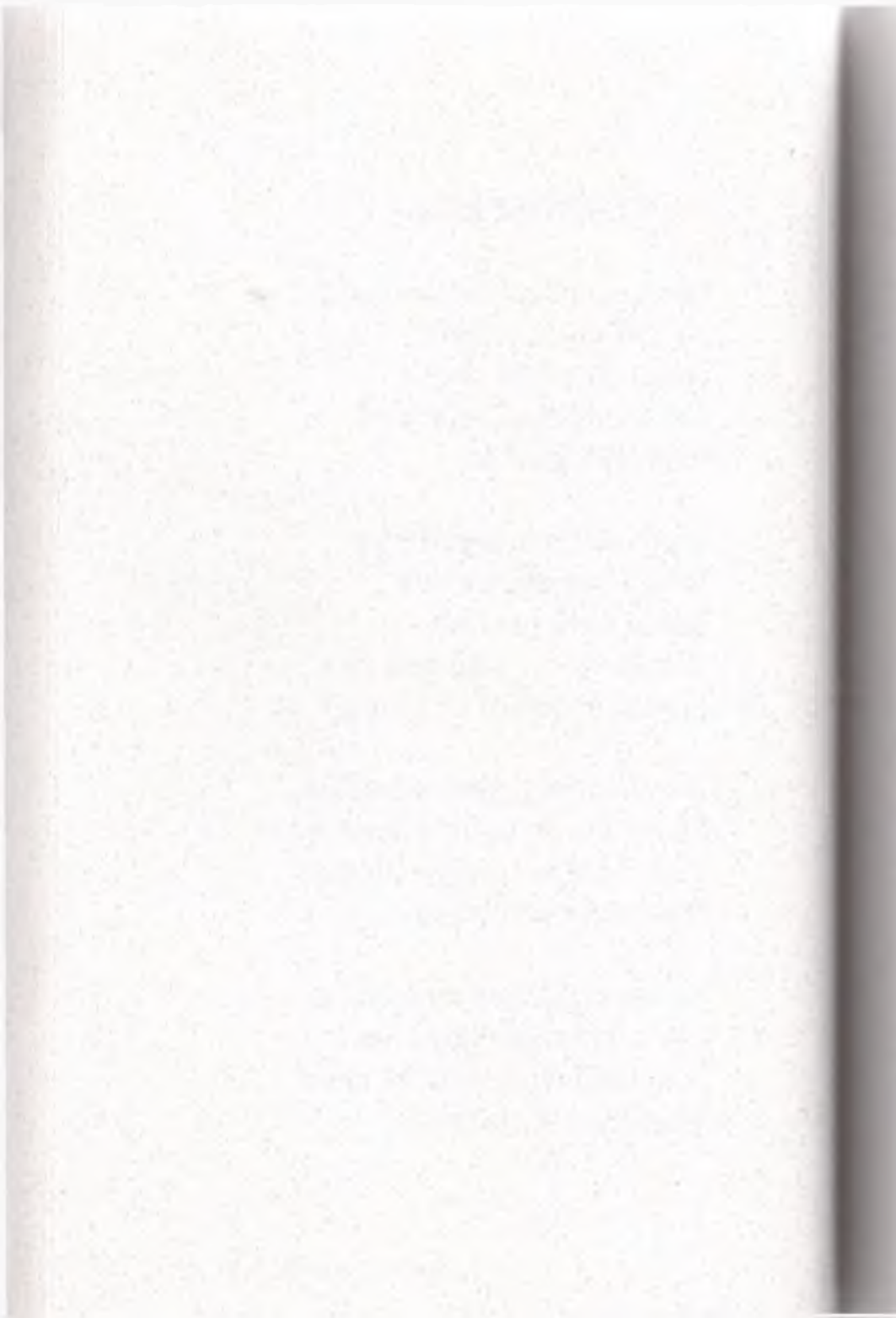
RETROSPECT.

Have you ever looked back,
Not in anger or pain,
But in pity and love,
To a child that once was,
And still remains.

Have you wondered how
With love and nurture
She'd have grown?
Would she be changed now,
Would her spirit be strong?

But the things that we suffer,
Shape our lives in strange ways,
They lead us down pathways
Not easily perceived.

So we look back and mourn,
For what might have been,
And hold with love the child
That lives on within.

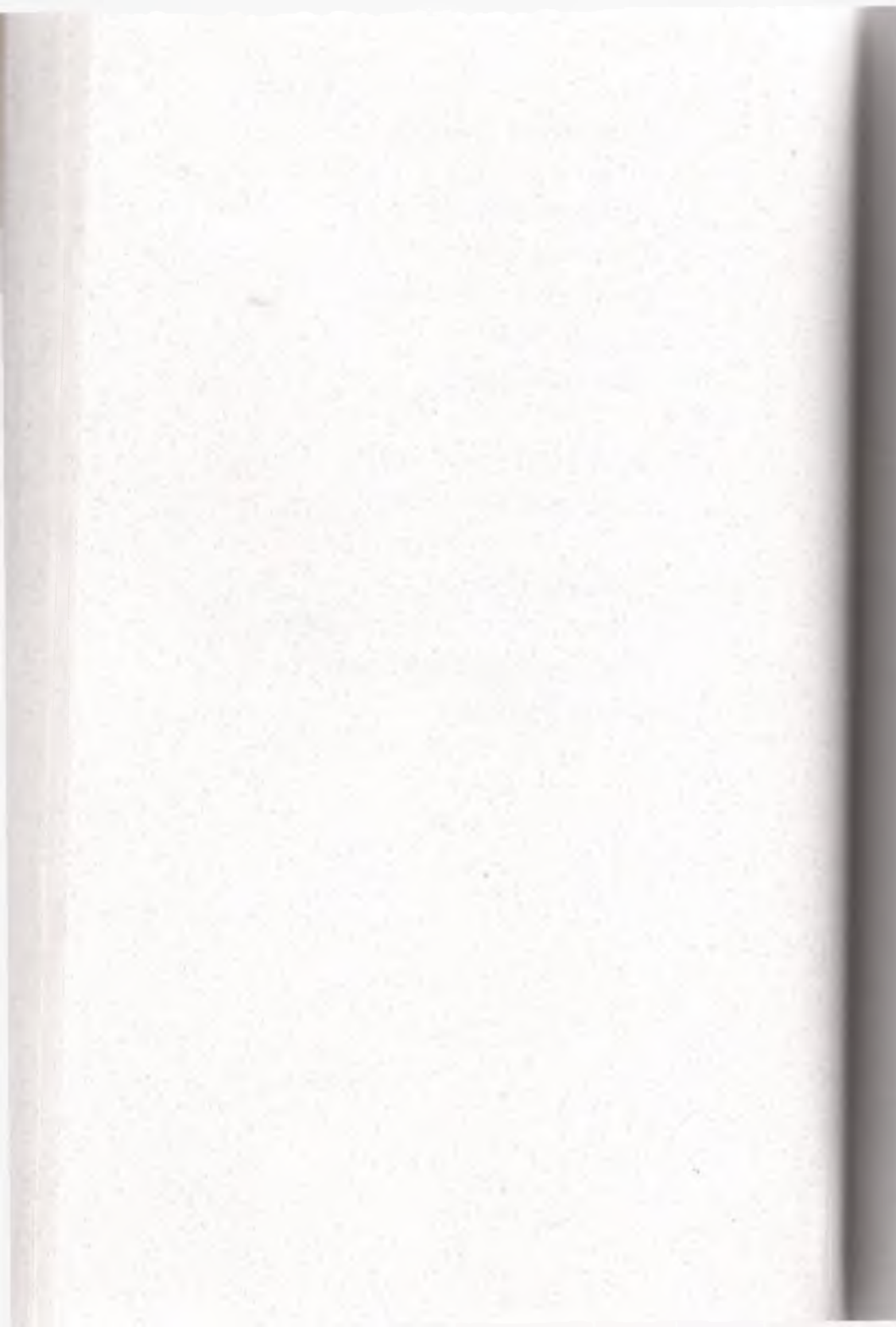


A NEW DAY.

A step that goes
Through a door,
Or across a threshold
Is powerful
And terrifying.

And I am just a child
Crying in the street.

Outside doors
I have to make it through,
This morning and every
Other morning.



WISHES.

I wish I were the owner
Of a lightning bolt or two.
I'd hide them in my pocket
For a month, a year or two.

I'd go on down the alphabet,
A, B, two C's, an F,
A T, a V and so forth,
The so called friends I've met.

I'd wait my chance so patiently,
And count on day by day.
Until the day I'd meet them,
And then I'd yell hurray.

I'd zap them once or maybe twice,
Or maybe two times three,
I'd sizzle and I'd fry them
For all they've done to me.

For taking me for granted,
For long ignoring me,
For only asking me for favors
And then I'd yell Hee-Hee.

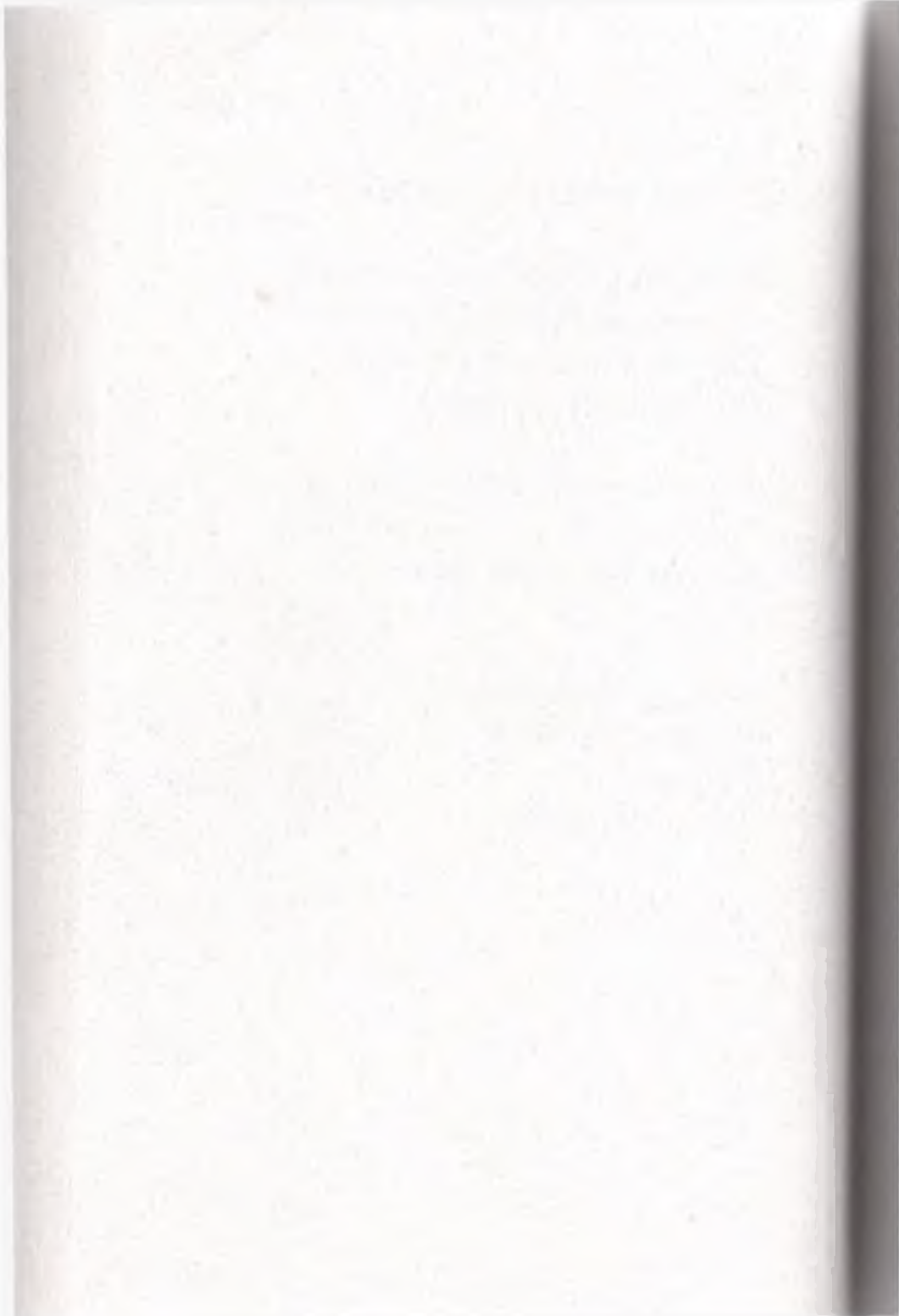


THE WAITING GAME.

How many times have you heard
I'll wait until I lose ten pounds,
I'll wait until I start vacation,
I'll wait until next year?

And you smile softly to yourself,
For you know
The day will never come.

Courage waits with
Outstretched arms
For you
To call it's name.

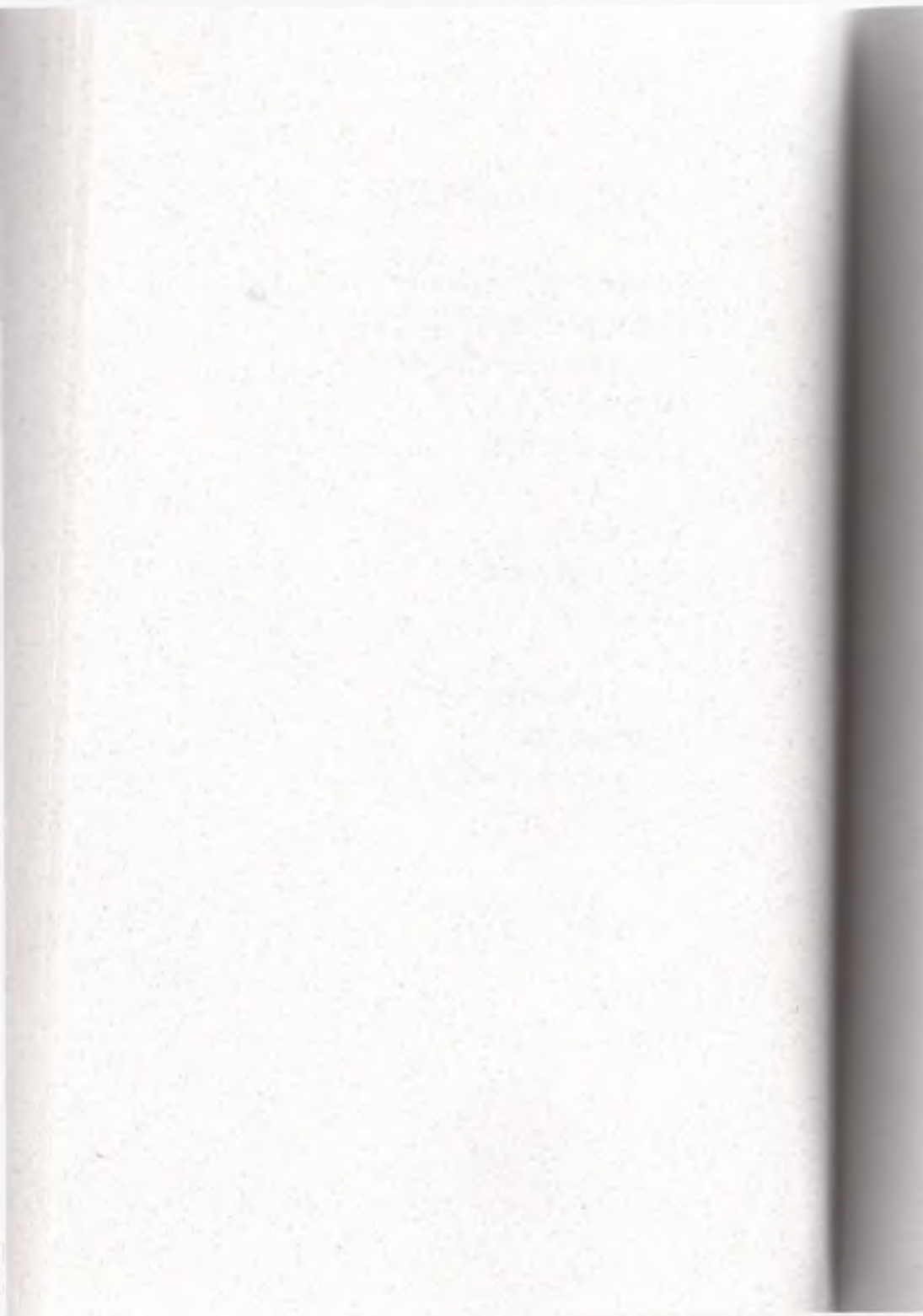


THE STARFISH.

She sets small goals
To propel herself
Through the tide pools
Of life.
Like a starfish.

She asks
For forgiveness
Or sleep.

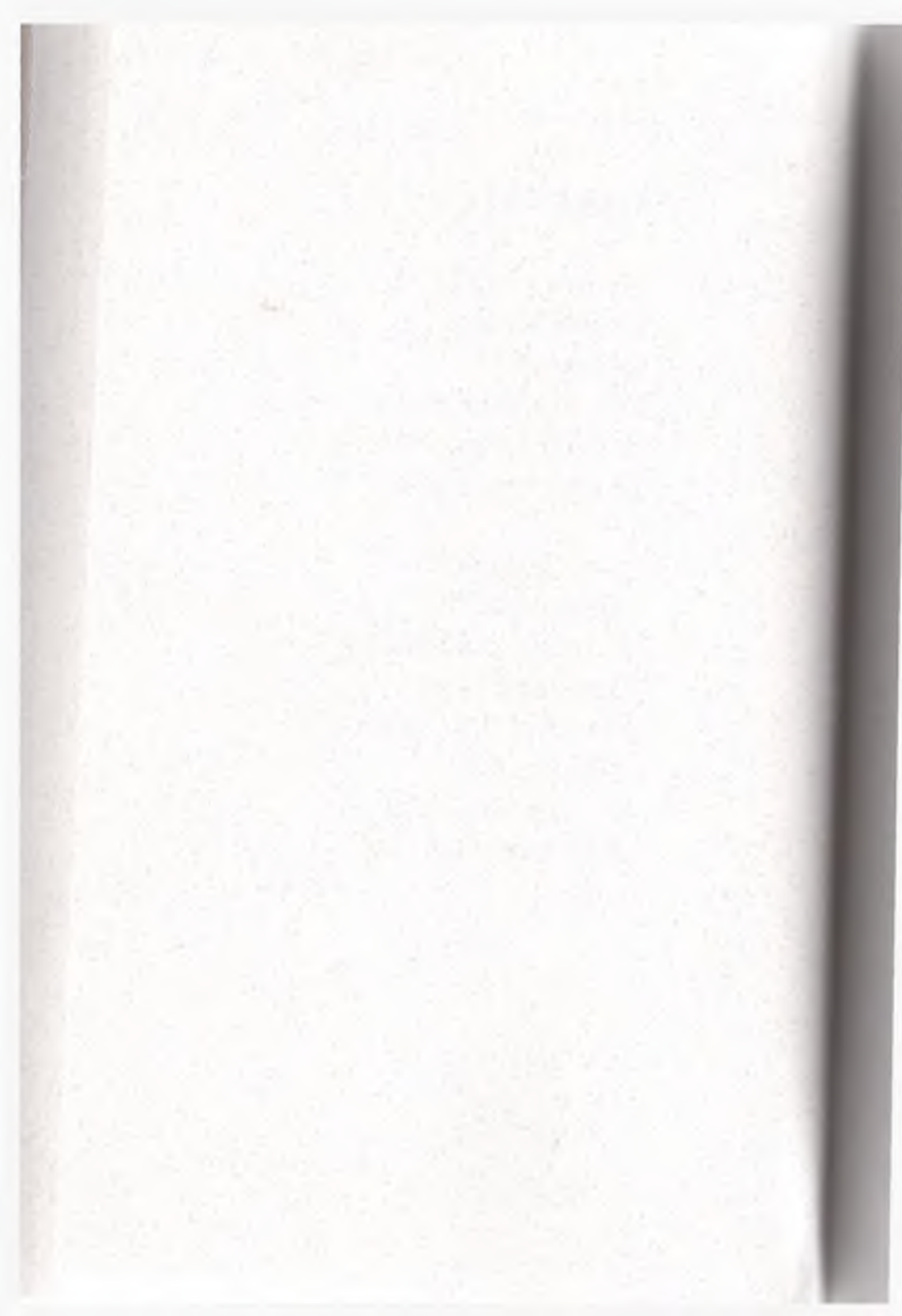
To fall away,
To drop into
A healing place,
To be at rest.



HEART SONG.

My heart begins
To sing a song
Of hope.
Of peace and pride
In what I do
In who I've come to be.

In walking down
The road of life
To many dead-ends
Turns and twists,
My heart now sings
A little song
Of how I've been
And where I'll be.



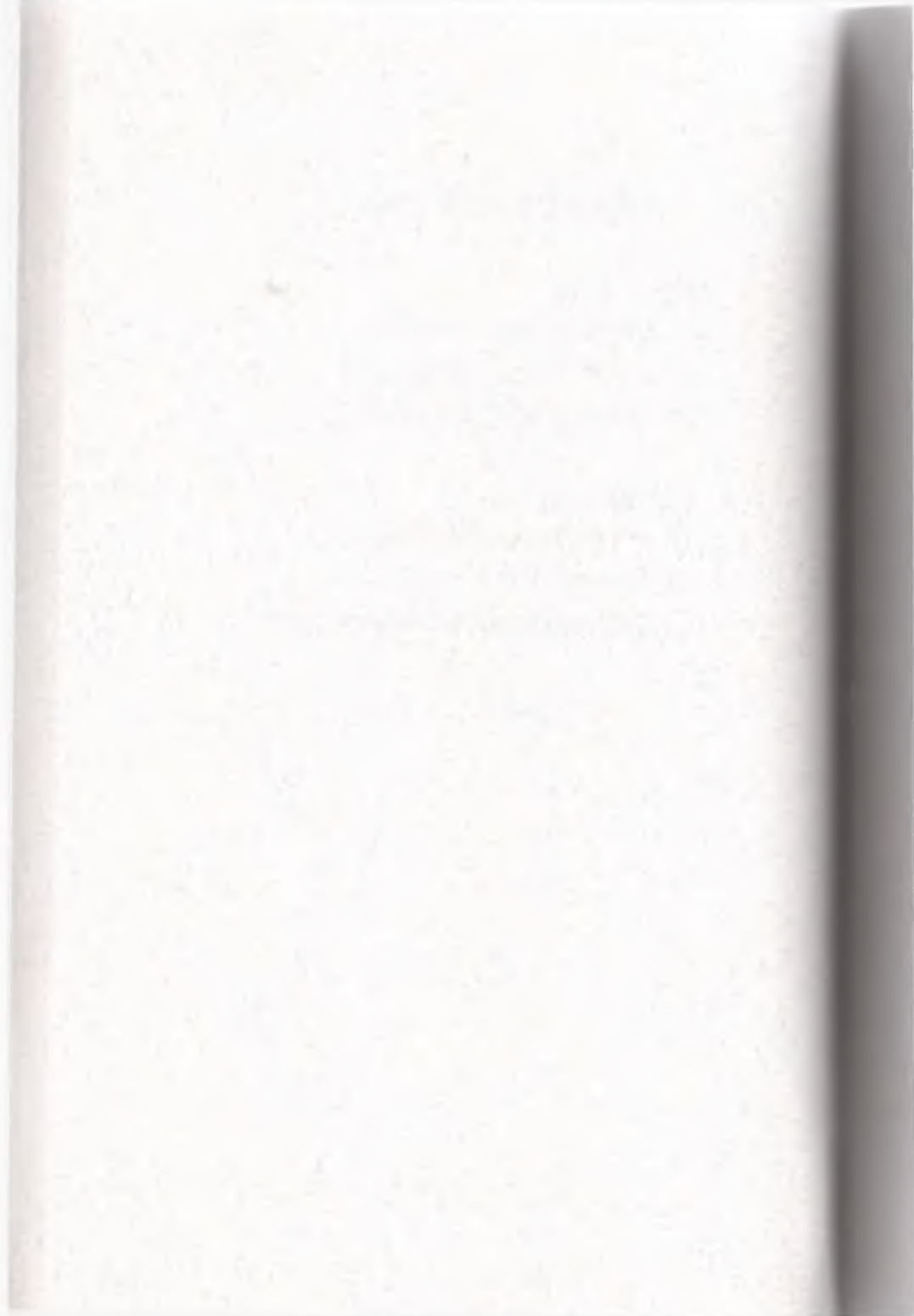
OBSERVATIONS.

OCEAN;

Ever restless, corroding
And rebuilding beaches.
Nurturing life and taking it.

PEOPLE;

Ever restless, abrading and
Renewing each other.
Creating life and destroying it.



MAGNIFICENCE.

Have you ever seen
Rows on rows of spider webs
In the early morning
Glistening with dew?

Each as individual as you or I,
Woven in splendor and intricacy.
On a ramp made for
Wheelchairs and the poor.
Spider webs at morning
With dew laden magnificence.

As the lowly spider weaves,
So do you and I
The story of a soul.

Have you ever caught a glimpse
Of a soul's magnificence
In an everyday event?
Have you paused
And been bedazzled?



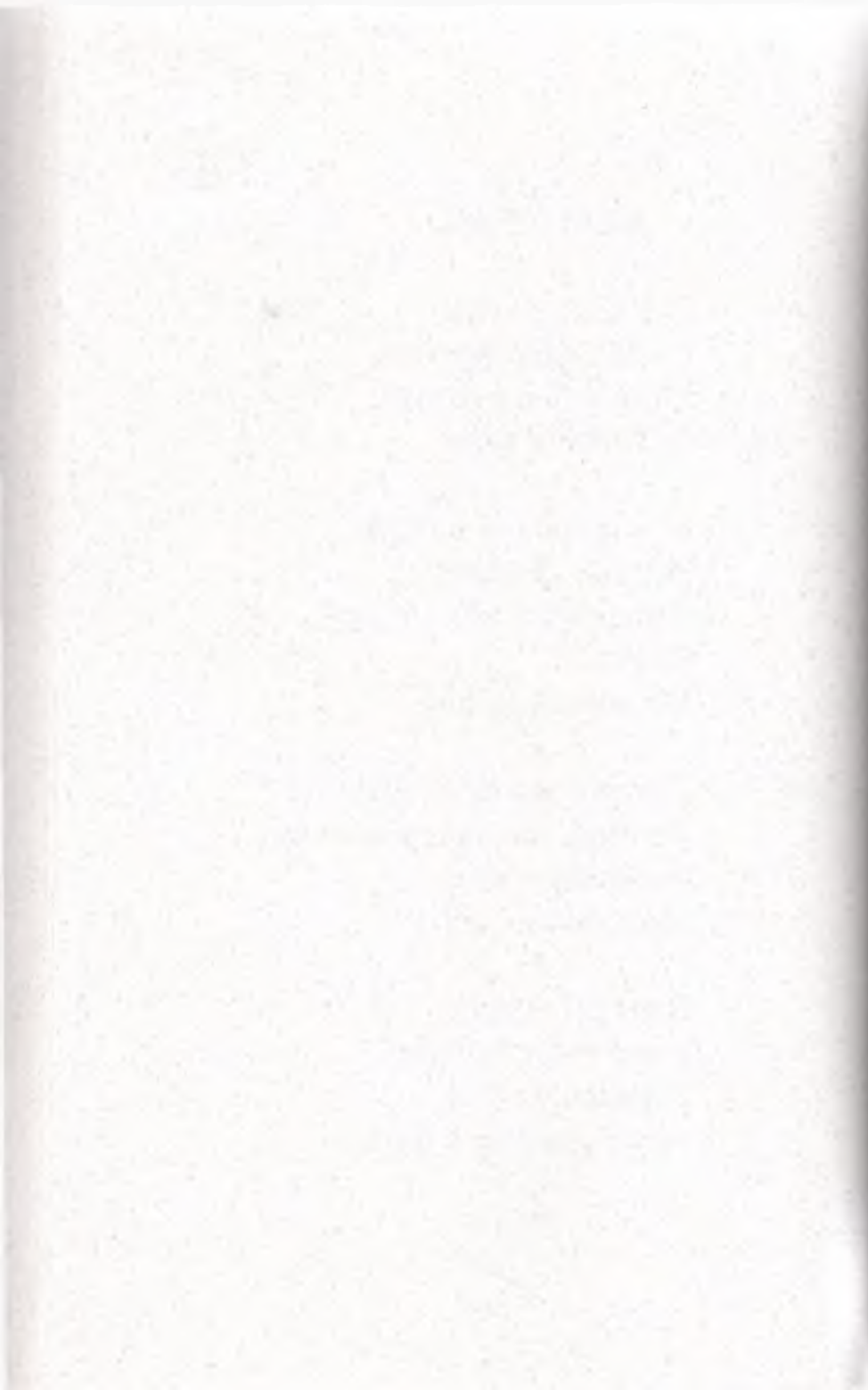
BETRAYAL.

It is a long way,
On the winding road,
From initial betrayal,
To trusting again.

Words spoken secretly,
Attitude changes,
Patterning a life,
Based on
Misunderstanding.

Circumstances altered
Through misrepresentation,
Pain unbearable,
Tears uncounted.

Betrayal evokes,
A cry from the heart,
Especially when
Perpetrated by a friend.



OUR HEROES.

The heroes of our time,
Are lost
By our own hand.

Men who spoke
The sweet aspirations
In our hearts,
Urged us on to change.

JFK, RFK, MLK,
Spokesmen
Of our heart's desire,
We loved them
One and all.

Then came the old cry
"Crucify him"
And we did.

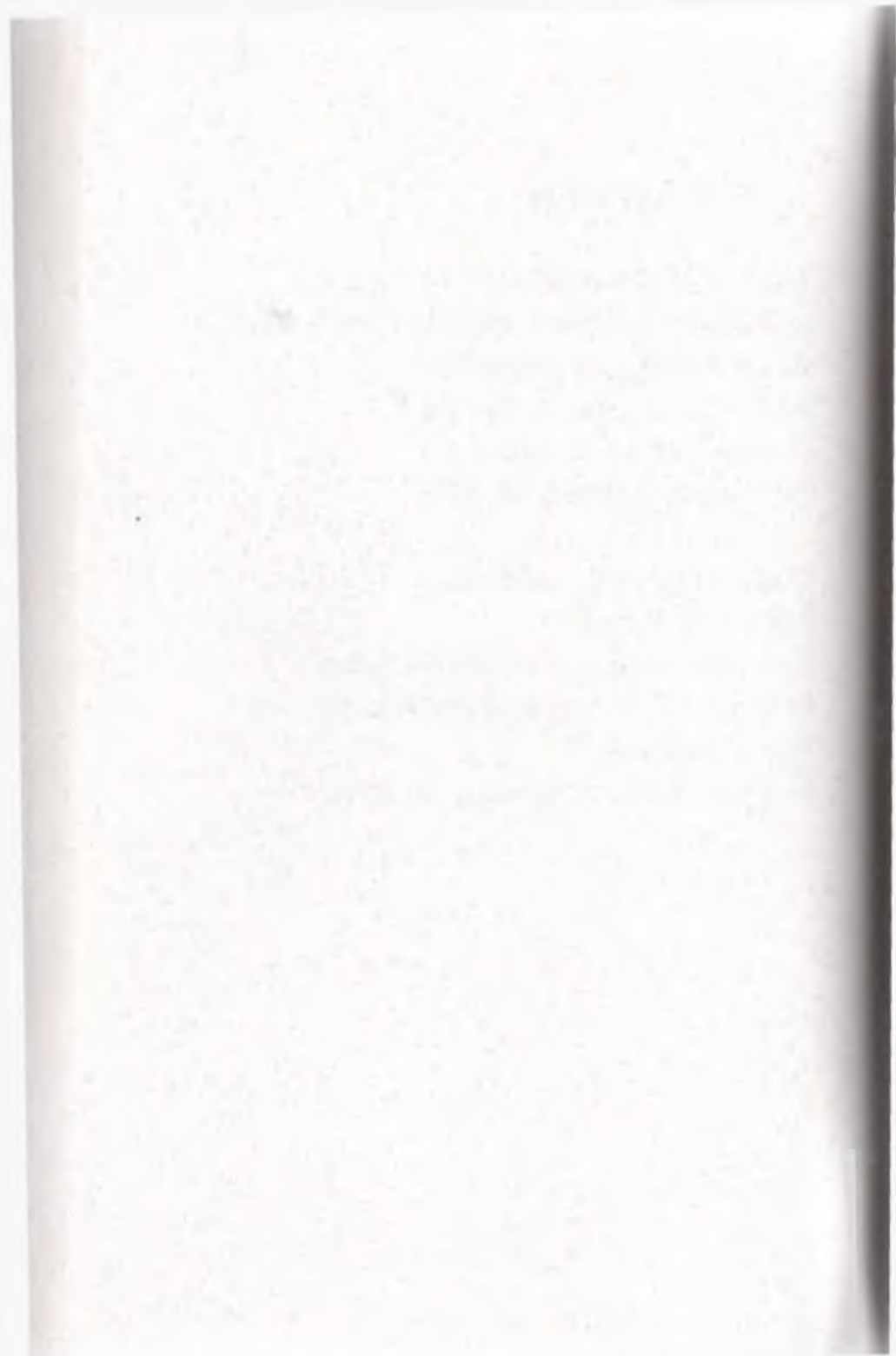


THE VOWED.

They hold the orphan by the hand,
Have time for madmen's/women's tales,
Are not afraid to empathize
With elderly, weak, and frail,
Or stories told by idiots,
Or nurture babes with HIV.

They sneeze and wheeze
Like all the rest,
Have backaches, flu and indigest,
But still have time to light a candle
From each other.
Keeping alive a spark of divinity.

:



MYTHS OF OUR TIME.

Conform and obey,
Do not dare to be different.

A war to end all wars,
Except the hundred seventy seven since.

Booted feet marching in cadence,
Bringing torture and death to millions.

Preachers pounding their pulpits,
Binding souls to their misguided doctrines.

And God in His heaven looks down,
And says "I am love, peace be with you".

:

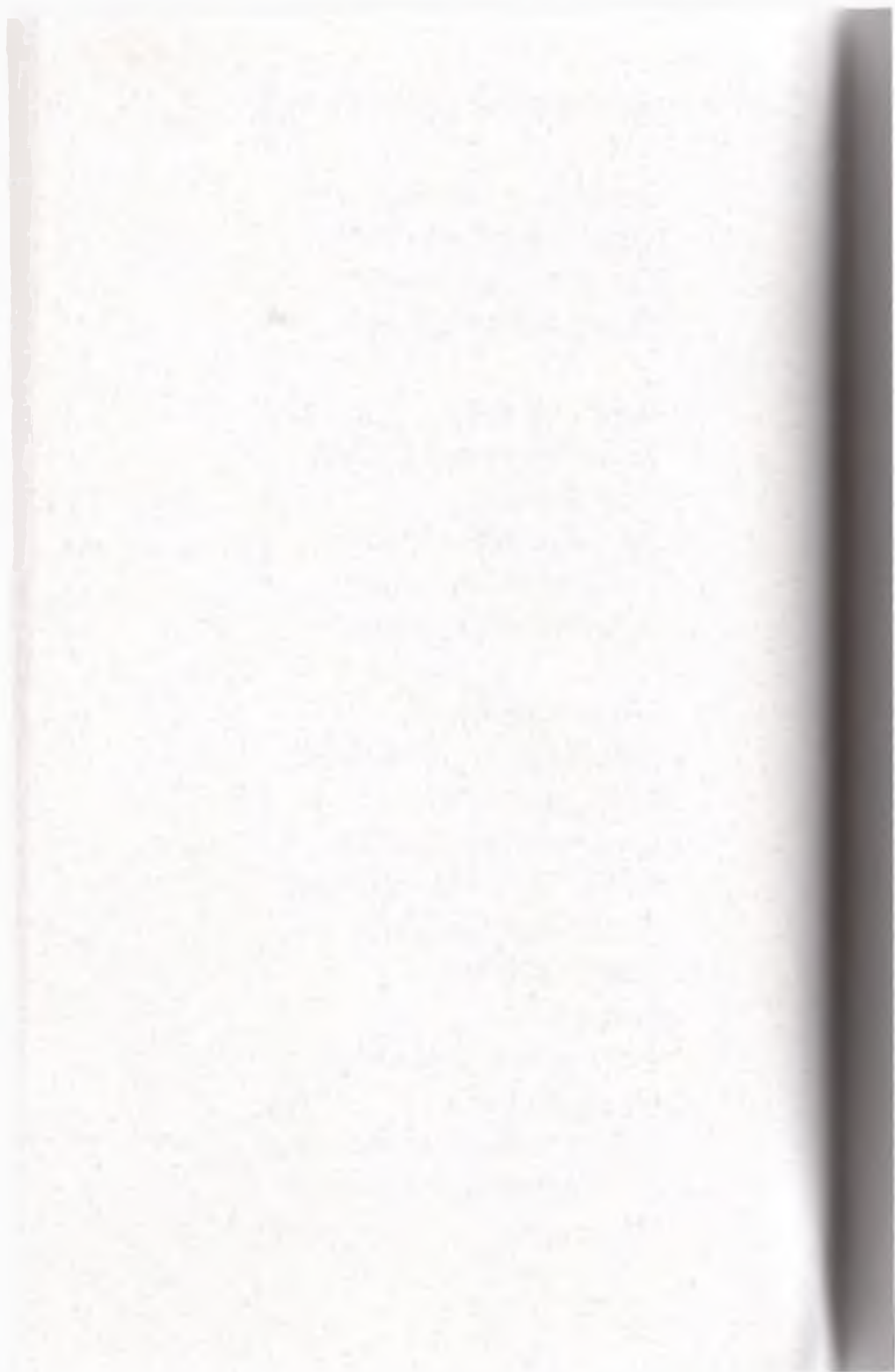


THE COMING OF WINTER.

Freshening breezes.
Goosebumps on flesh,
The skitter of leaves
Newly blown off trees.

Hues changing
To burnt orange, brown.
Tree skeletons
Swaying in the wind.
The body hibernating
In layers of clothing.

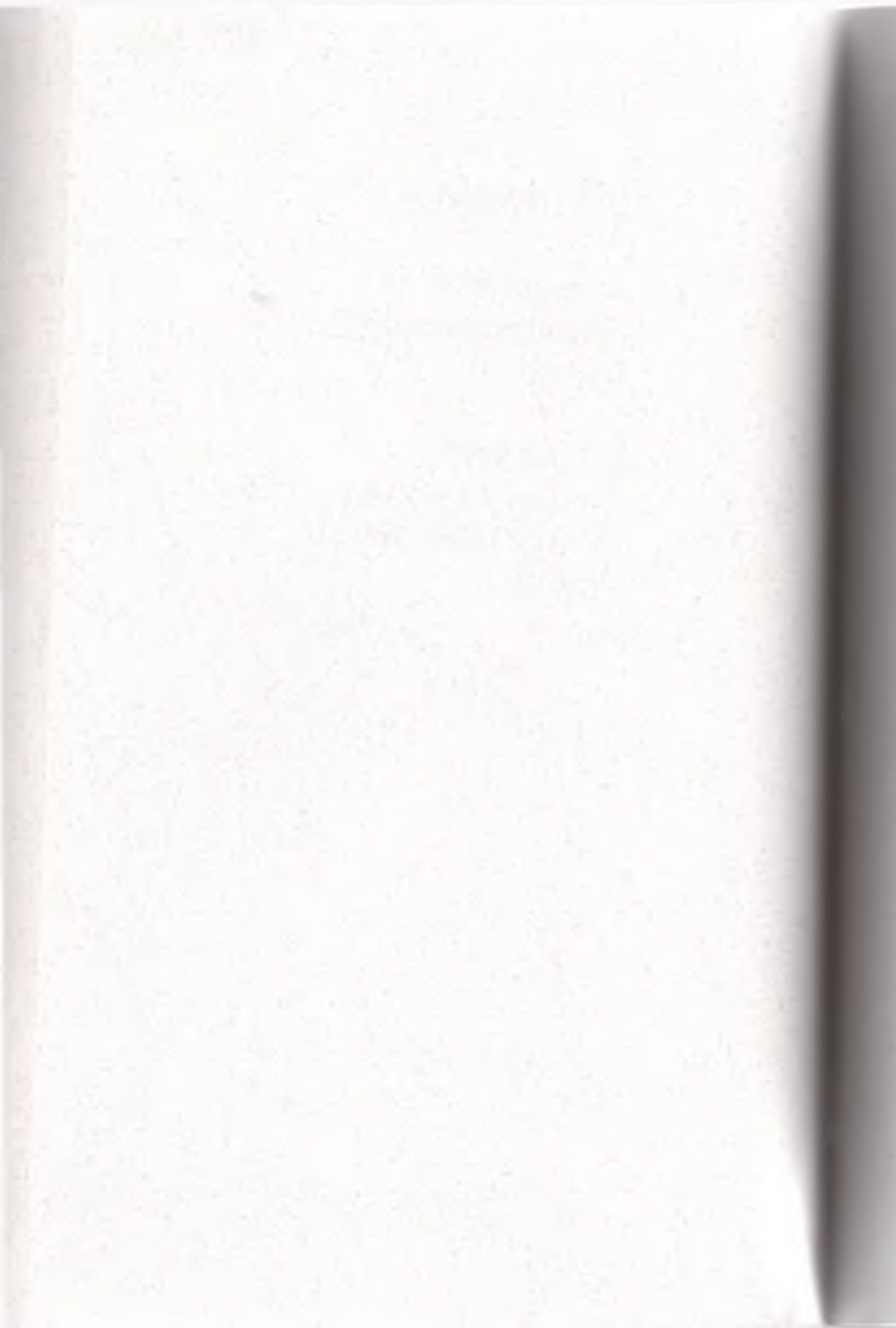
Loneliness for the
Extravagance of summer
Filling the soul.
Gloom in anticipation
Of the long cold months,
Settle over the spirit.
Barely stirring
Is the wish
For the first green bud
Of springtime,
Which will grace the earth
With extravagant summer
Once again.



TUESDAYS.

A safe place to be,
Unspoken thoughts
Shared.

Loving words
Dropped like honey
On the broken places.
Healing.



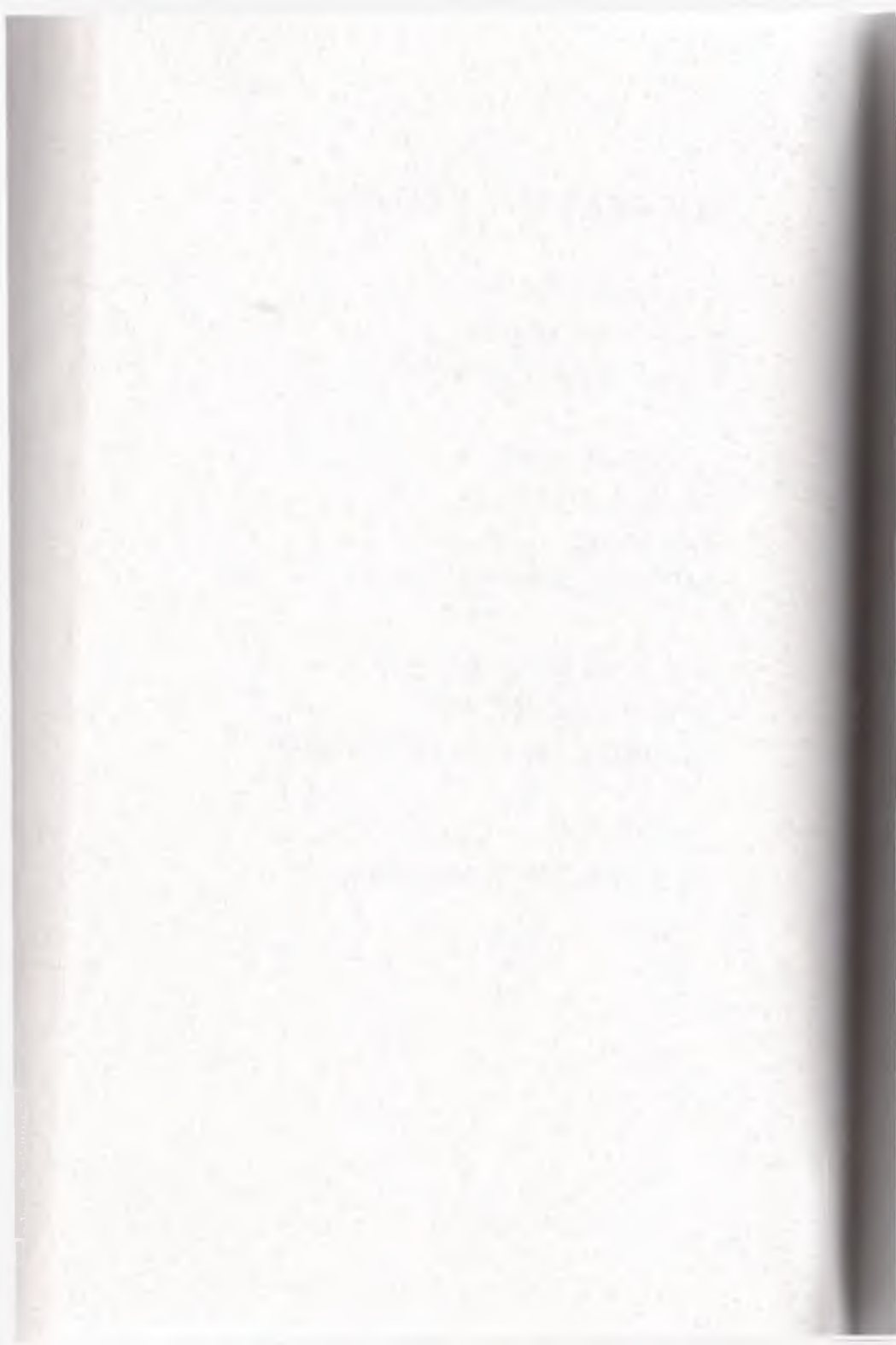
MOMENT IN AUTUMN.

It is November.
Rain starts to fall.
I walk slowly up a hill.

A gust of wind.....
Myriads of leaves
Fall on me
Mingling with the rain.

My heart leaps up,
Where before I was
Thinking oppressive thoughts.

I am awash in the
Glorious colors of autumn.



SOUL SONG.

For years and years
I never heard
The song my soul can sing.
I hear it now at still time,
And at early morn.

For years and years,
I have been told
No song is yours.
It must be very wrong
To try to kill a song.

My song is sweet and sad,
And joy and hope and pain.
It tells of things long passed,
That will not be again.
Elusive, but of essence.

CONT.



SOUL SONG CONT.

I wish that I
Could play the flute,
Compose the music,
Bring it forth,
Let it fly free
O'er wind and cloud and sea.

Notes from a single place,
New drops of music,
Floating on the still soft air,
Of early morn and still time.

30A.



ENIGMA.

I know someone,
Who was born
Yesterday,
Every day
Of the week,
All year long.

WHAT?

Little Miss Muffet,
Sat on a tuffet,
Eating her curds and whey.
Now what is a tuffet?
Does anyone know?
And whey sounds like
Horse food to me.



ABOUT DIETING.

Where does fat go
When you lose it?
 Does it float in water?
 Or fly in the air?
Does it hide in a pocket?
Or stay under a chair?
 Can it float overhead?
 Can it swim underneath?
Can it wait to fall on you
When you are asleep?
 It comes and it goes,
 With a great deal of effort.
But where does it go
When you haven't got it?



JULY.

I went to the pool,
It was full of surprises,
Gluteus maximus
In all shapes and sizes.

ALONE.

There was a time
When I knew not
The friends that I now know.
And at that time
So far away,
I did not miss them so.



MONSTERS.

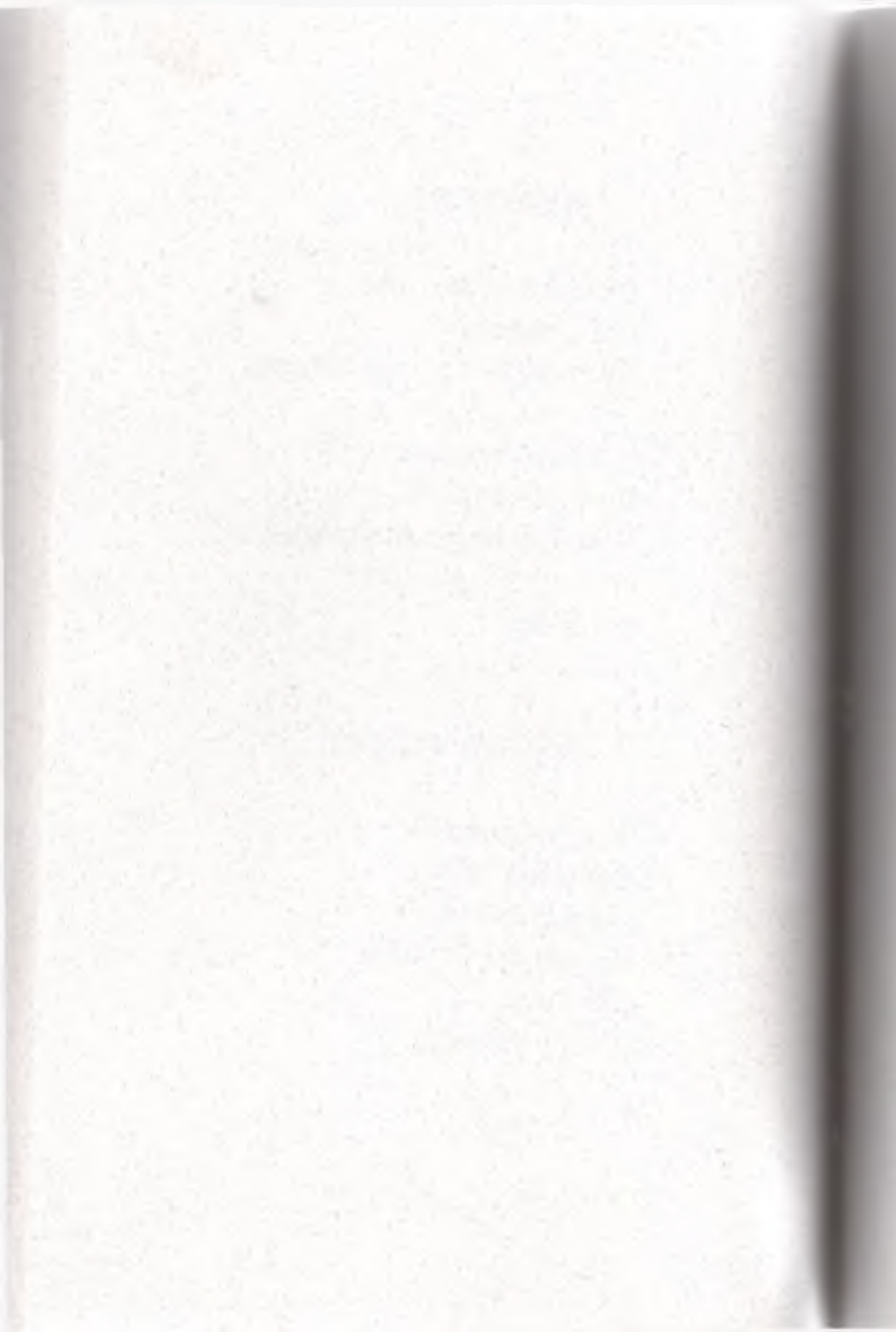
Sometimes at night
I'm troubled
By monsters in my dreams.

If a baby monster
Looked at me
Would it begin to scream?

I wonder.

DISCERNMENT.

Sagging breasts,
Rounded belly,
Double chins,
It's not the Buddha,
(Or me).
It's my friends



MAYBE.

Some day in the future,
When I lose all this weight,
I'll be svelte and look gorgeous,
And my talent will be great.

I'll play a sly sexy villainess,
On p.m.TV,
Even Miss Susan Lucci
Will be jealous of me.

I'll win the N.Y. marathon,
My bank account will soar,
I'll own a house on Park Avenue
; With my name on the door.

CONT.



MAYBE CONT.

I'll play upon a golden flute,
With flair and mystery,
Crowds will come to hear,
And People magazine
Will send a crew,
To do a twelve page interview.

My friends will come to visit me
And I will greet them one and all,
With my enormous modesty.

35A.



NEW YEAR.

I bought a little notebook,
Exactly three by three,
It fit into my palm so nice,
I'm happy as can be.

I wrote within it's pages,
All the things I'm going to do,
As soon as possible I said,
And checked it over too.

Each day I did a chore or two,
And marked it nicely off,
I was getting really proud of me,
Until my book got lost.

I'm back to where I started,
No book, no list, no chores,
I think that I will go to sleep,
And very loudly snore.

I'll search for it tomorrow,
And then begin again,
Because my middle name,
Is still procrastina--shun.



COURAGE OF THE SPIRIT.

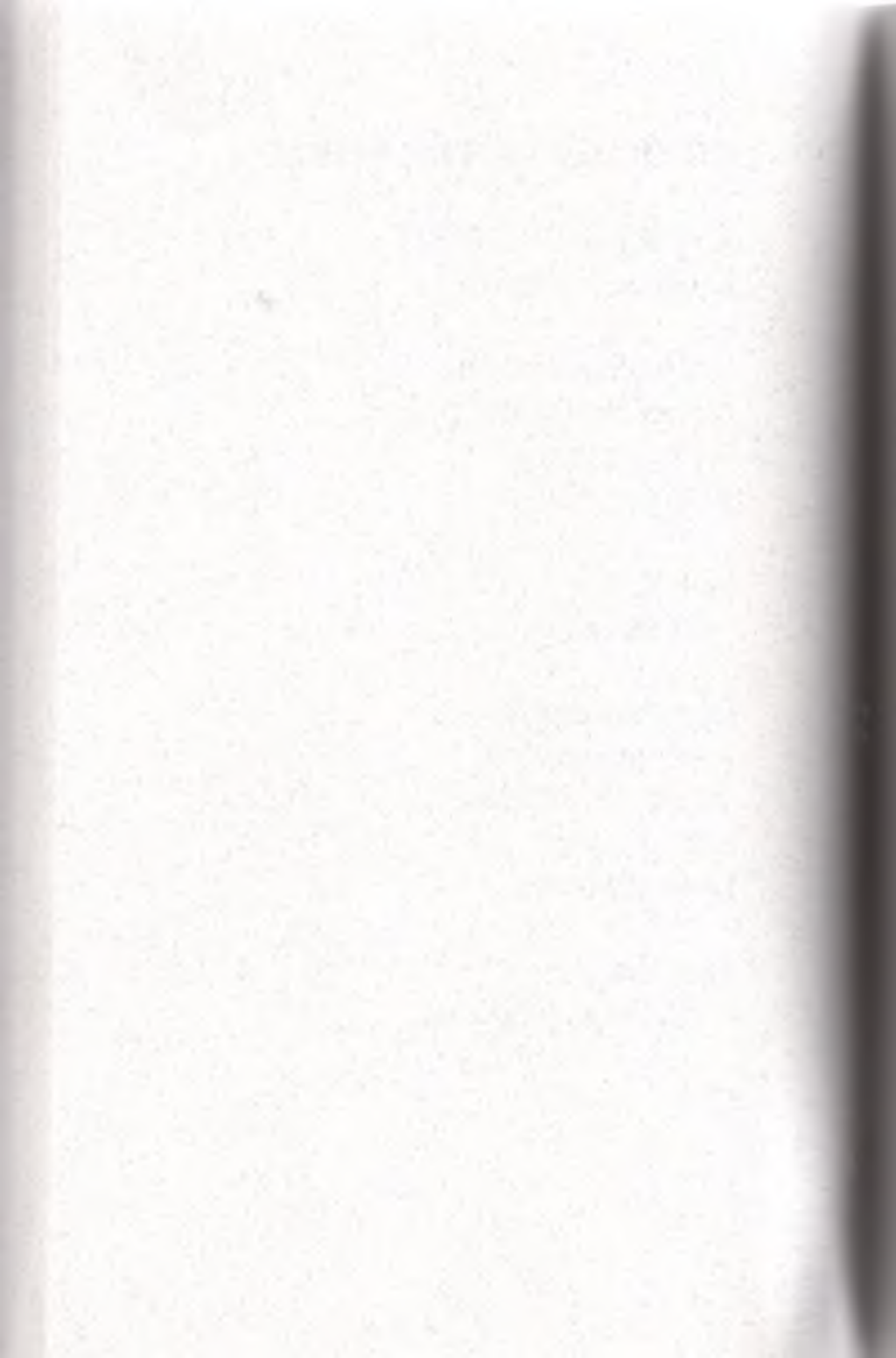
A breath of the SPIRIT
Touches my spirit.

It is called maturing.
Accepting myself
With my limits,
With my gifts.

Less fear
Of the other.

Less fear that
I will be rejected,
Totally devastated,
Assimilated,
Lose my being.

Less fear of
Showing who I am.

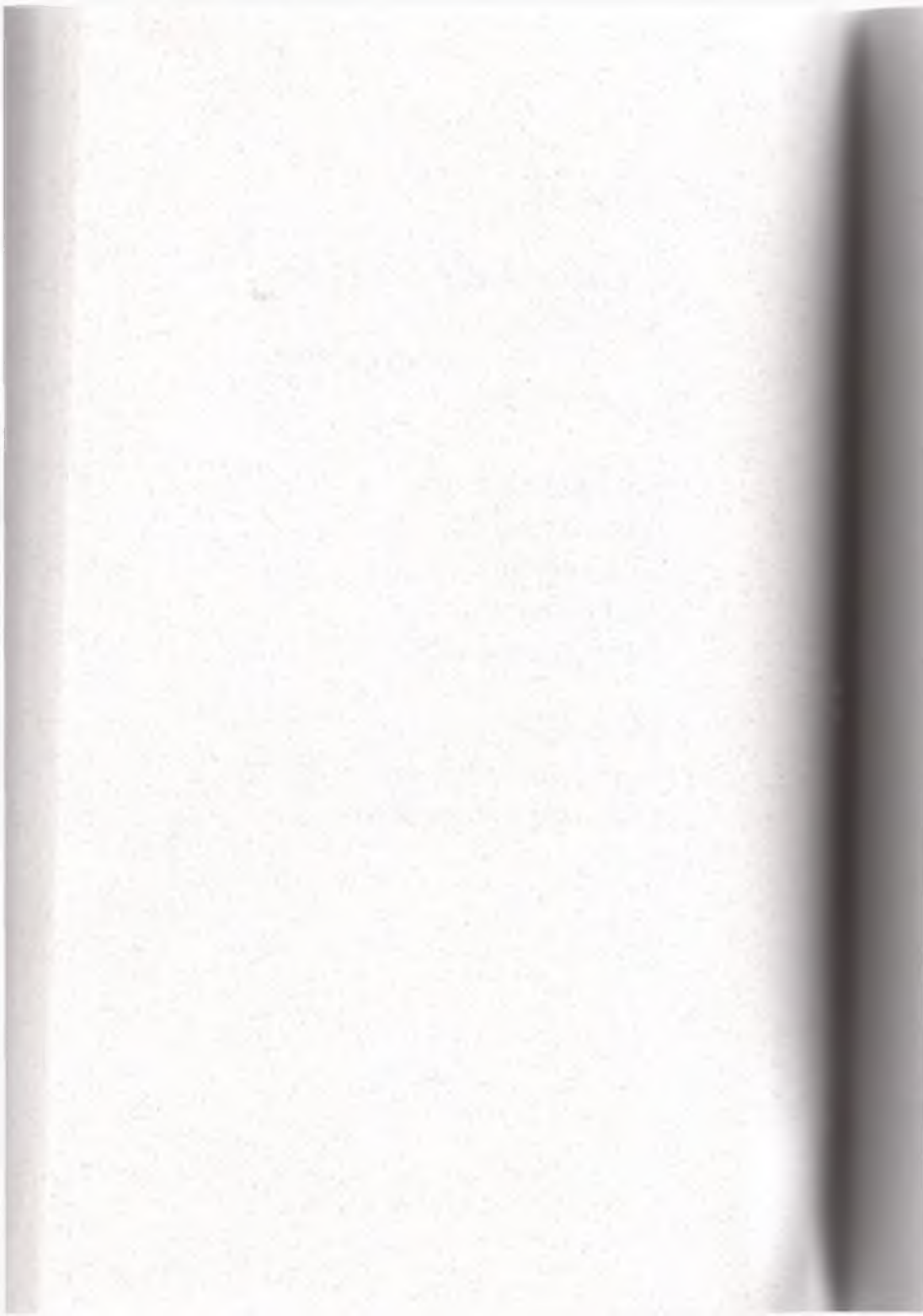


EXITS.

To close oneself to the other,
To reject help freely and
 Lovingly given.
To let fear rule.

Not to explain the
Present reality,
To leave emotionally
And physically.
To let silence rule.

These are the ways
Emotional walls are
Built against another.



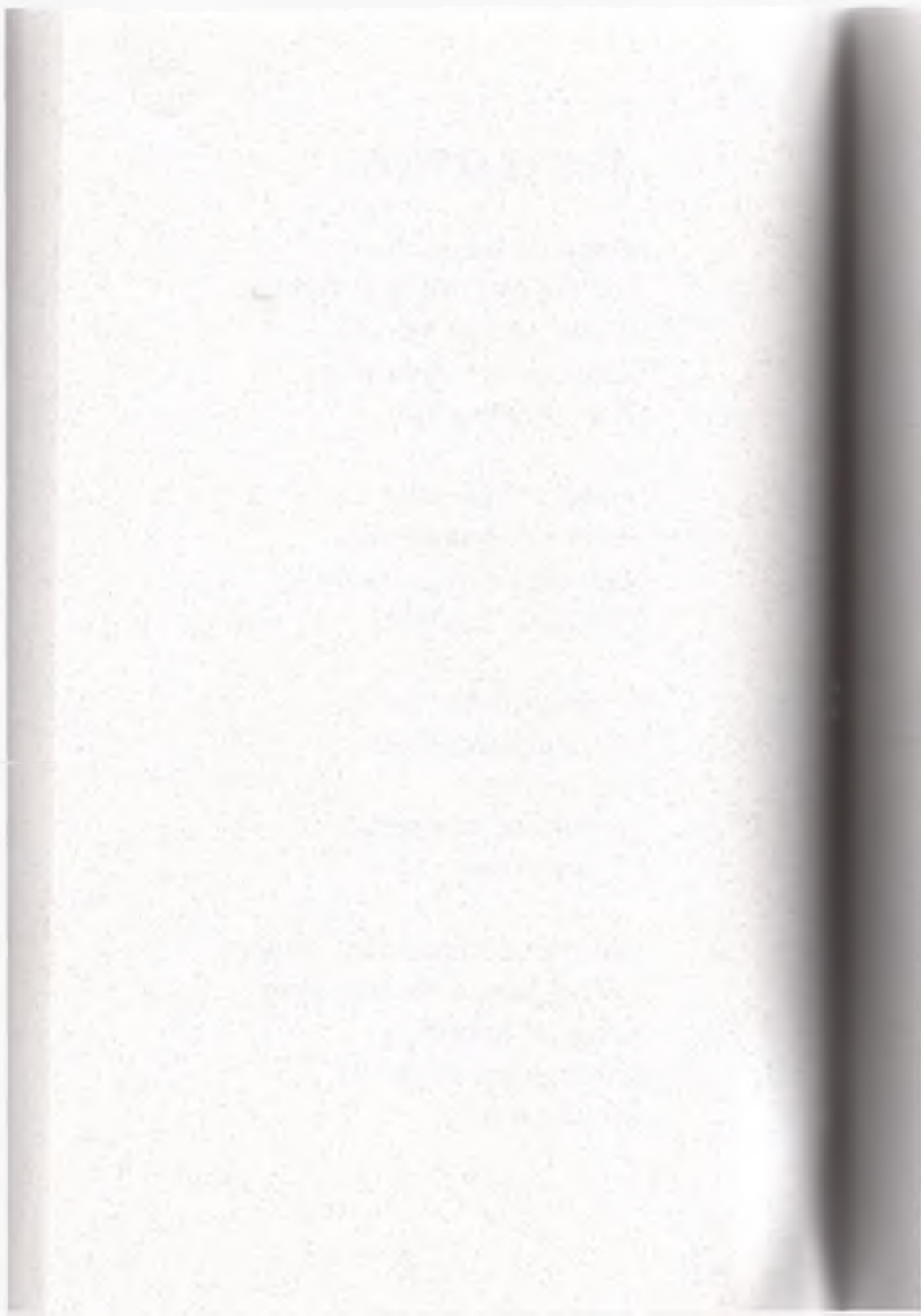
THE TEACHER.

Friend on the journey,
And the meeting that teaches
About interior travels.
Friend of the quiet way
Of generating life.

Friend with simple
Gestures of welcome,
Nurturing and provocative.
Clarifying thought.

Friend with the skills
Of translating love
Into service.
Springtime messenger
Of new times.

Creator of a heart that sings,
So that the world may sing
Songs of harmony,
Through the hearts of
All you teach.



TRANSITION.

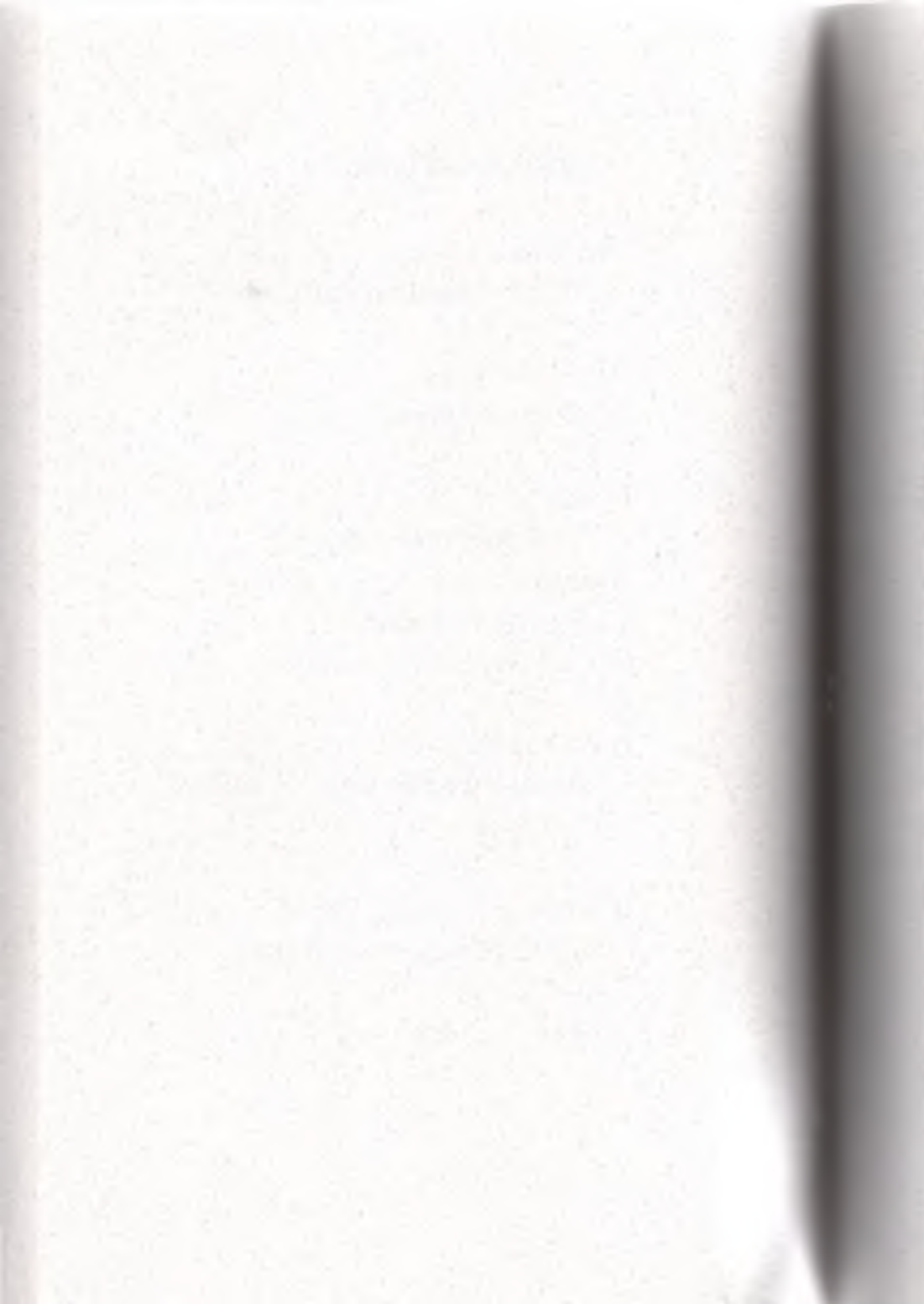
She was a force
To be reckoned with.

When did she
Begin to change?

It was as if she
Woke up one morning,
And mislaid a
Piece of herself.
Part of her soul eroded.

It was some time
Before we became
Aware of it.

It became a gaping hole
Skirted in conversation.

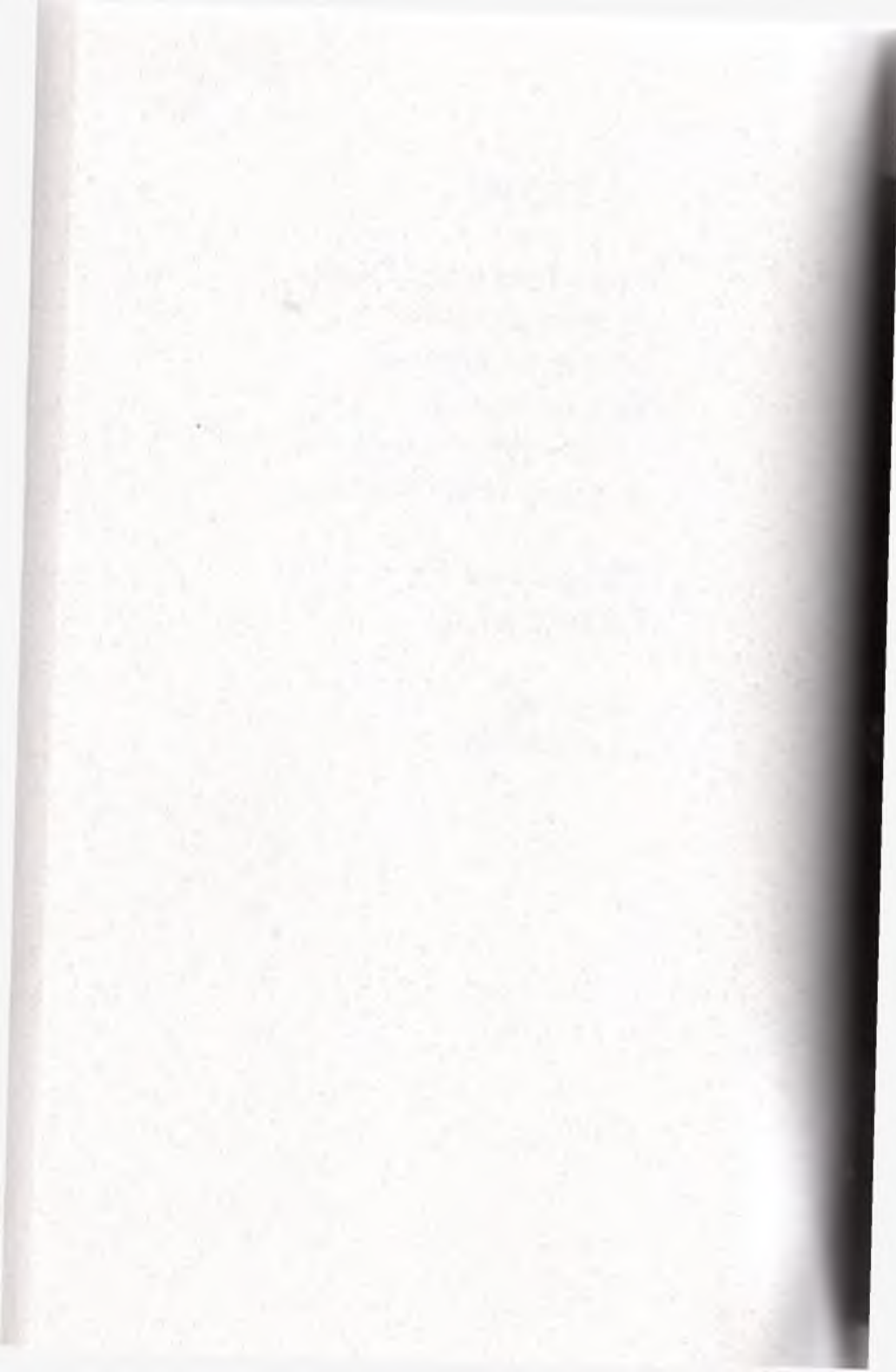


FEAR.

I fear your glazed look,
In grim corridors.
Sitting in pajamas.
Gaping mouths.
Liver spotted hands
Tugging at my sleeve.

Old persons not
Clearly asleep.

Someday
It will be me.



THE PATH OF LIFE





THE PATH OF LIFE.

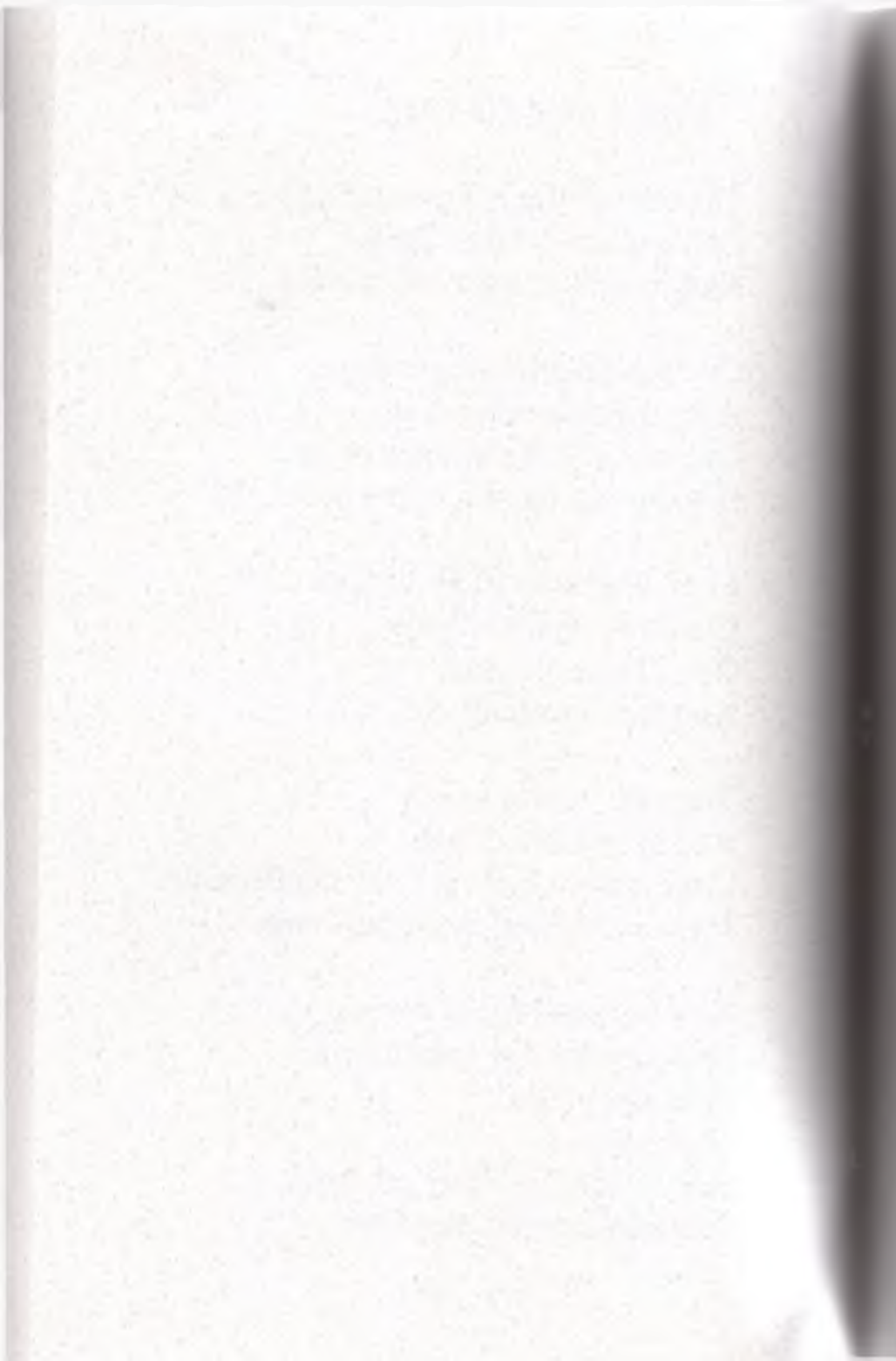
The web of life is light and dark,
One begins carefree, joyful,
And travels on the road naively.

One's great suffering comes,
A devastating something,
One slows and stumbles along,
In great torment for some time.

Light begins to filter through
Days and nights of pain.
One lifts one's gaze,
And looks around.

The path begins again,
And shows directions
Unperceived before, more challenging,
More satisfying, more fulfilling.

New opportunities present.
One squares one's shoulders,
Lifts one's head,
Walks proud.
And travels joyously on again,
In a reinterpretation of life.



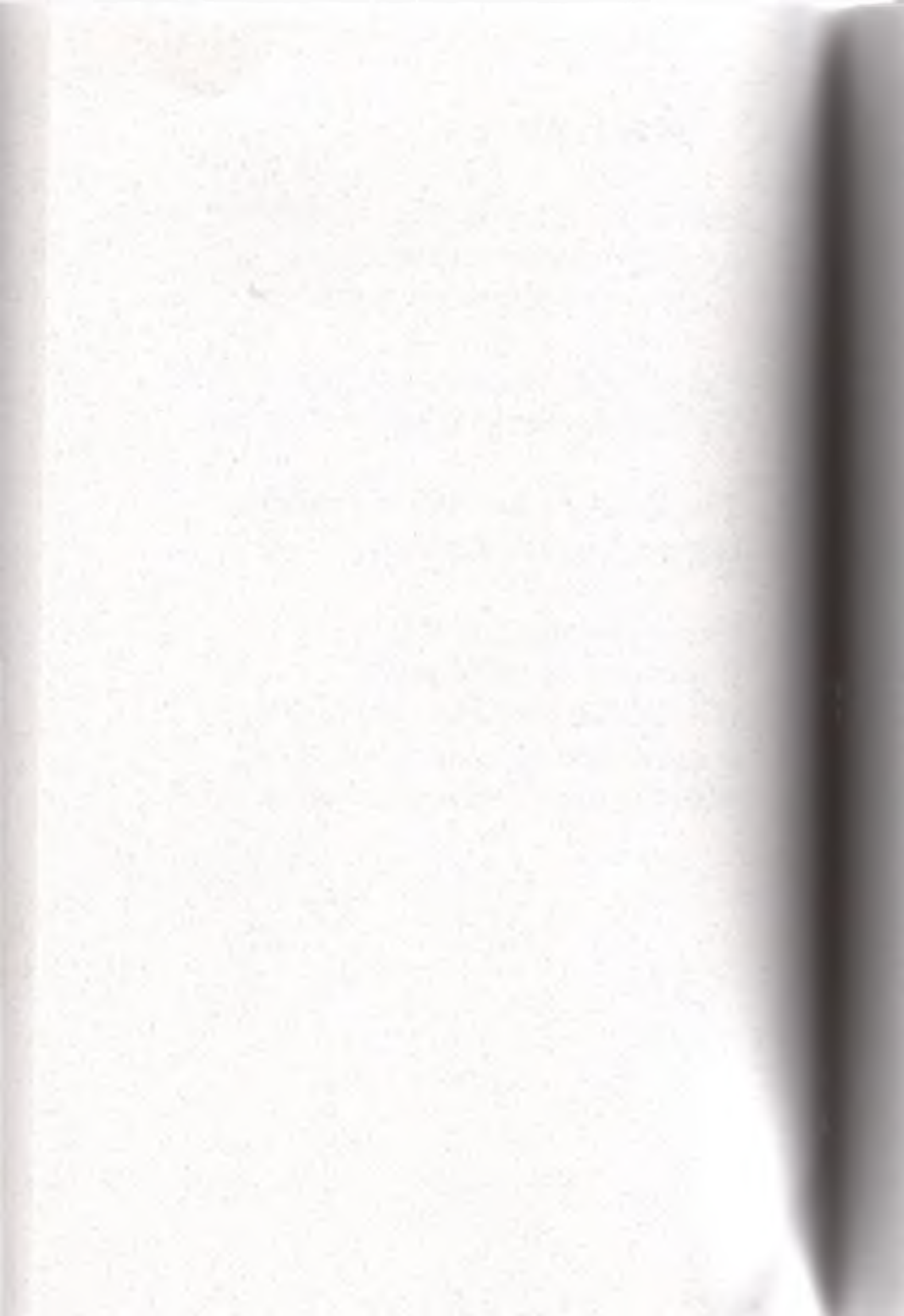
VARIATIONS.

Leaves fall from the trees in autumn,
A broader perspective appears.
There is a larger vacant space.

The ache of emptiness covers the heart,
Yielding to change is not without pain.

The sense of what held life together
Is trembling like the leaves.

Life is grasping and yielding,
It is choosing and negating,
It is like inhaling and exhaling,
It is a loosening up of space,
Where we can find new meaning.



NOSTALGIA.

I am
Santa's discarded wife.

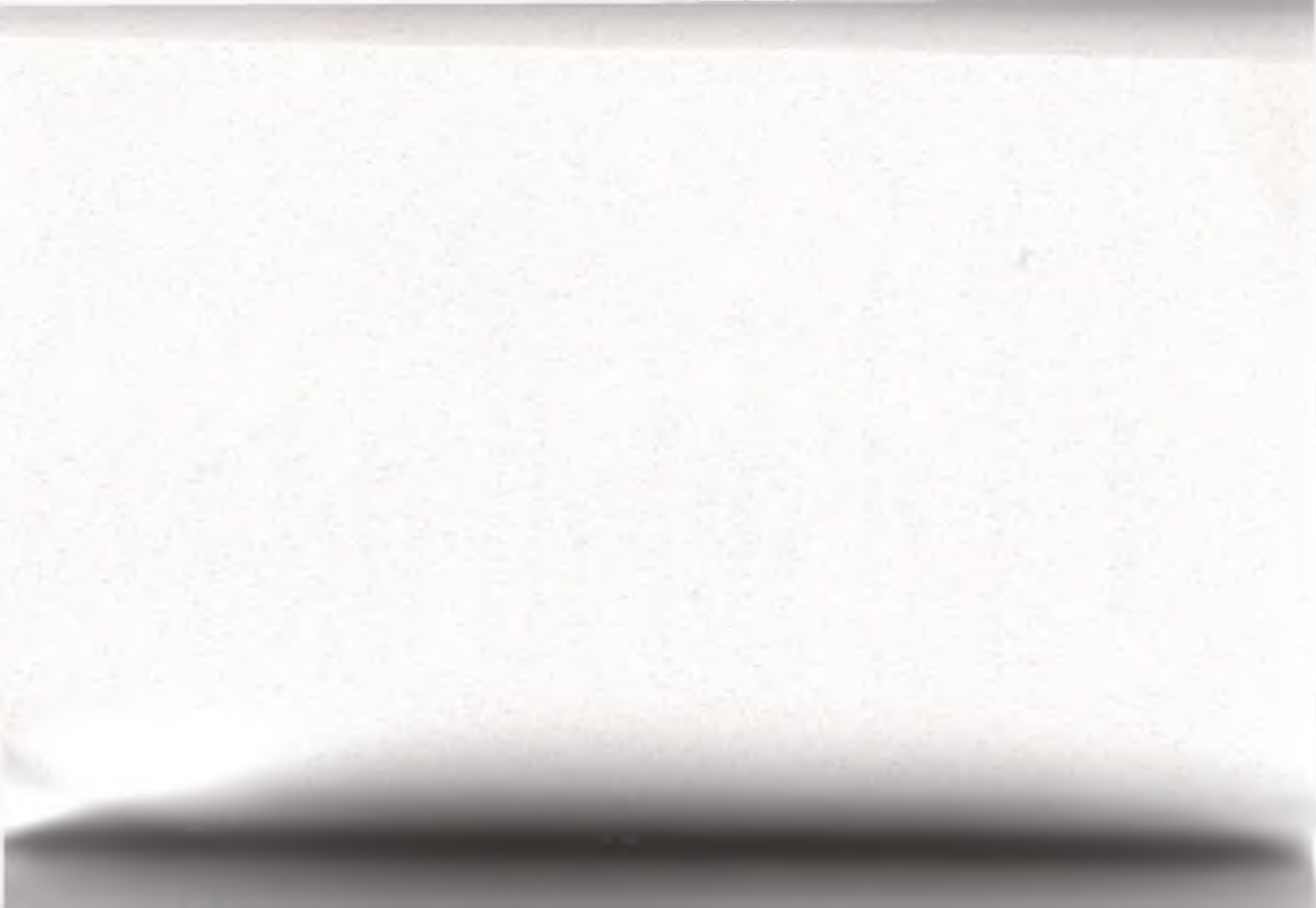
Who needs
Ho, Ho, Ho's day and night?

Who needs
Elves popping in and out
Of my kitchen,
Stealing cookies?

Who needs
Dressing in red outfits
Whether it suits me or not?

Who needs
Reindeer looking in
My window.
Snow blowing about?

I do, I do, I do.



TIPPING THE SCALES.

I fell off my diet,
The weekend now passed,
I ate and I ate,
And there was no more fast.

Spaghetti and meatballs,
Chicken and stuffing,
Ice cream and tofutti,
All tasted like heaven.

I ate and I stuffed myself,
'Till my belly was round,
And on Monday morning,
Found I'd gained five pounds.

The answer is clear,
If somewhat of a puzzle,
When I'm feeling so good,
I can't sustain being successful.



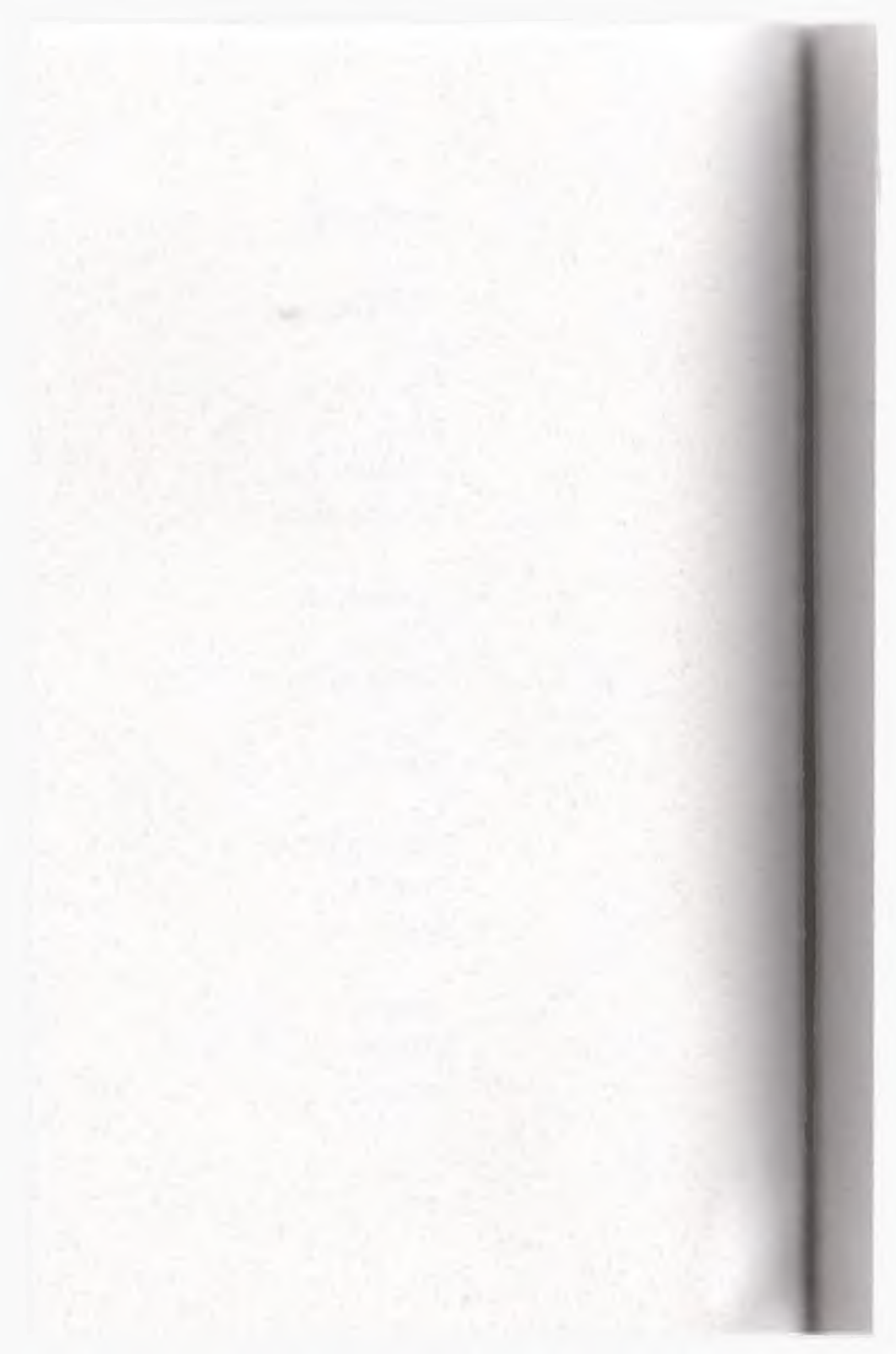
ESCAPE.

The dragon
Stirs.
The keeper
Puts
Another bar
On the gate.

The owner
With
Some sadness
Says
Begone.

The frantic
Feeling
Ends.

Another
Successful
Evasion.



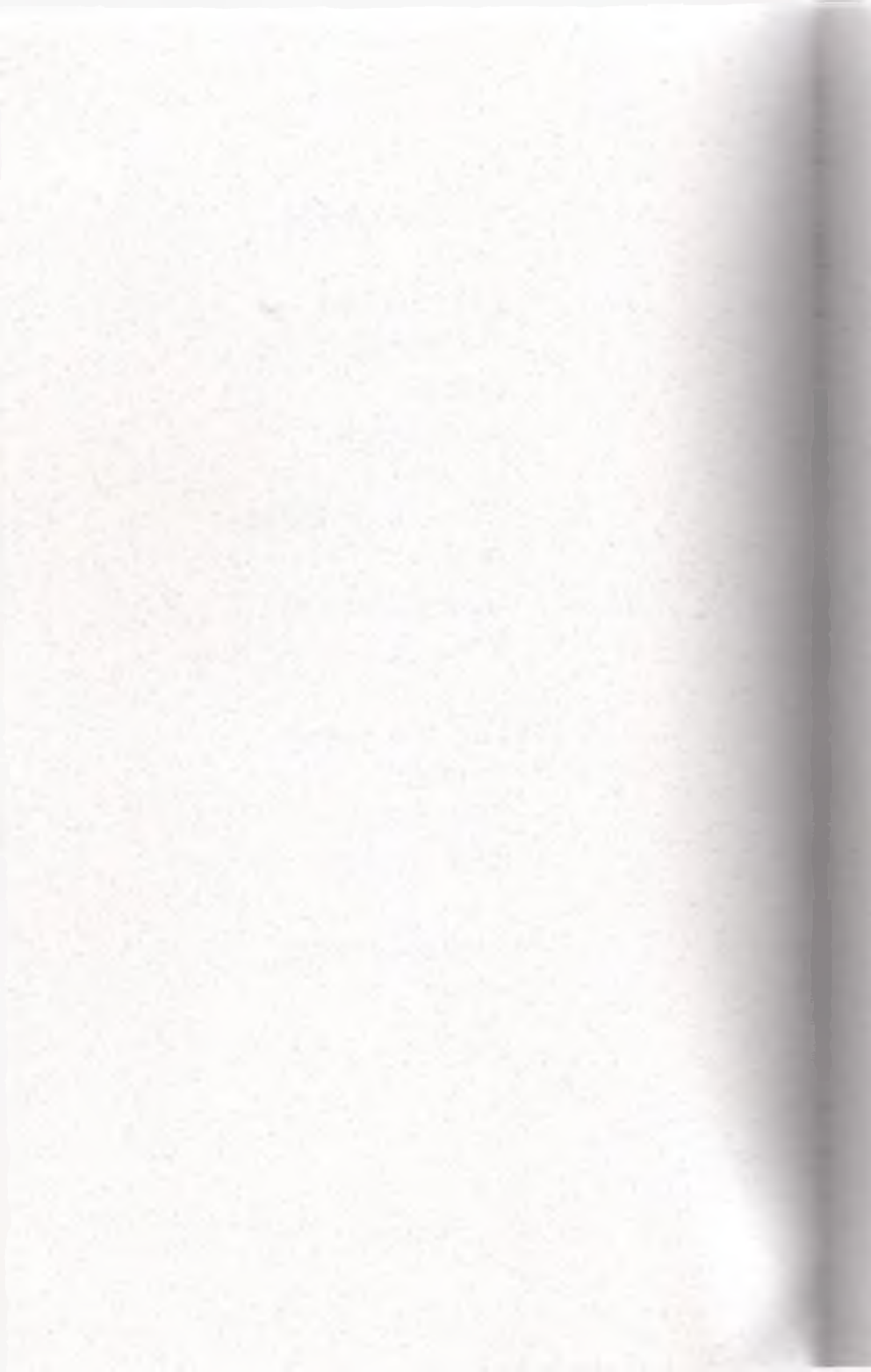
GROWTH.

I am the bud,
Trembling in the
Forest
At midnight.

I am the fledgling
Bird,
Emerging from
The egg.

I am the young
Oyster,
Who has never
Seen the light.

I am becoming.



SECOND CHANCE.

What if you were offered
A brand new second chance?
Would you toss away
The life you have
Without a backward glance?

It's not an easy question,
We all have some regrets.
And as the years go by
The harder some lives get.

In fact you would be
Quite amazed
To see some other's lives,
And if you saw the
Valor there,
You might be
Quite inspired.



A NEW ROAD.

She stands at the crossroads
In fear.

She looks both ways,
And trembles.

She gathers her courage,
And walks down the chosen road.

She finds her stride,
And a great release.

Surprises meet her,
At each turn in the road.

Her choice at the crossroads,
Was of utmost significance.

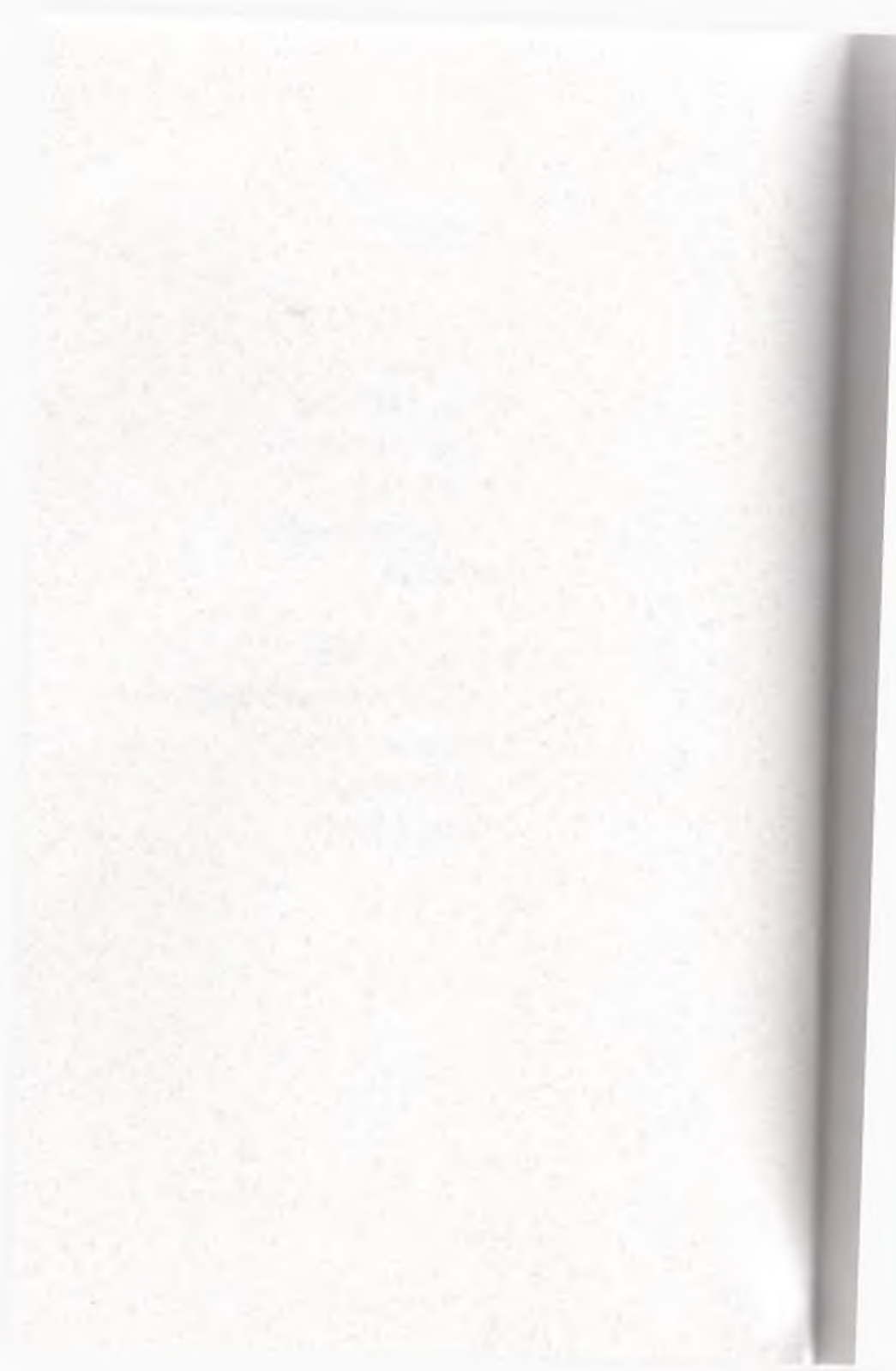
It has colored her life
With light, courage and confidence.



NO.

The word NO
Is magic,
When it affirms
One's Being.
When it lifts
Oppression from
One's life.

It opens doors
Of new opportunity,
And raises the
Aspirations
Of one's heart.



IMAGES.

What is your mood
Wearing today?

The black tights and top
Of the jester?

The paradoxical colors
Of the clown?

The drab gray of a
Doomed King Lear?

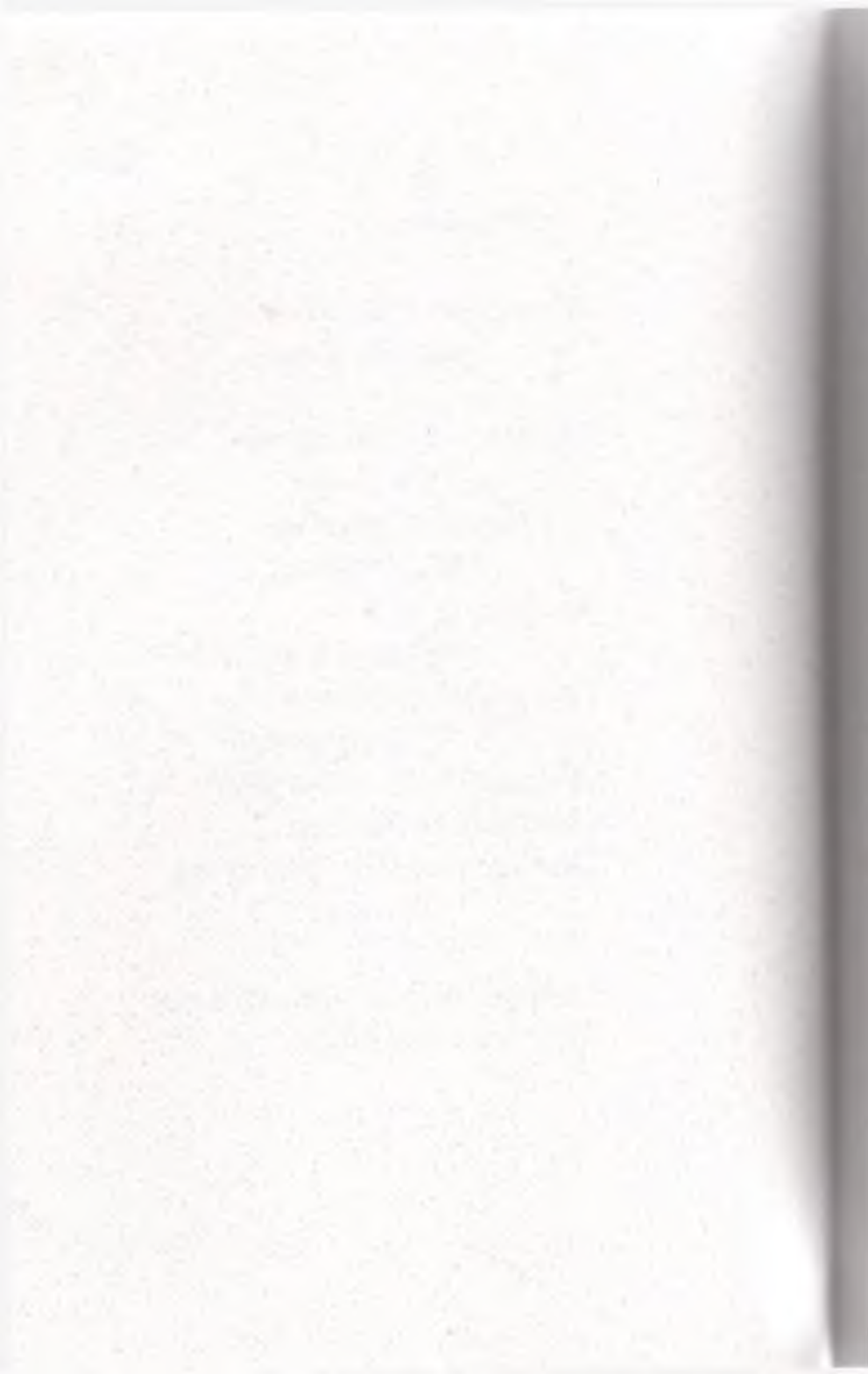
The majestic red of a
Cardinal prince?

The quiet blue of the sky?

The green of avarice.

The star studded cloak of the
Sorcerer?

Clothing is a metaphor for our
Effect on each other.



JOURNEYING.

I have been to my inner place,
Where shadows and light
Play together,
Where my dreams are sustained,
Where a gift of growth remains.

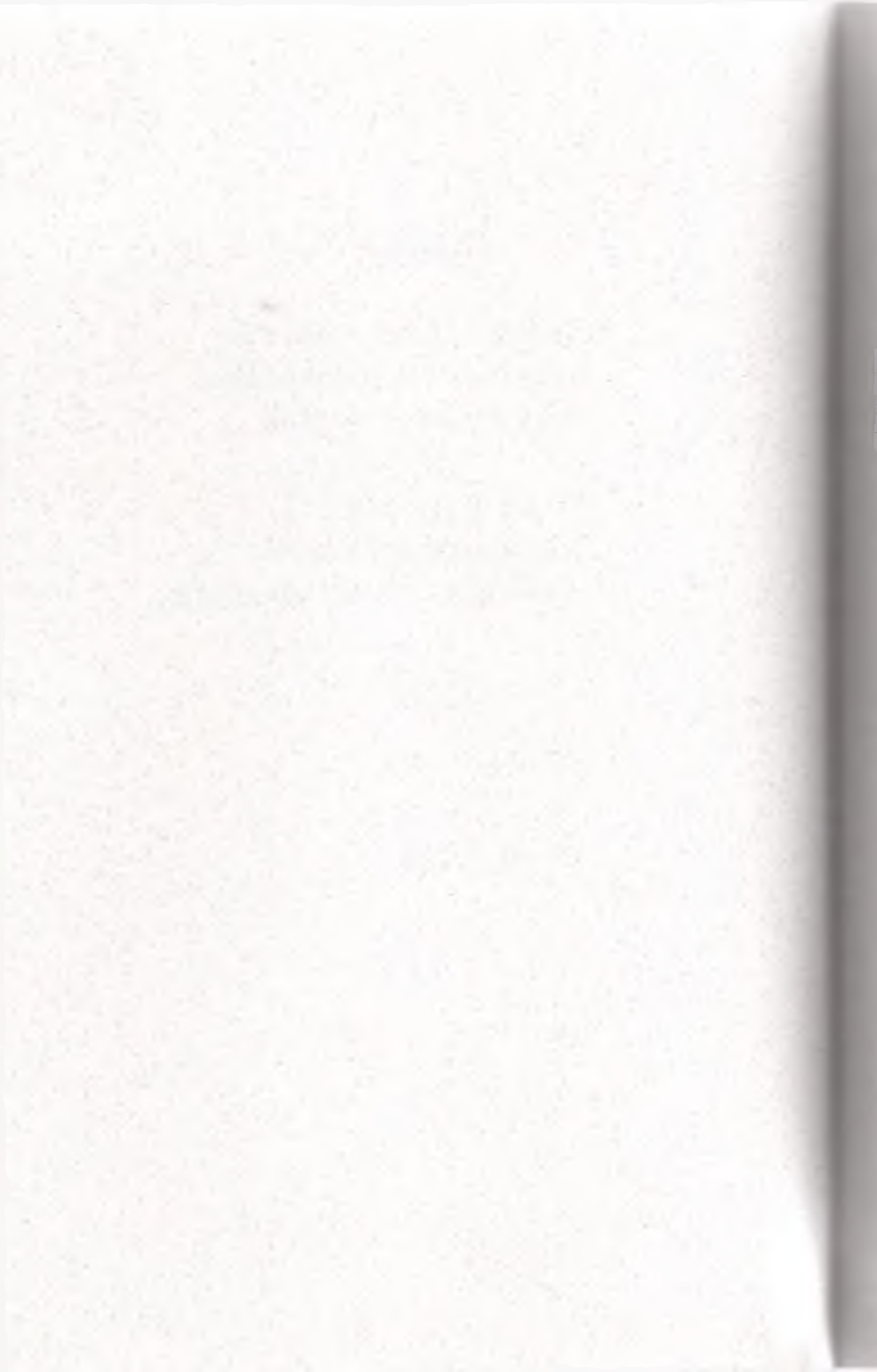
Wrap this hope of becoming,
Securely round my heart.
For now and the future.



GOSSIP.

Someone lately told me
Gossip is the spice of life.
And that is as may be.

So let it go round
And round and round
As long as it's not about me.



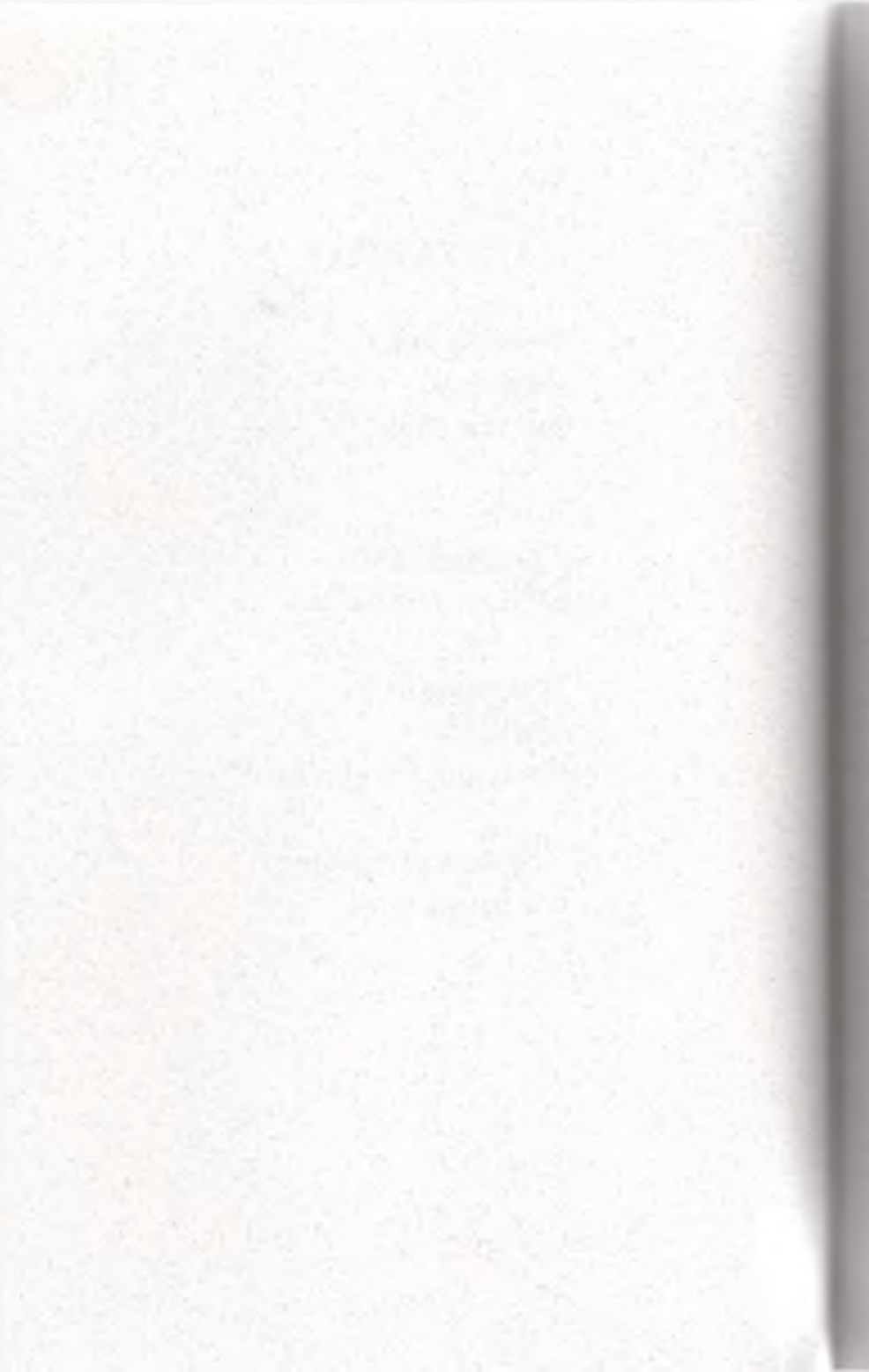
HEARING.

Hearing is a
Gateway
For the soul.

It is a
Thoroughfare
Of communication.

Listening to the
Universe
Enchants the spirit.

Anguish permeates
It's passing.



HOLDING SWAY.

Where is your
power centered?

In money accumulation?
In unneeded property?
In family control?
In business relations?
In the security of being right?
In conforming rigidly to the
conventions of where
we live and move?

The loneliness of your heart
Keeps saying
Do you love me?

Do you love me?





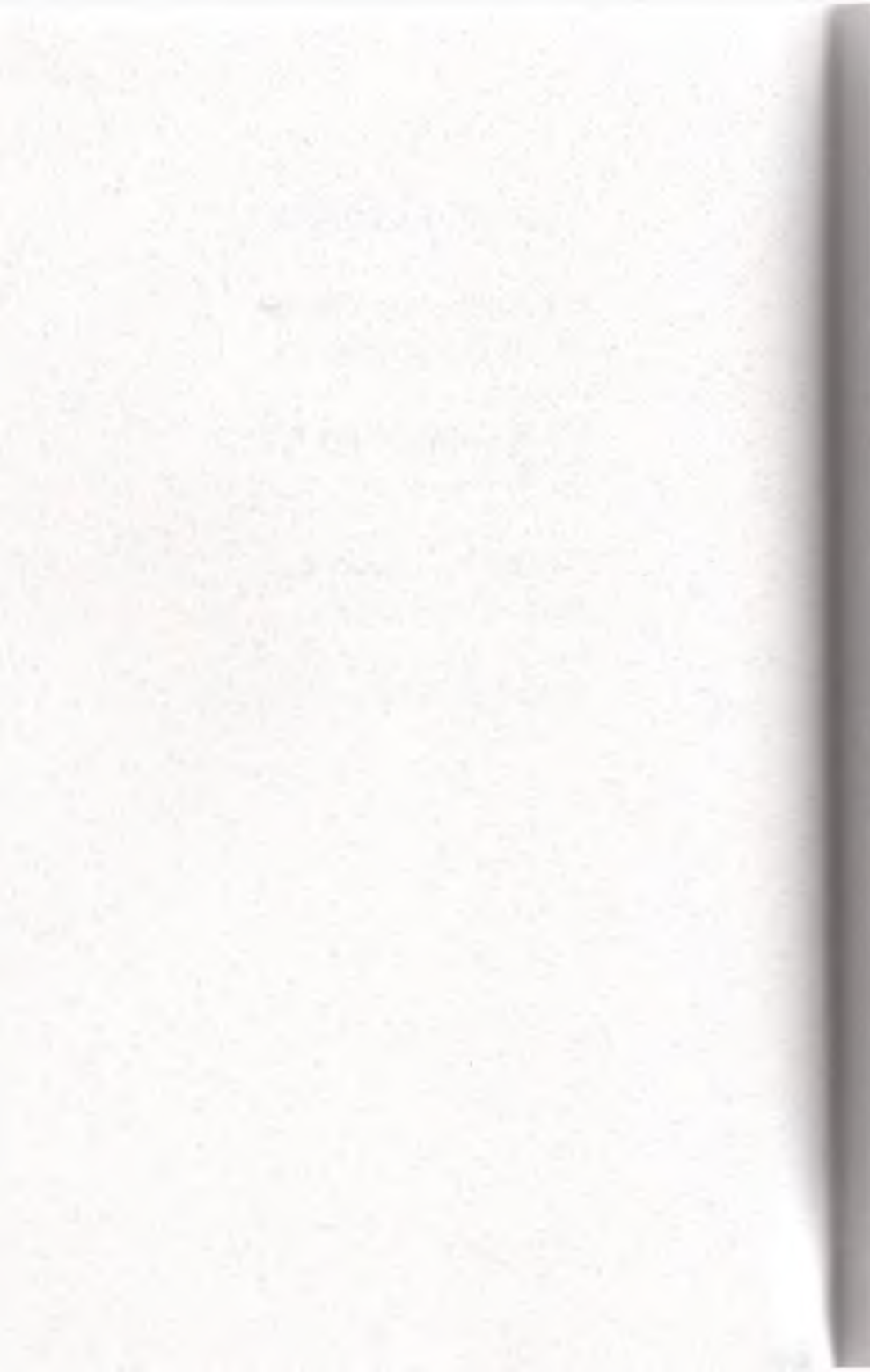
SELF- EVIDENT.

It's not easy to climb
on the bus anymore,

It's not easy to get off
my knees.

I won't be Tarzan's
Jane of the jungle

A wish for sixty-five years.



HARD AS NAILS.

Her forehead flat and tall.

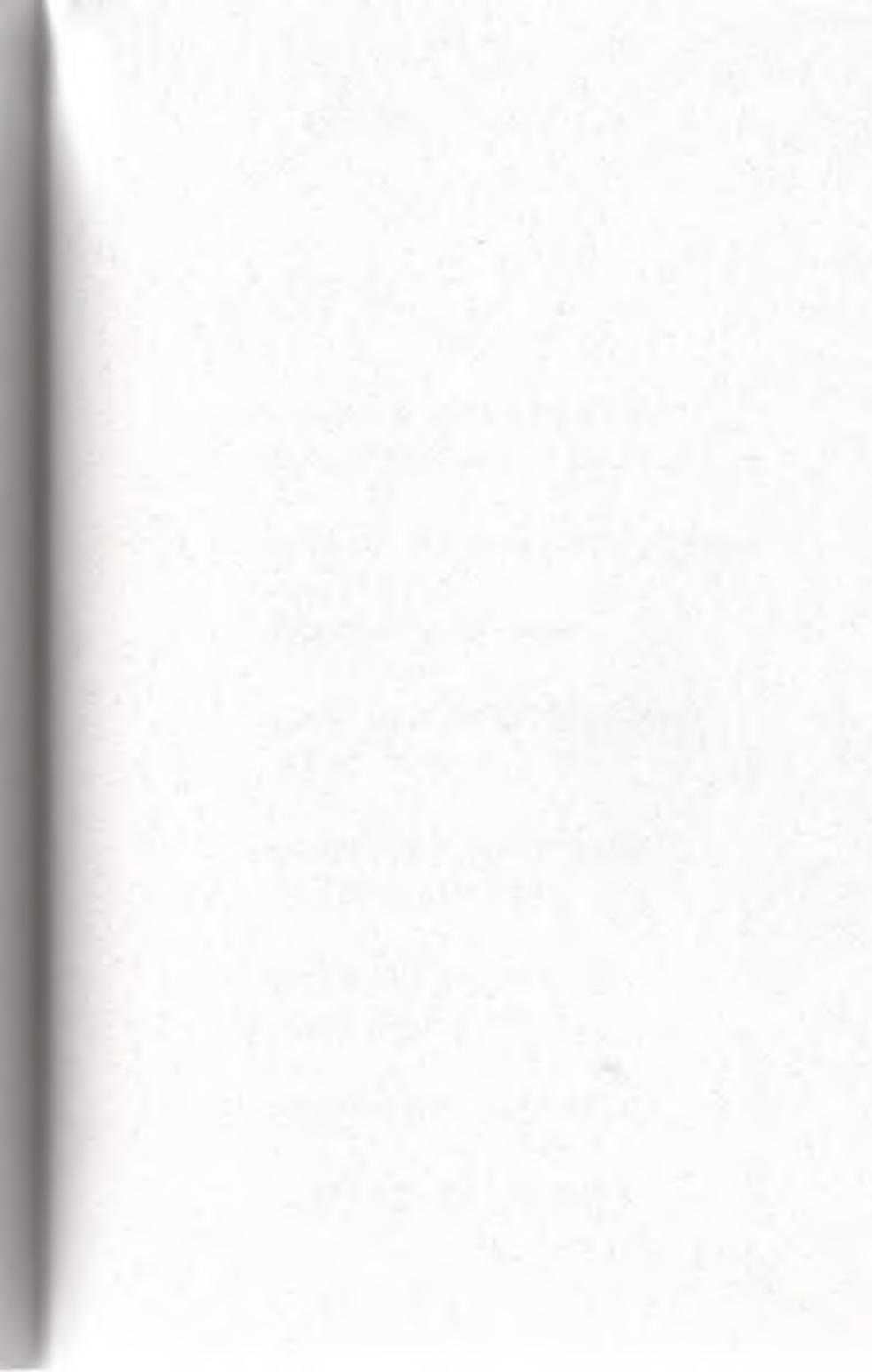
Little beady eyes
Regarding others coldly.

Her nose like a nail
Poking into others affairs.

Her face like a brick
Set in unrelenting judgment.

Her chin pointy with
some warts,
Harshly radiating malevolence.

All the kindness in her body,
Would fit in an acorn cup.



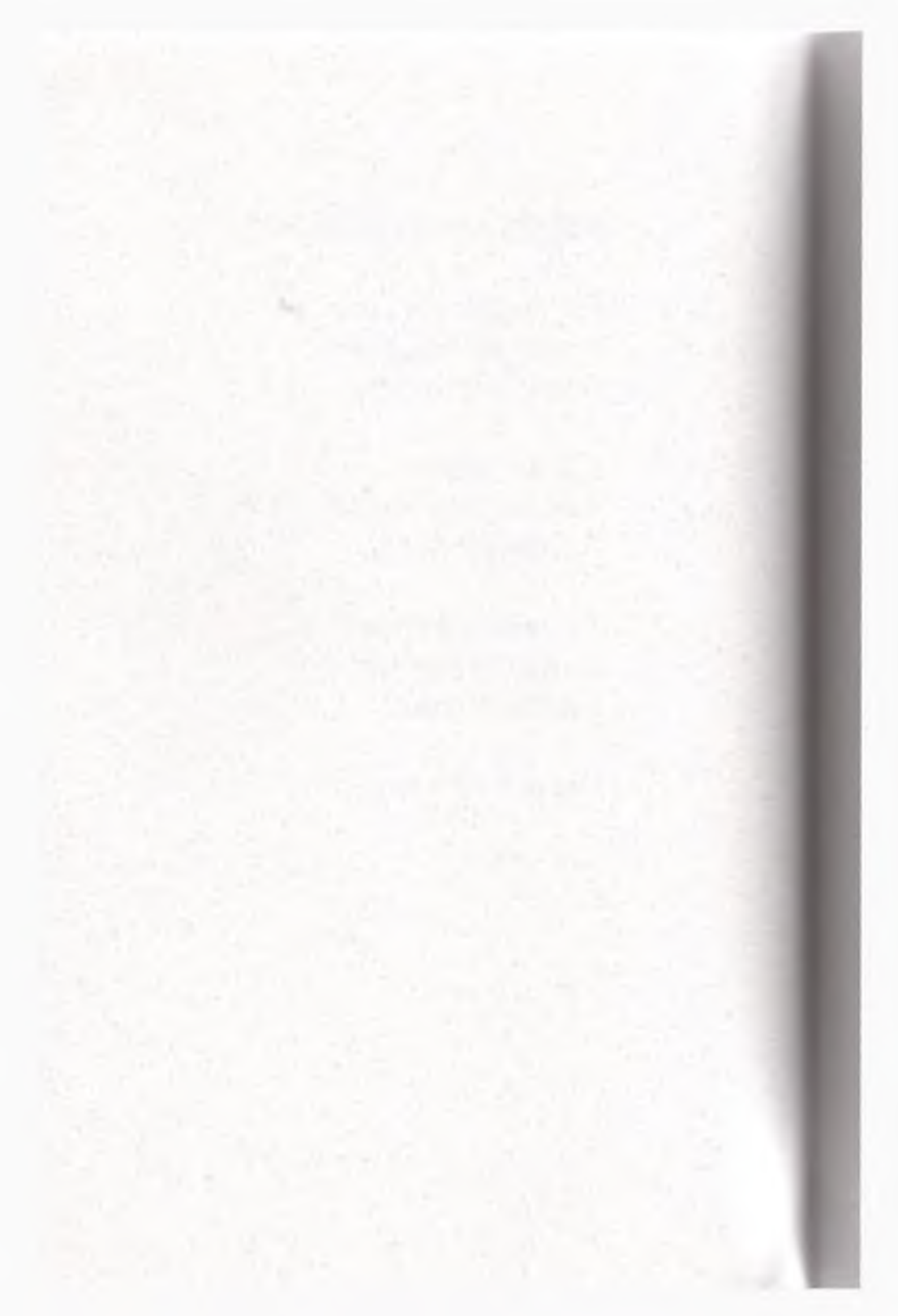
STOPS ON THE ROAD.

For comfort to the
Aged trembling body,
A touch and a kiss.

For the lonely
And the disgruntled
A friendly word.

To lighten the way
Humor is supplied
For the pilgrims.

She is God's spy.



IF ONLY....

Some mornings I wake.....
And think I have
Been born to
Sleep all day,
Be pampered like a queen,
Complain loud and long,
Plan to blow up the world.

But I turn on my side,
Stay in bed a little longer,
And merely whimper.



MUSINGS.

#1

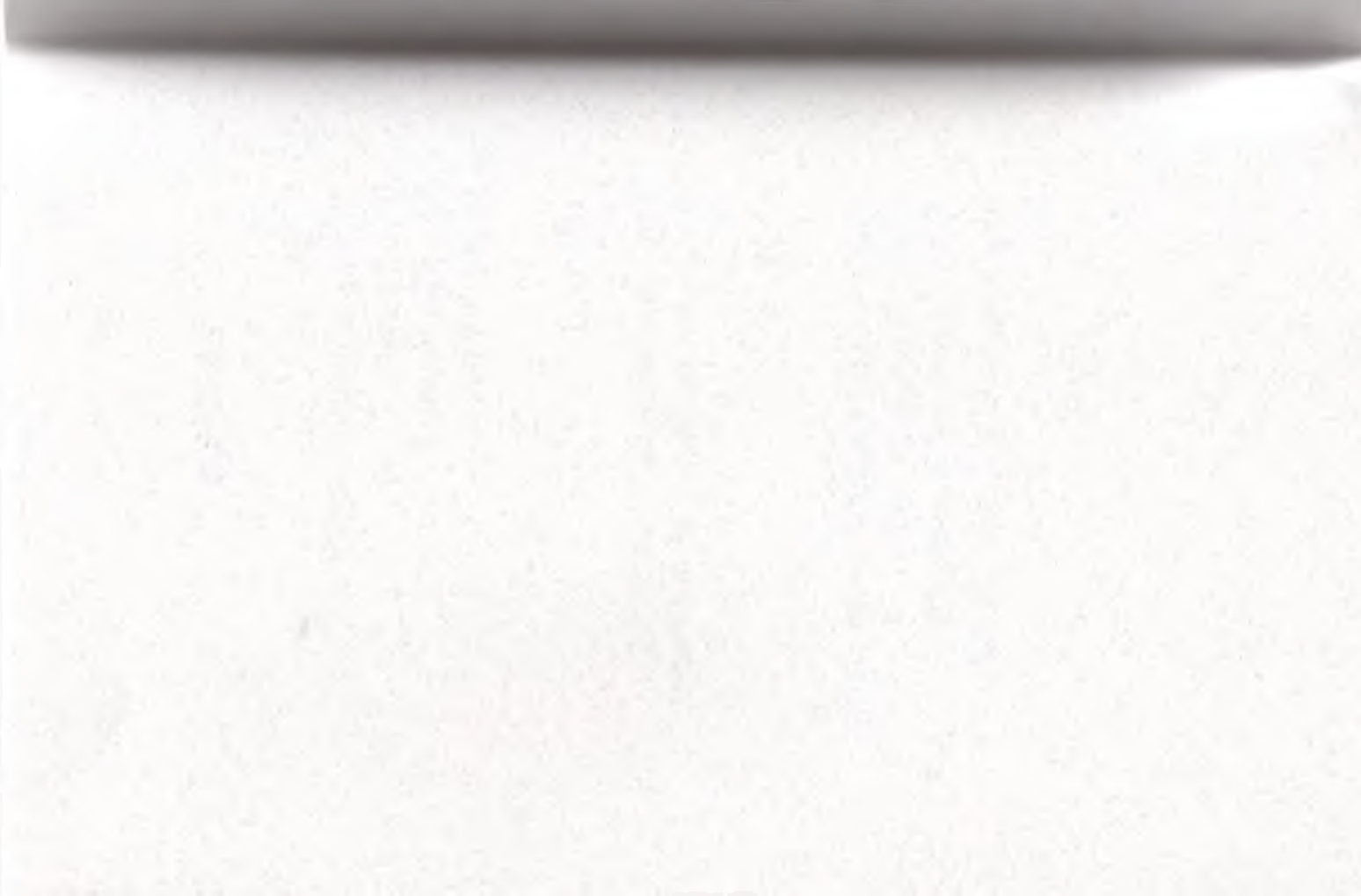
Dieting is just like walking,
Step by step
You find yourself
In another place.

#2

Decisions moment by moment,
We are the midwives of the future.

#3

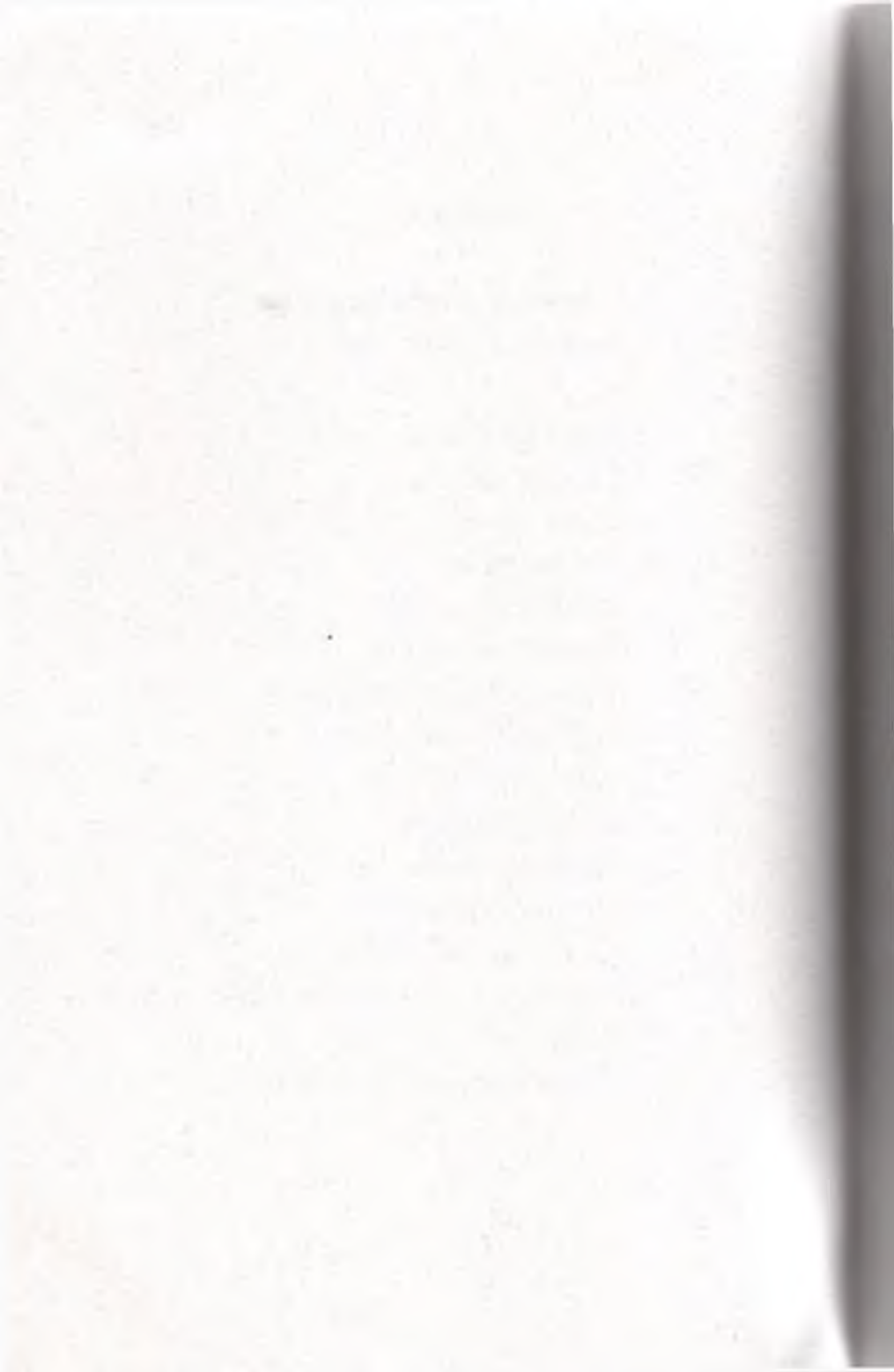
: There's a strange thing about clarity.
It only happens to you
After you've been confused.
You look back and say AH-HA.



TABLES.

Are there memorable
Tables in your life?

Kitchen tables,
Dining tables,
Patio tables,
Picnic tables,
Boardroom tables,
Round tables,
Tables turned on you,
Tables kicked over,
Computer tables,
Library tables,
Bedside tables,
Hotelroom tables,
Communion tables
Lay your cards on the table.
Savor your special
Occasions of blessedness.



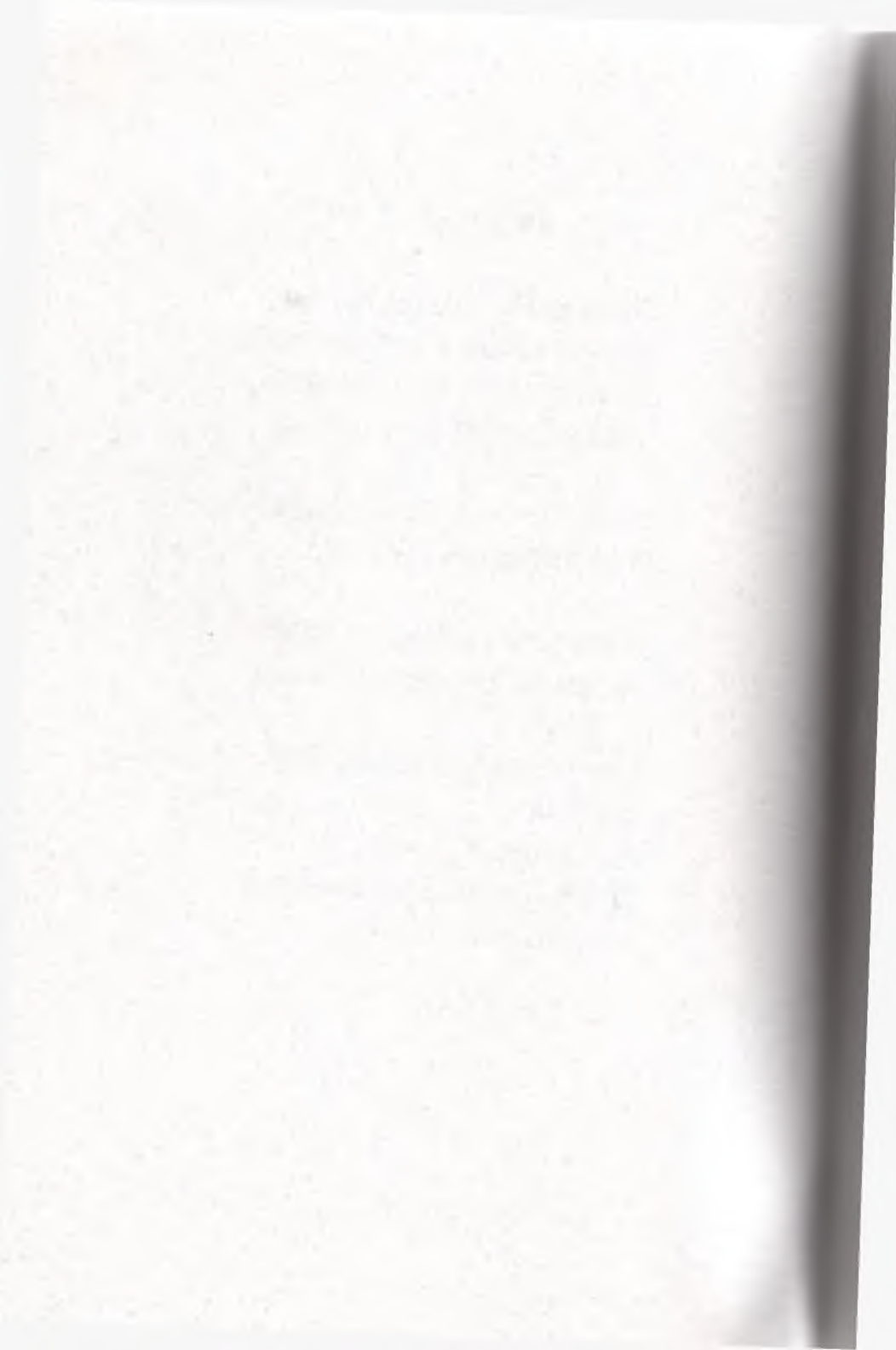
TREES.

Trees grow in serenity,
They are nature's monuments.
Sending roots into the earth,
Limbs reaching for the sky.

There flows a lovely sound
And motion in the wind.

What peace comes to those
Aware of the voice of trees.

Lay your hand on the bark
in silence,
And sense a gleam
of the Great Consciousness
Around you.



THE WIND.

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

It speaks in signs.

A touch upon my cheek.

Blown skirts and hair.

Tree limbs and grasses swaying.

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

It rides the racing clouds.

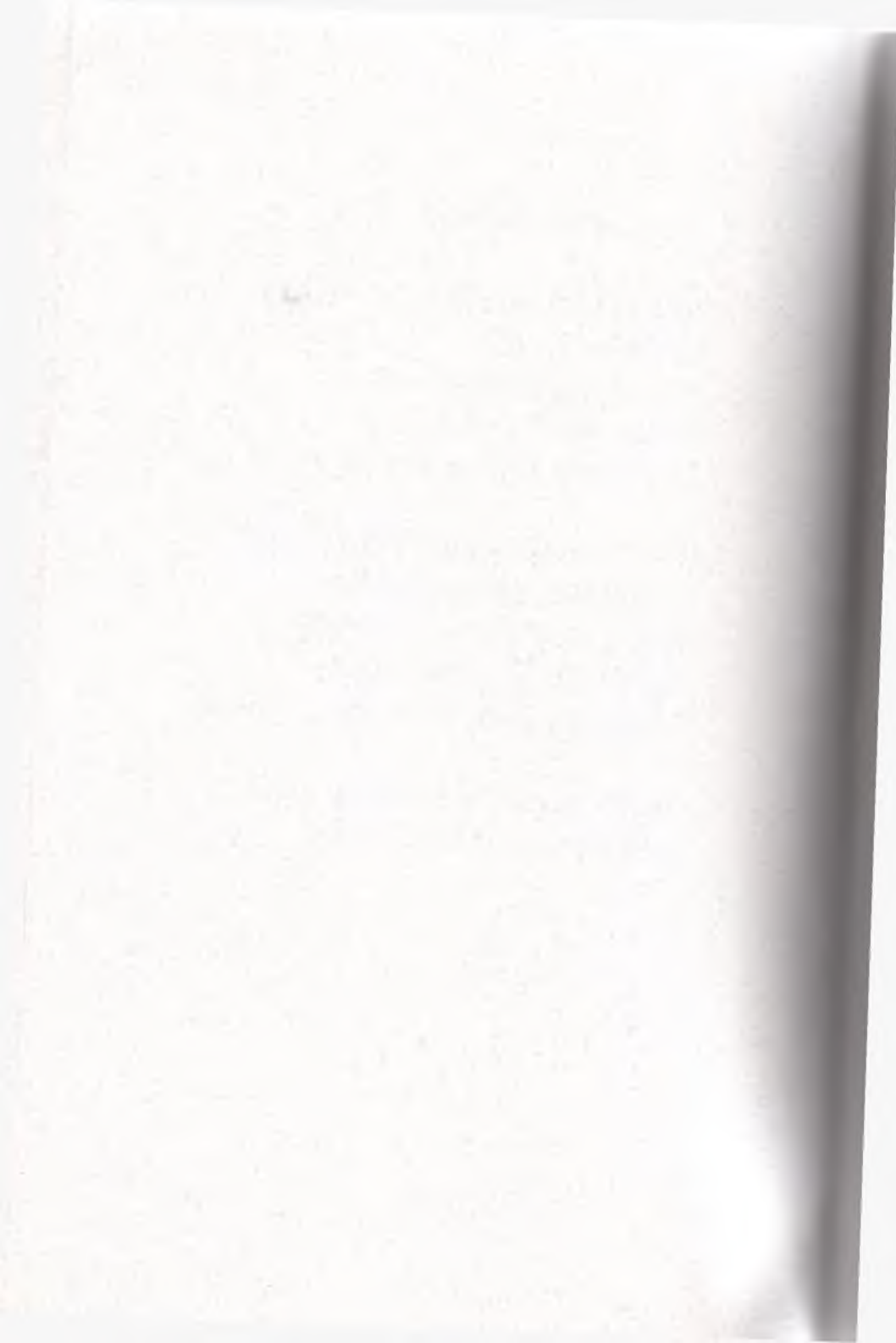
Blows the raindrops fiercely.

Shakes the fruit from trees.

Scares the children when it howls.

Gently rustles the leaves.

Softly sways the flowers.

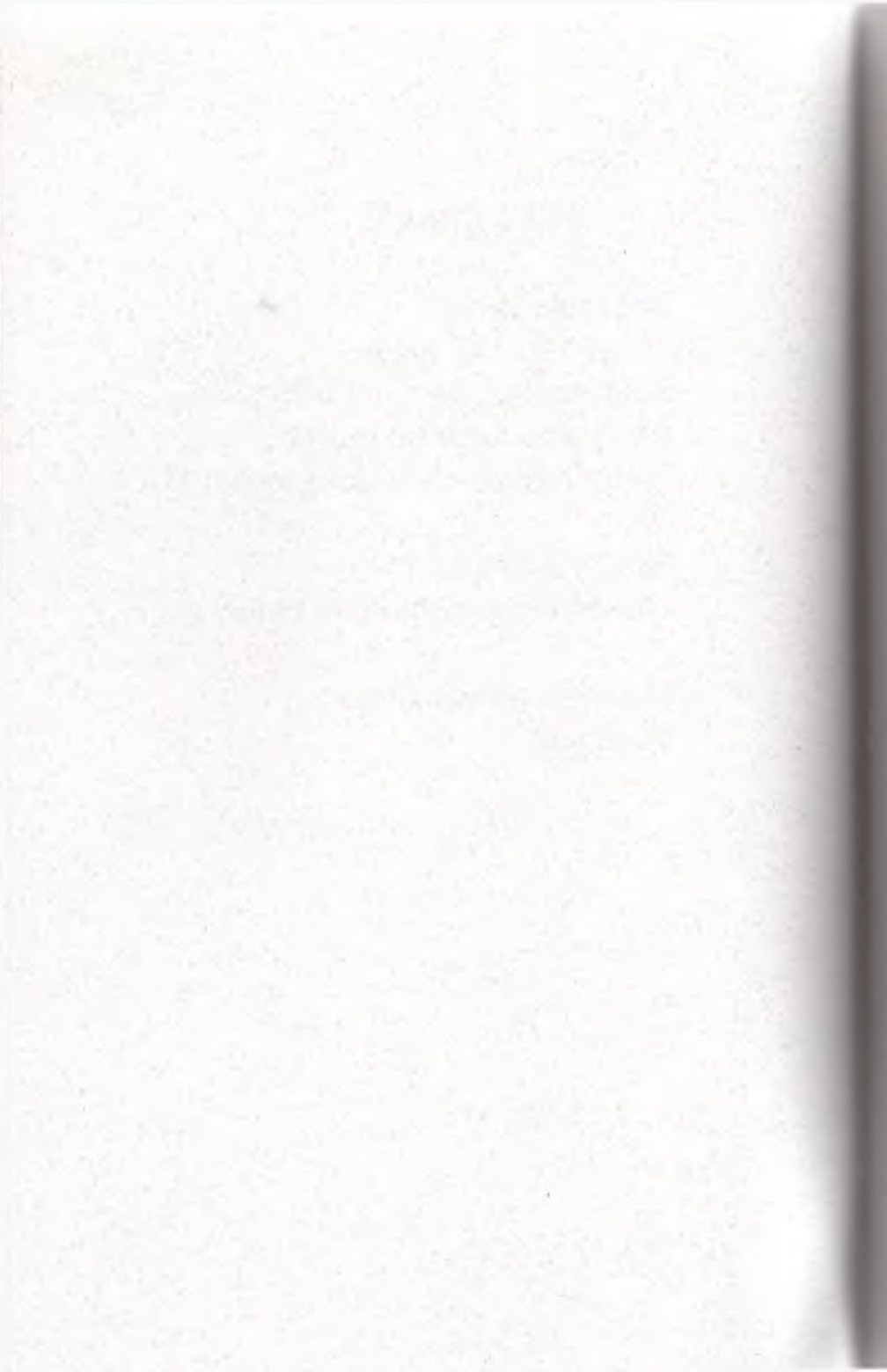


DEEP SPACE.

The radio is on.
An astronomer speaks.
He describes the rings of Saturn
And their shepherd moons.
Seen through a new telescope.

Finally he said;
I have seen the music of color.

I have never seen music.
Have you?



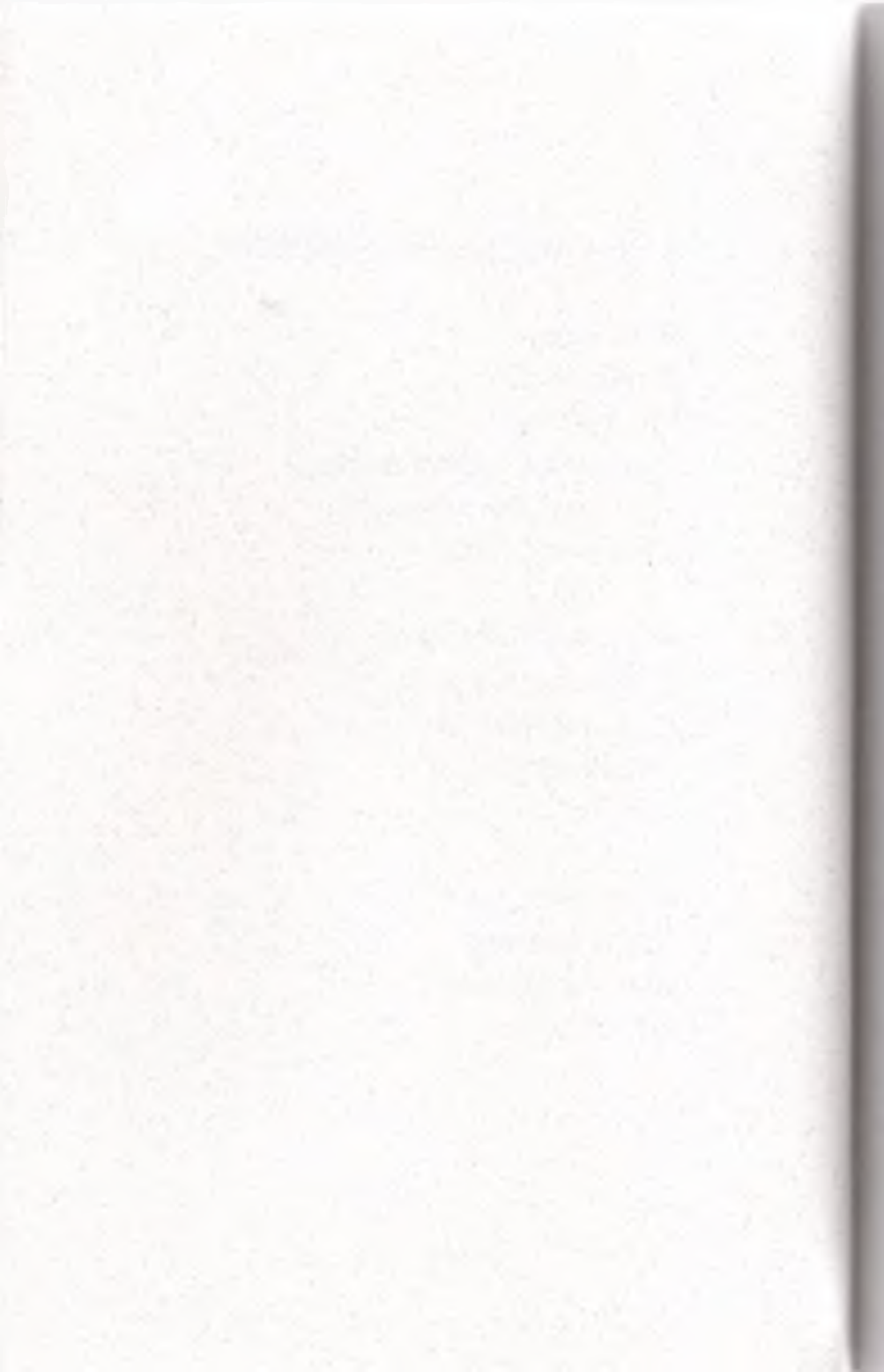
THE CIRCLE OF SORROW.

We sat in a
Circle of sorrow.
We told our
Stories not yet complete.
We heard the poignant
Reachings forth.

We heard of dreams,
And loves fled.
Hopes turned dark.
The bitterness of
Desolation.

We heard music
In the sorrow.
In the searching
Of each soul

CONT.

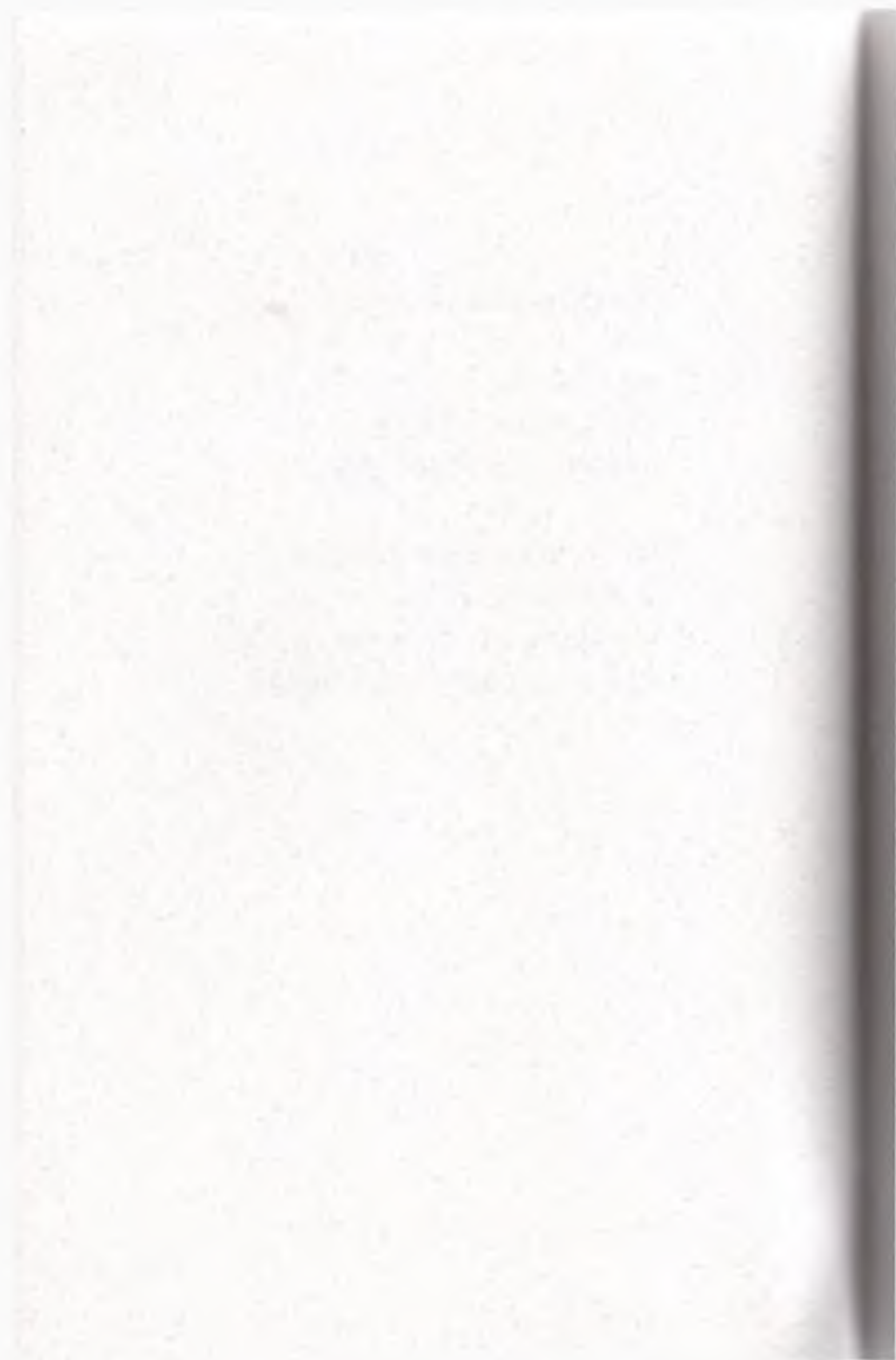


CIRCLE OF SORROW CONT.

And felt the beauty of
The Creator's Hand
In each pain filled path.

We found solace together
In the circle of sorrow.
We renewed our hope
And took each others hands.

65A.



PASSING.

I shall go from here,
From this green earth.
The time is uncertain.
I shall go alone.
The way I have not walked before.

I wish to be perceptive,
And have those I love best,
Visit me for a while
To give me courage.

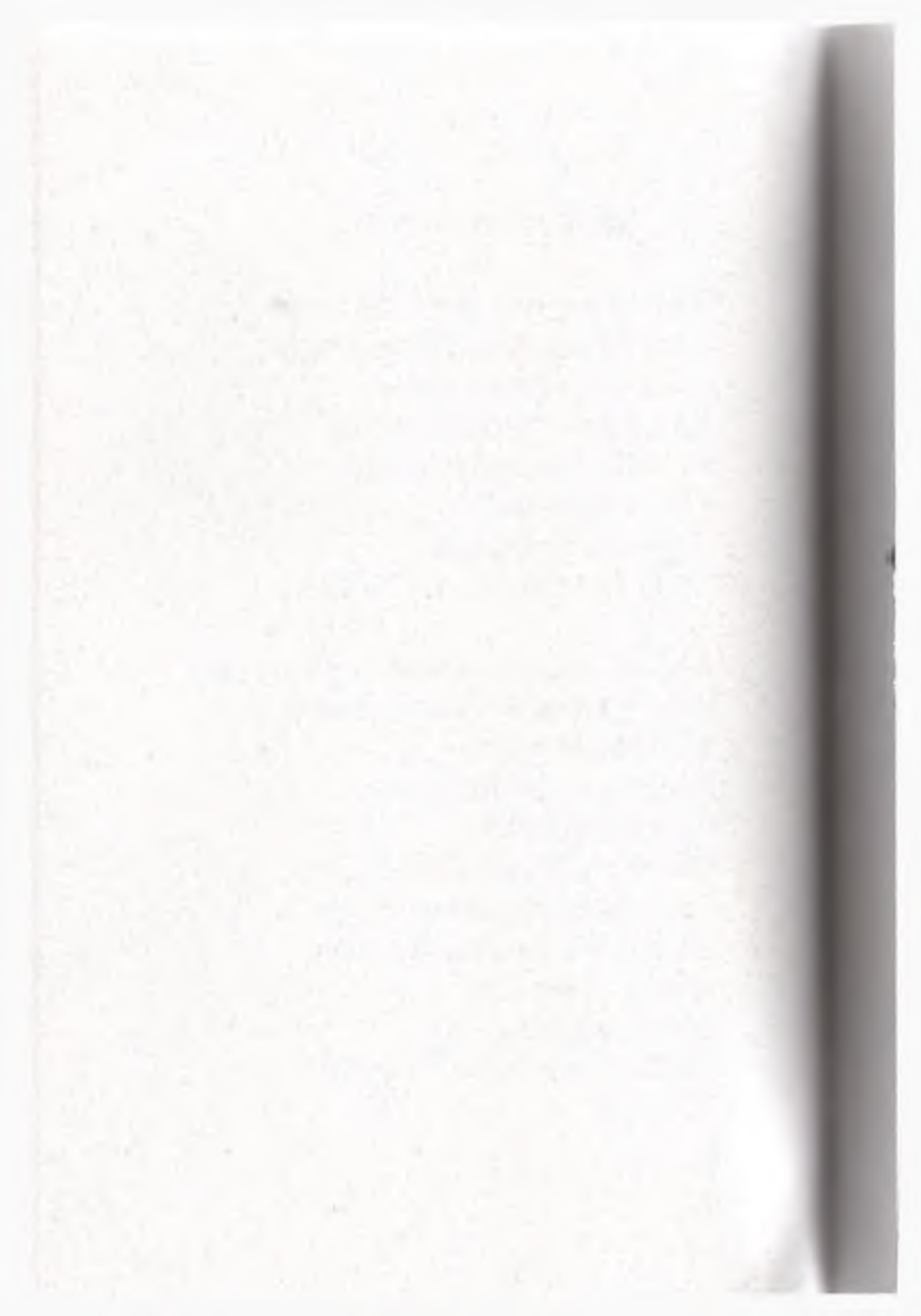
I shall be afraid.



MAGICAL MUSIC.

Thoughts travel down the years,
Like the fingers on harp strings.
A longing to turn again
To youth, to love, to poetry.
To what once you thought
Life would hold
After a long absence.
THIS IS MAGICAL MUSIC.

And the fingers run down the strings,
A groping back for the passion
That sleeps within.
Exploring, testing, going
; over old ground.
Whispers, bunches of notes,
The fingers touch the strings,
And at last the long running
chords of the harp
Break into song.
THIS IS MAGICAL MUSIC





SOJOURN

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POEMS.

Poems are enigmatic,
Beautiful and long,
Poems are delightful,
Full of beauty and even song.

Poems are imaginative,
In dense and liquid language,
Poems are odysseys,
And iliads and even
Love songs.

Poems are elegies and dirges,
And even mild diversions.

Poems are useless ruminations,
For slightly amusing occasions.

And then I came along.



A FALLEN TREE.

On a still beautiful morning,
The leaves gently move on the trees.
The sound of a chain saw
Laid to a tree,
Shatters the stillness.
We almost hear the earth groaning.

As we anticipate the end
We are ill at ease.
Is there not some honesty
In the potpourri of human intentions?
Does nobody care
About a felled tree?

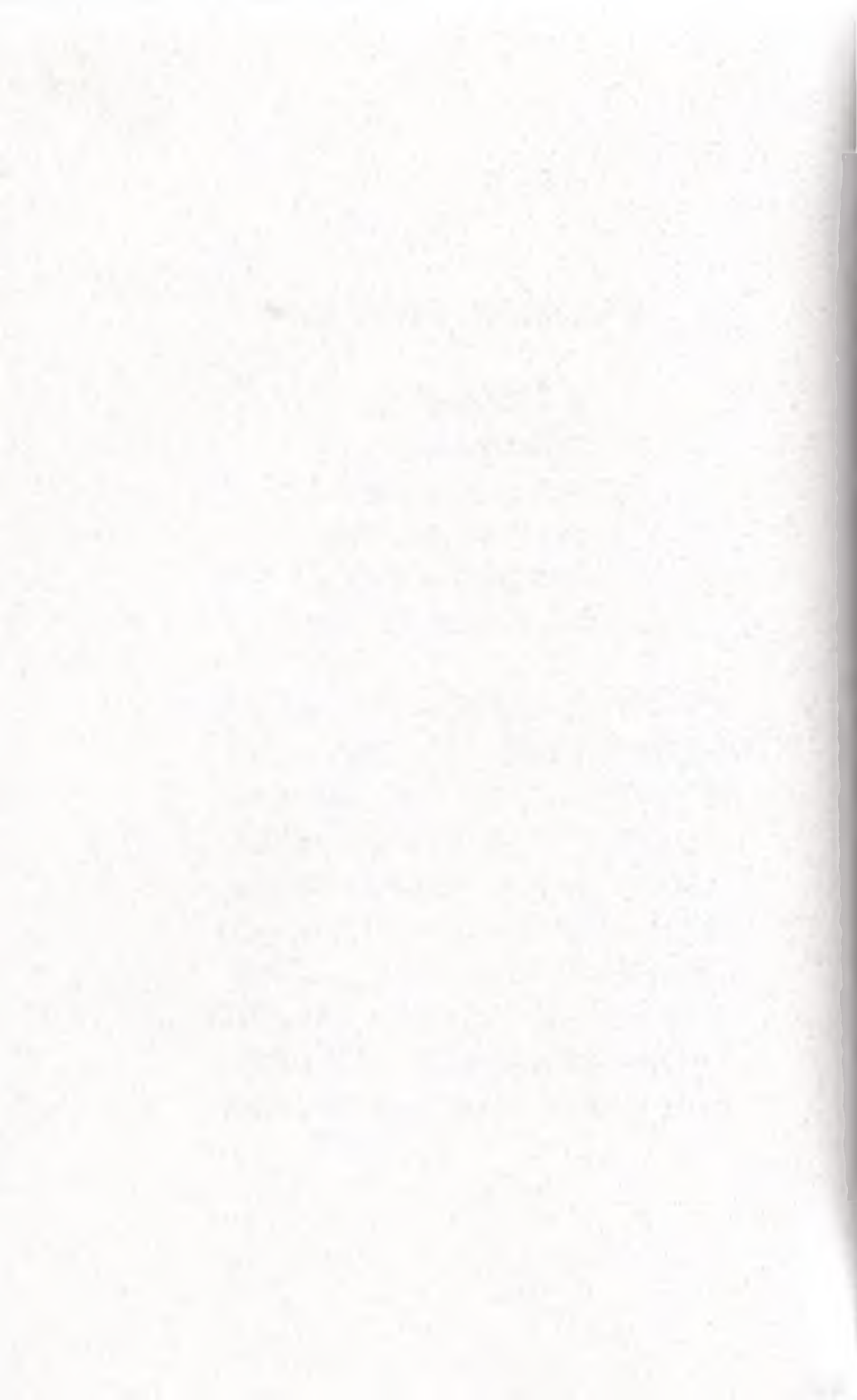


CULTURE SHOCK.

A little Martian
Studied hard.
In English he excelled.
In his little machine
He zoomed to earth,
And this is what he heard.

TV—VCR---DVD---PG---SCIFI
FEDEX---PC---CDROM---CBS
PPV---PO---UPS---MOMA ---UN
ASAP---ETC--- .COM---AC/DC
: IPOD---AOL---AM/FM---Ebay
ATM---COD---IRA---RAM---DJ
WWW---FYI---MEMO---CPA
CSW ---MSW---PHD---CEO---HIV
PDR---DOB---MD---RN---PA
LPN---MTA ---DOS---CSI---IRT

CONT.



CULTURE SHOCK CONT.

LSD---AM---PM---BC---AD---EST
NPR---LBJ---JFK---RFK---MLK---ER
VA---TB---PTA---MRI---IBM---INC,
PATH---FTD---RFD---CVS---EMS
USA---NYC---24/7---K9---9/11---V8
GM----JD---TOR---ERA---PS---FBI
CIA---AFL-CIO---YMCA---NFL---KFC
P's+Q---CQ10---3M---GOOGLE

The little Martian said,
“All this is nonsense
And makes no sense to me.
I'll zoom my little machine
Back Home
And happy there I'll be.”



COLOR YOUR LIFE.

The child's hand turns the kaleidoscope,
And looks with innocent eyes,
Sees the pieces fall together
To make a lovely picture
And smiles.

The adult sees the pieces fall,
As the years go by.
The pictures change
Some light, some dark,
The adult wishes for completion
And sighs.



CANTICLE TO A FRIED EGG.

It is early morning.
She sits at the breakfast table,
Contemplating a fried egg
For twenty minutes.

She comes alert with a start.

Organize the day, hurry, hurry,
Shower and dress, hurry, hurry,
Do hair and makeup, hurry, hurry,
Start for work, hurry, hurry,
Give the fried egg to the cat,
: All day long hurry, hurry.

**Be still and know
That I am GOD.**



COMMUNICATION.

Jibber—jabber in the air,
Cell phones busy everywhere,
 What did we do
 Before this invention?
Talked at the dinner table
With communicative intention.



DESOLATION.

The time of a funeral.

The deep sorrow of a divorce.

The desolation at the death of a spouse.

The loneliness at the end of a love affair.

The grief at an injury to your child.

Let your tears

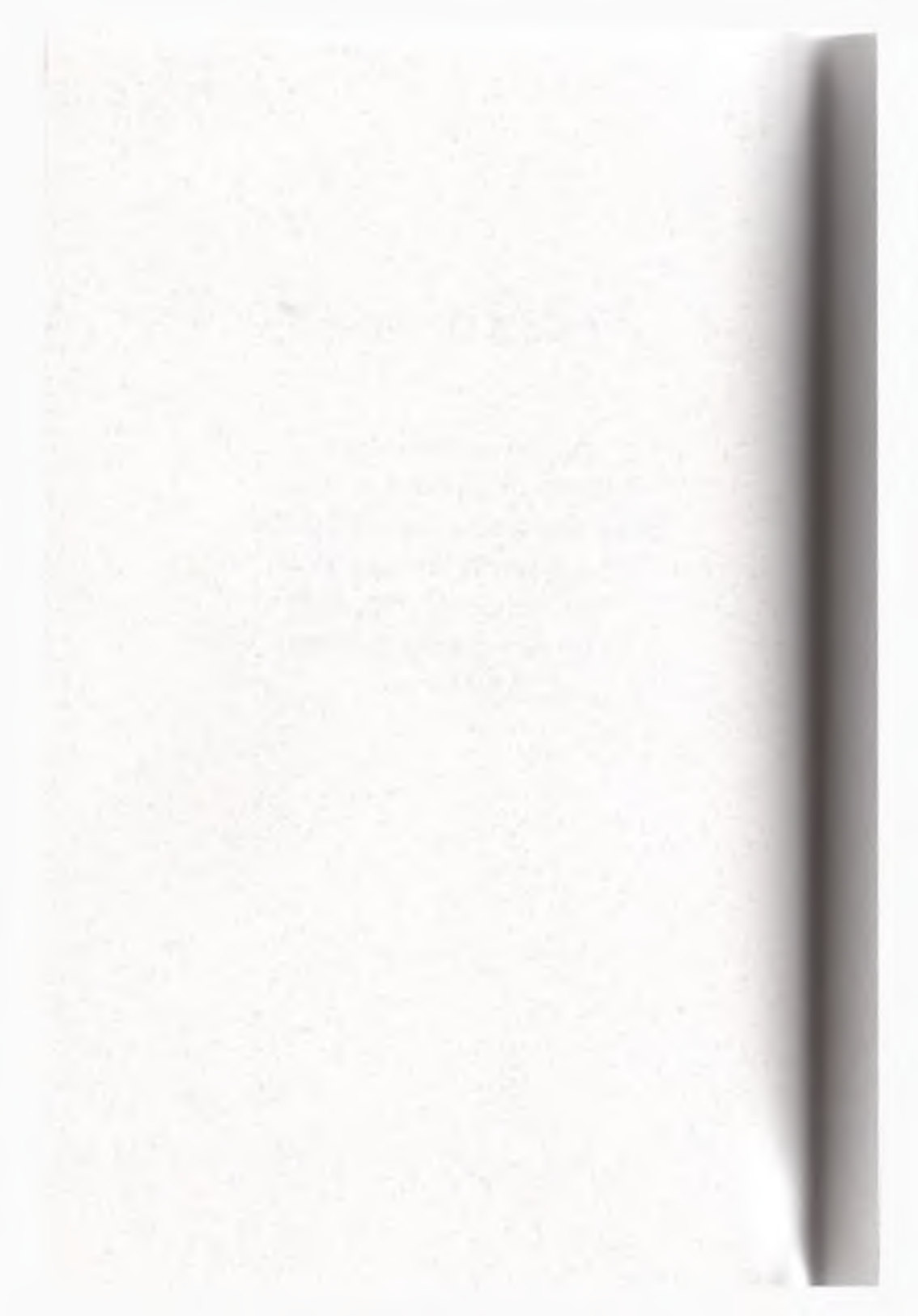
Wash away the despair.

Help your heart to sing a poem.



PEACE OF MIND.

At the end of a day,
Can you look back and say
Now that was a job well done.
With a warm hearted glow,
And peace in your soul
You can give into sleep
And let go.



FELINES.

The wily cat
Sits all day,
What
Is
He
Planning
Would
You say?



FRANKIE.

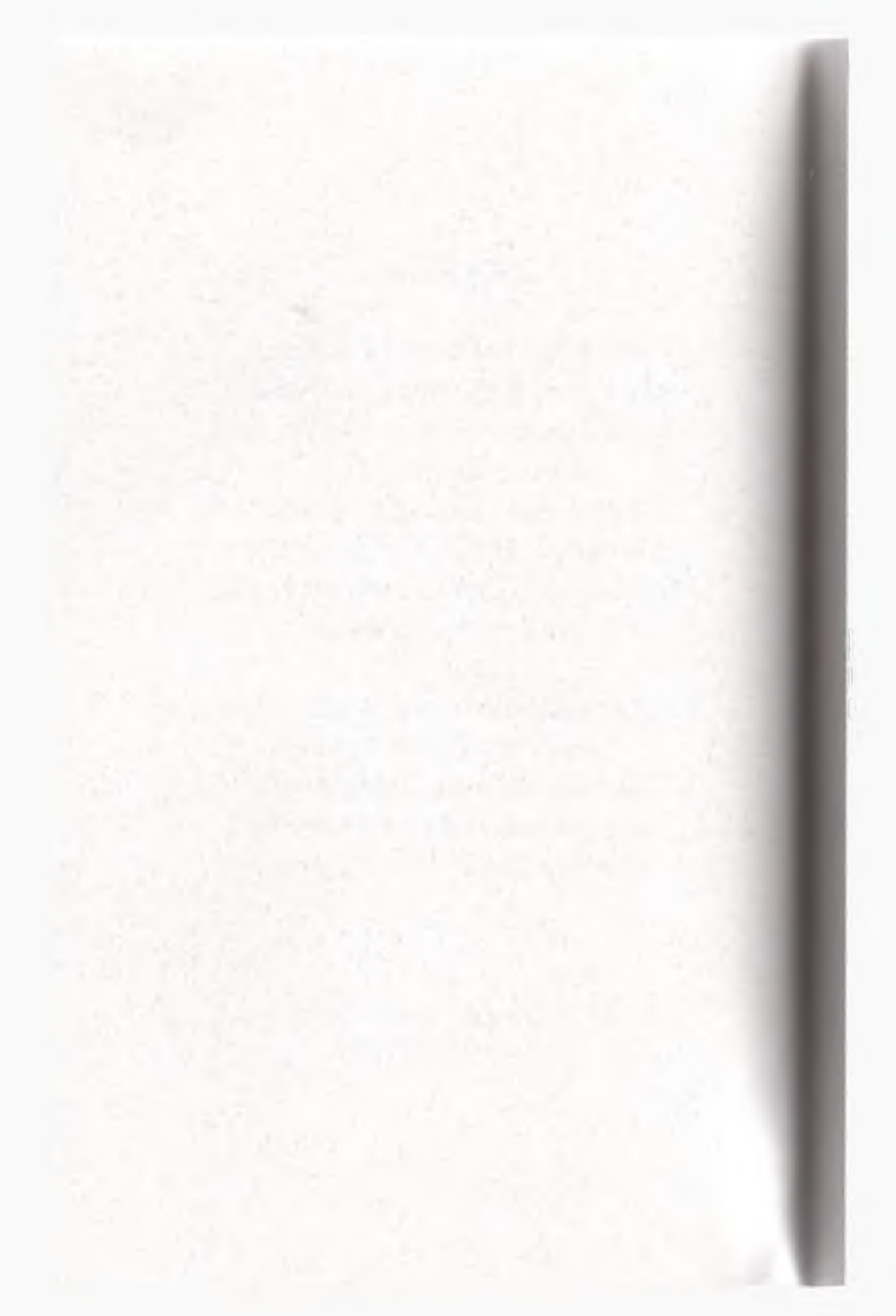
My name is Francis Parakeet,
My colors gray, blue, and white.
My friends say I'm a beautiful bird,
And so do I say also.

I can say, "You have a call,
Goodbye, Hello, Good Night."
Monica says Ciao to me every night,
But I will not repeat.

I eat lettuce, seeds and weekly treats,
I leave my house to play,
I fly around and sing my songs
: And scream and chatter for fun.
Frankie has to divert himself.

77.

*Frankie died Spring 2012.
We miss him.*



FRIEND AND FOE.

I've got fear under my skin,
Acquired or imposed
It's all the same.

It will stay as long
As I continue to grow,
Or take risks.
It is both friend and foe.

The only way
To lessen it
Is to move
Forward with life.

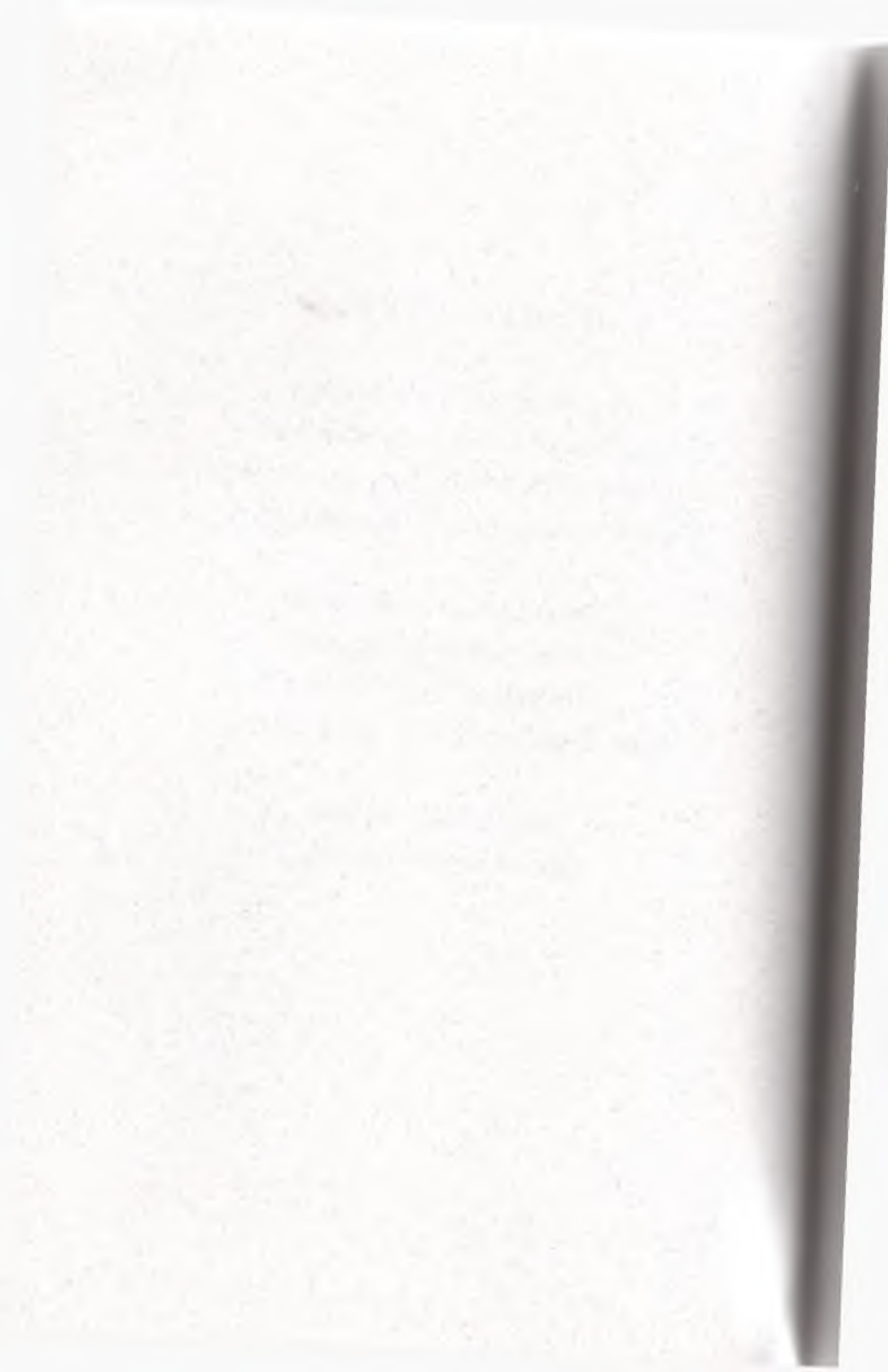


HOME COMING.

O to have a little house,
A place of shelter and hope,
A place where intimacy is fostered
To nurture mind, heart, and spirit.

Then the adventure of
Growth can progress,
The place from where
One flourishes and originates.

Spirituality is the
Art of homecoming.



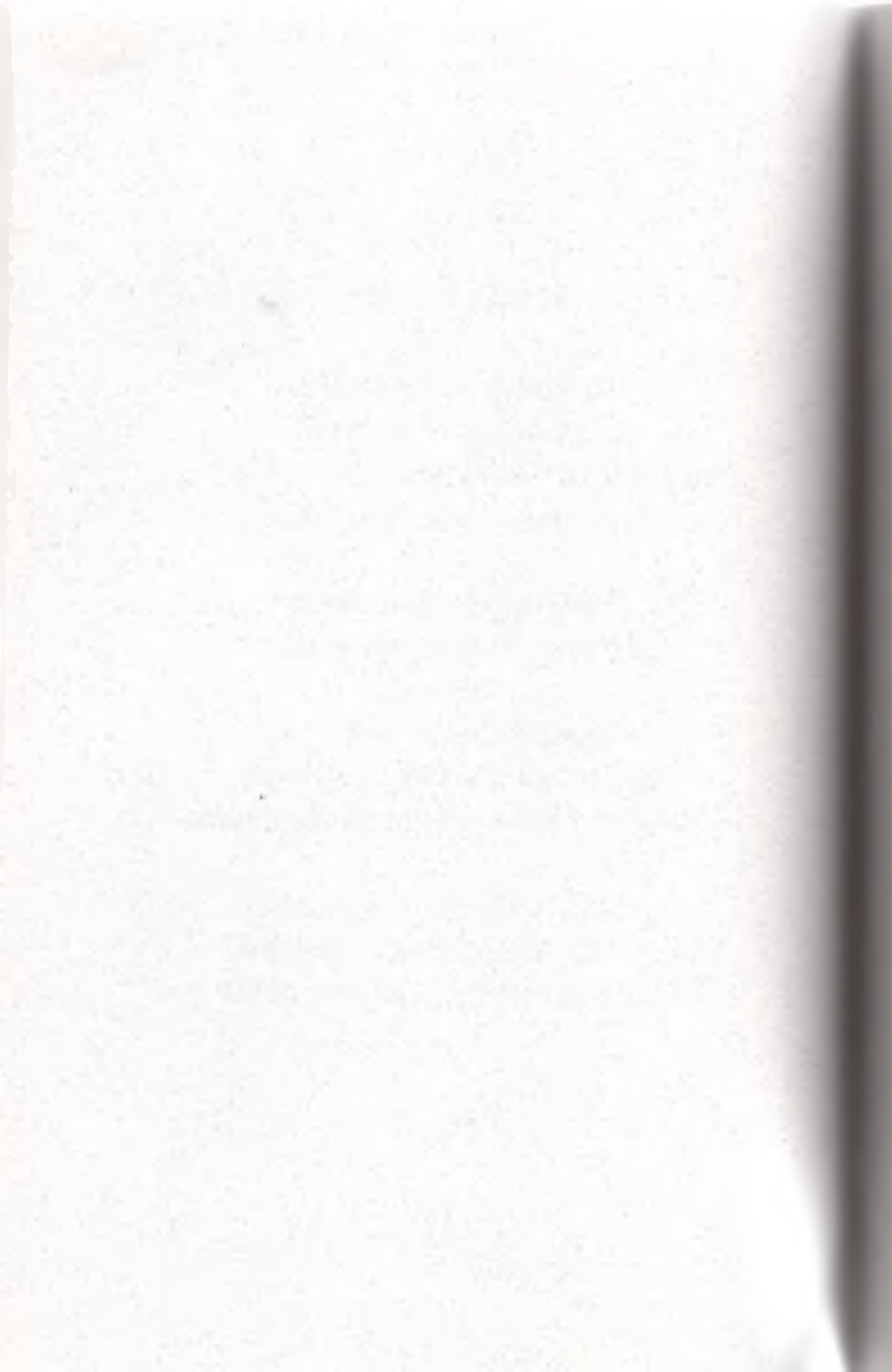
HARMONY.

Harmony so beautiful,
Is mostly rare as well.
Made up of sand and sea and sky
And loving hearts as well.

Harmony is also made
Of irritation and annoyance.

Harmony is color and music,
And peoples hearts together,
Harmony some people never attain.

Take your child's hand
And feel the harmony together.
Walk in empathy day by day.



LOSSES.

Grandmother,
Mother,
Daughters,
Sitting by an open fire.

Spinning,
Quilting,
Sewing,
Knitting,
All skills of years gone by.

Companionship,
Friendship,
Togetherness,
Problems solved,
Future plans discussed.

All these skills
Are now being lost.



LIVING IN LIGHT.

If at twilight,
You collected a
Million fireflies,
You could read
Mysteries
Under your blanket,
Without turning the light on,
All night long.



MISERY.

The mind is like a pincushion,
As a cloud of unmeaning
Broods behind
My appearance of contentment.

I begin to turn over
The pieces of my experience,
Looking for security.

Later the mind turns to
Mute comfort.
And a wish for
Abiding wholeness,
To put things rightly.



MIRACLES.

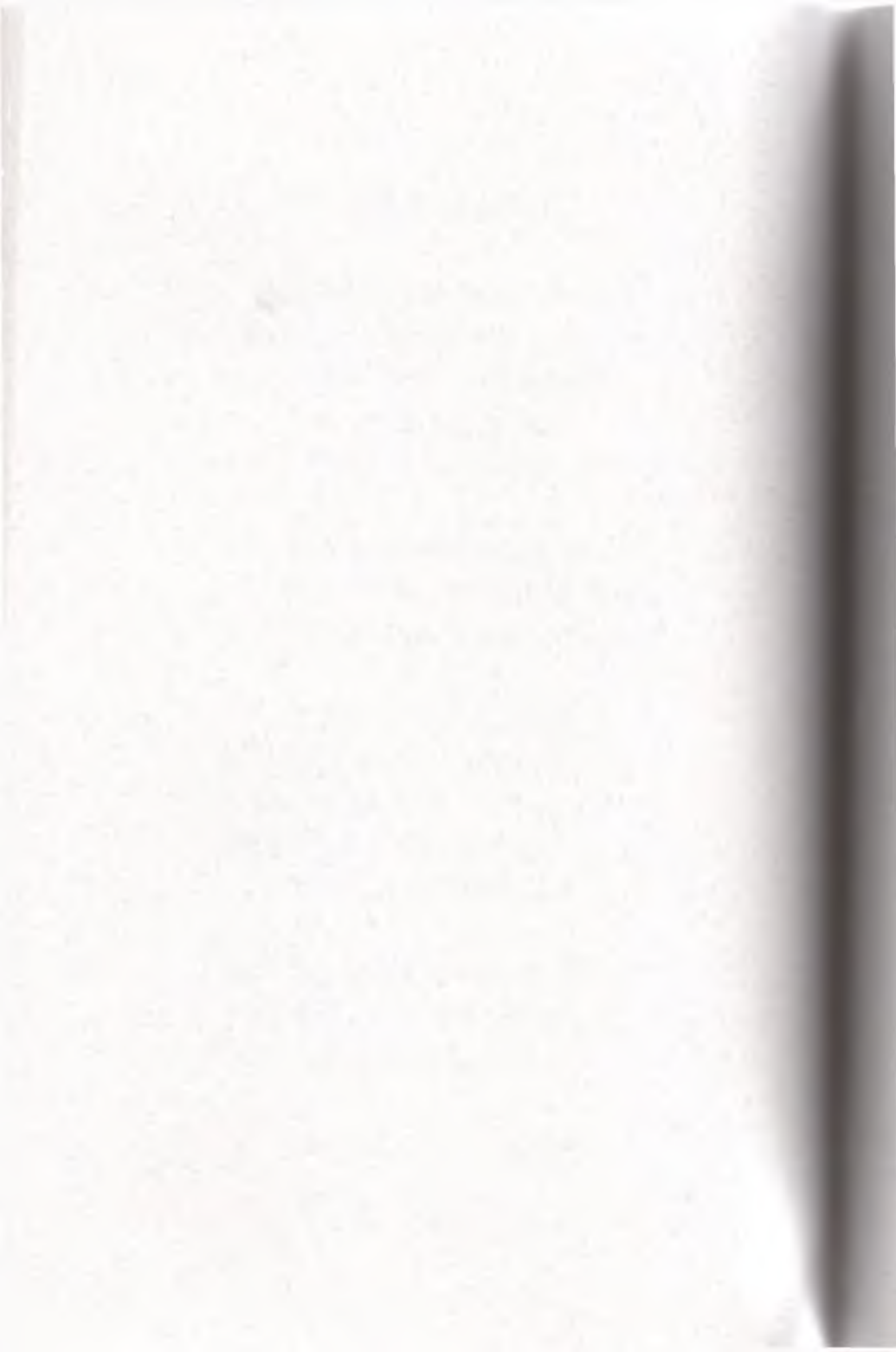
People wish for miracles,
To happen in the twinkling of an eye.
But do they ever realize
The great miracle
In the unfolding of their lives.

Look at the seasons within,
Look at the adventures of life
That challenge and comfort us.

Look for the messages,
People, Events,
Written or spoken words
Which come at the right time
And help us to grow.

Look at the ongoing process
The pain, the grief, the joy,
Of becoming who we are.

There is our miracle.



LOVE.

I love you a little,
I love you a lot.
My love for you
Would fill
10 pots,
25 buckets,
46 cans,
13 teacups
and
14 dishpans.

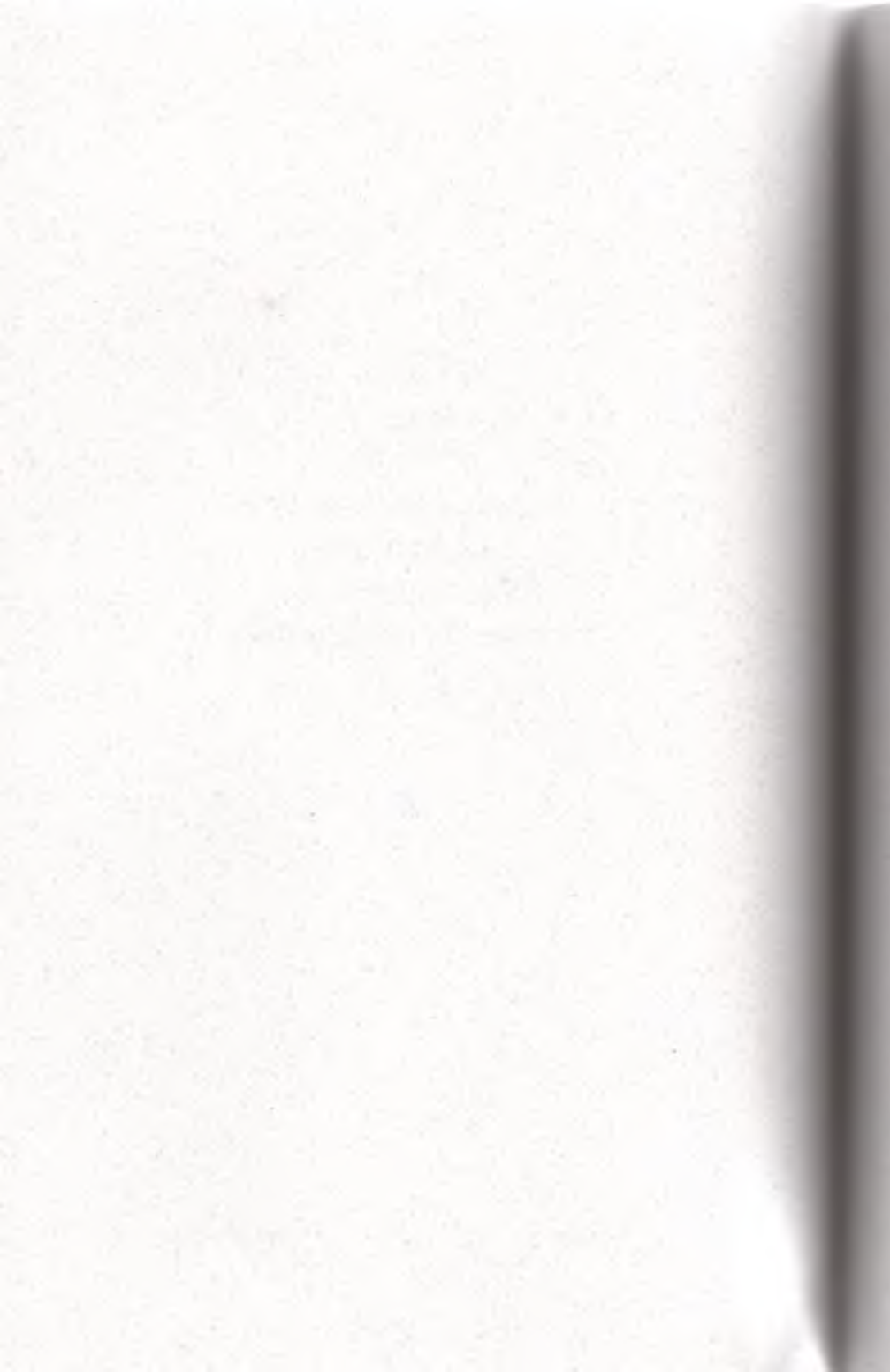
So be it.

Now I will wash
All these utensils.



IF.

If I were
A dragon
I'd spit
Roaring fire words
At anyone
Who came near
To threaten my solitude.



MOURNING.

I mourn the curls,
That fell off my head.
Now there's a bald spot
On me overhead.

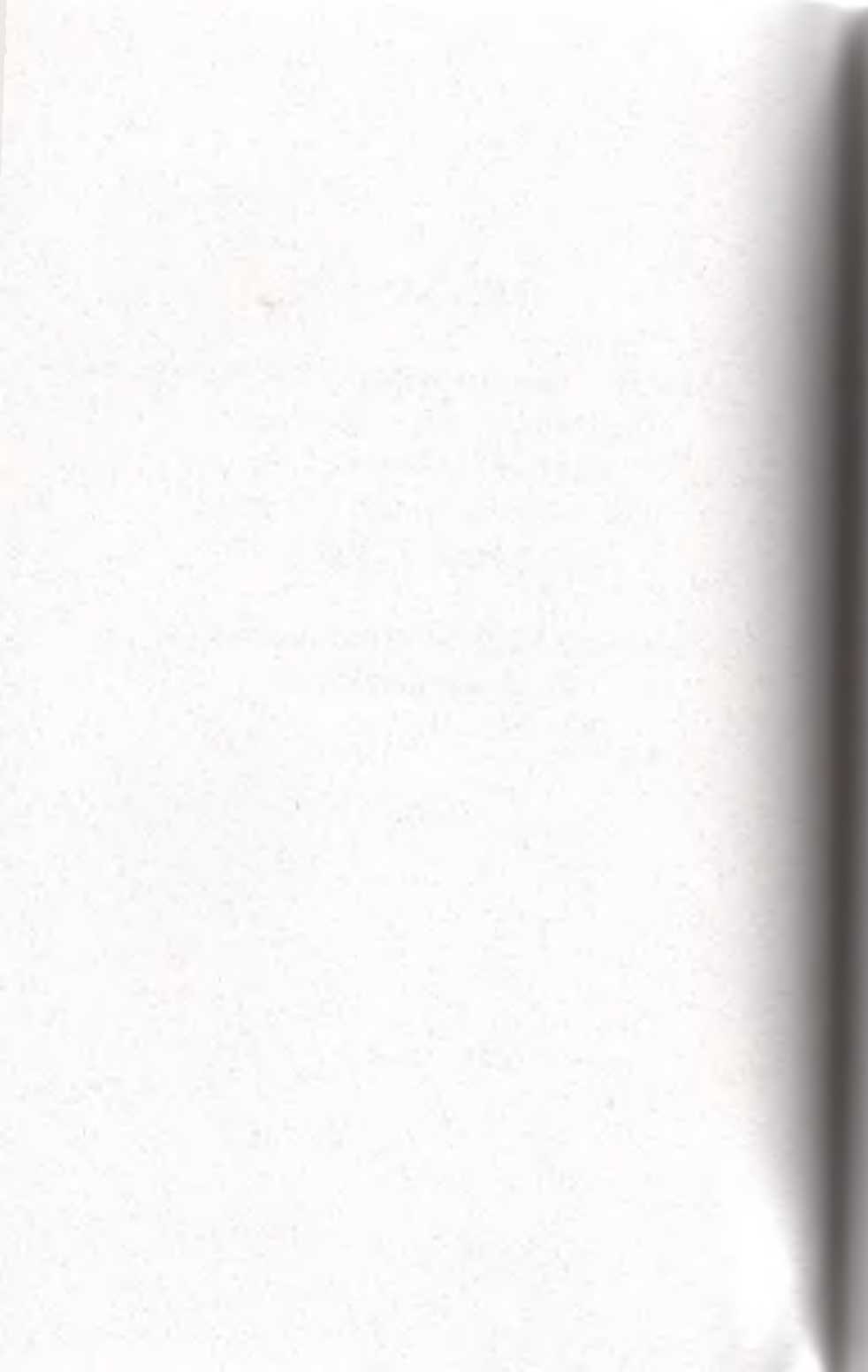
What will I do
If a little bird
Mistakes it for her egg?



MEANING.

Meaning has many shades and colors,
For different times and places,
For folks young and old,
For destinies woven of surety,
And for hesitant shy folks.

Meaning leads us to our destination
To an uncharted end.



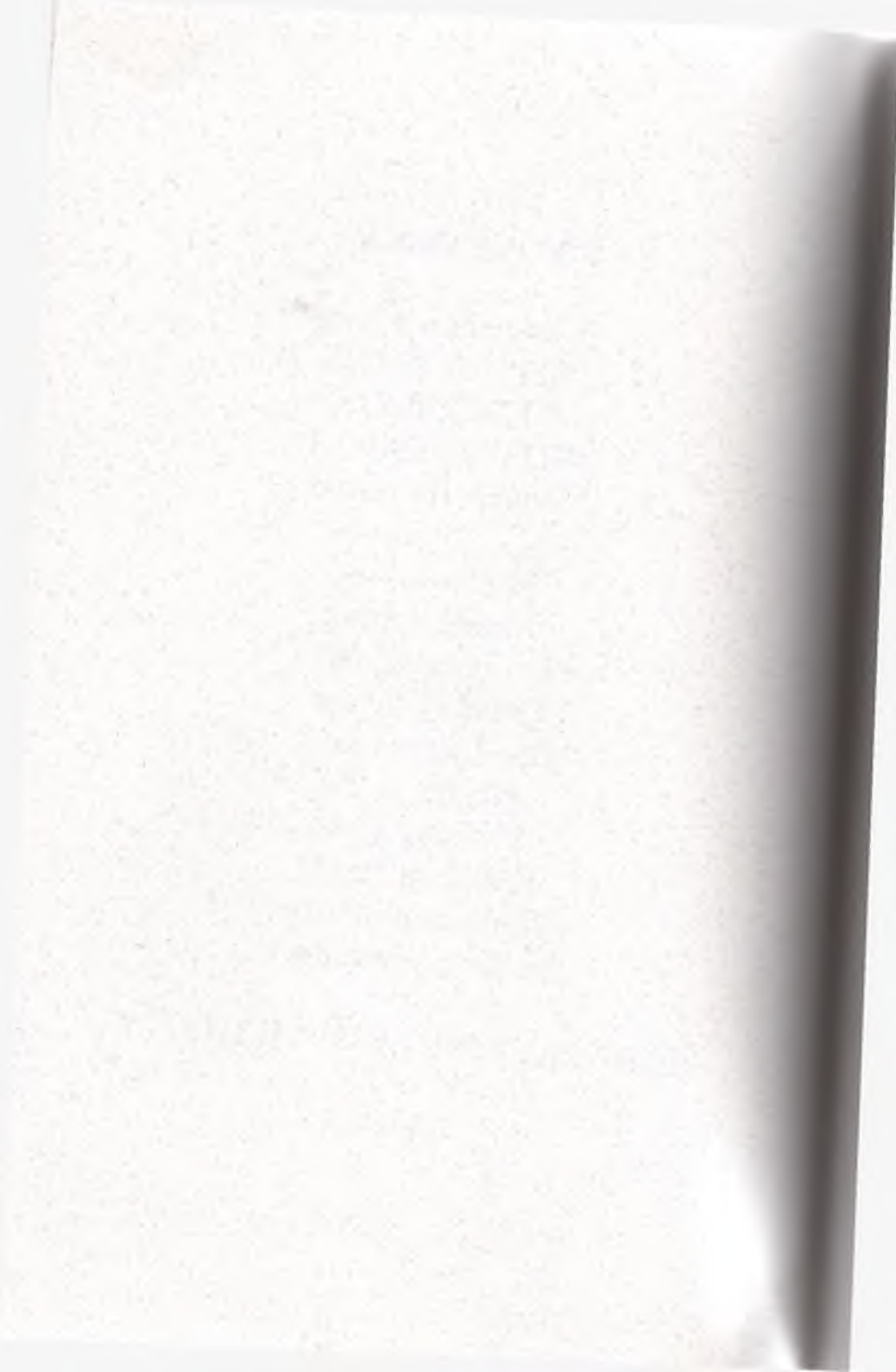
NOVEMBER.

Politicians are busy.

REPUBLICANS
DEMOCRATS
INDEPENDANTS.
Strivers for power

Name calling,
Hand clasping
Manipulating facts,
Granting favors,
Handing out jobs,
Making deals,
Twisting arms,
Knocking heads,
Being paternalistic,
Preferred treatment,

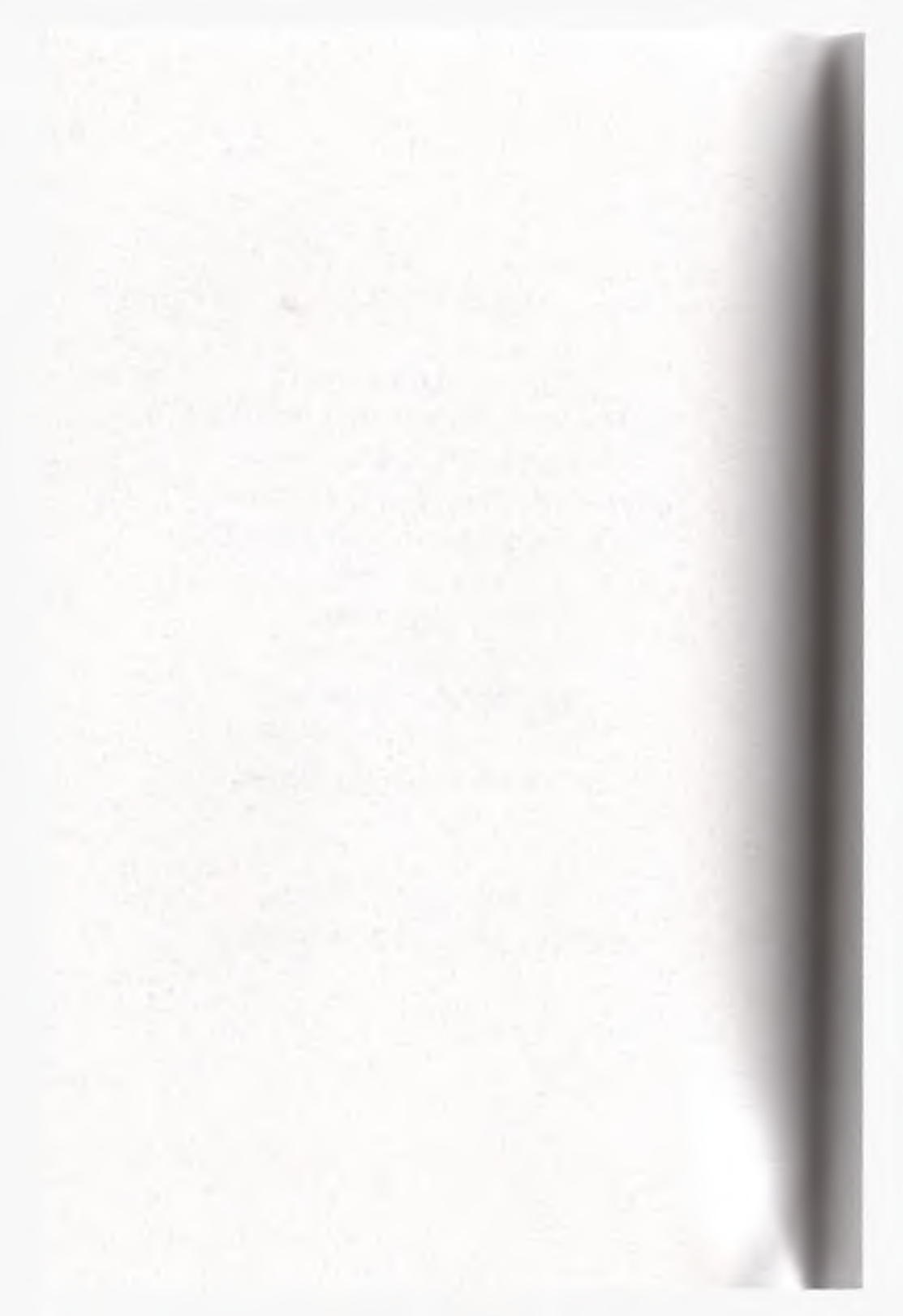
HOW CAN ONE BELIEVE THEM ?



OLD TIMES.

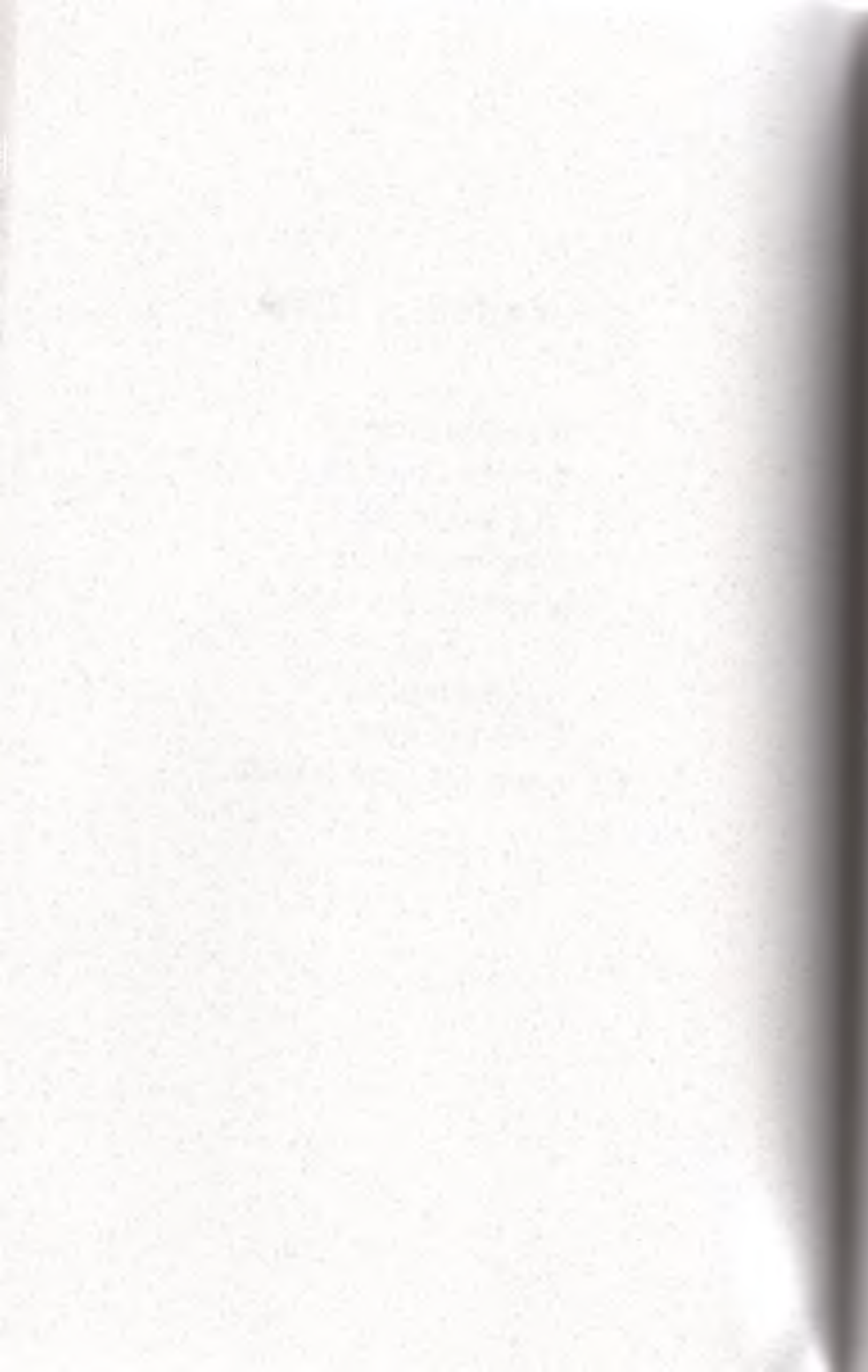
Don't step on a crack,
Cross your fingers behind your back
When you lie to your Mom.
Throw salt over your left shoulder.
Hop seven times on your right foot
For good luck.
Wish upon a star,
Don't yell in church
(you'll wake people up)
Don't smile at a stranger.
Don't whistle in the house.

Watch out Dr. Jung,
Here are some new archetypes.



ONCE UPON A TIME.

There was an elf
Named Lou-Lou,
He does all
Santa wants him to,
Where his red shirt
And
Green pants
Don't meet,
He makes his little skin do.

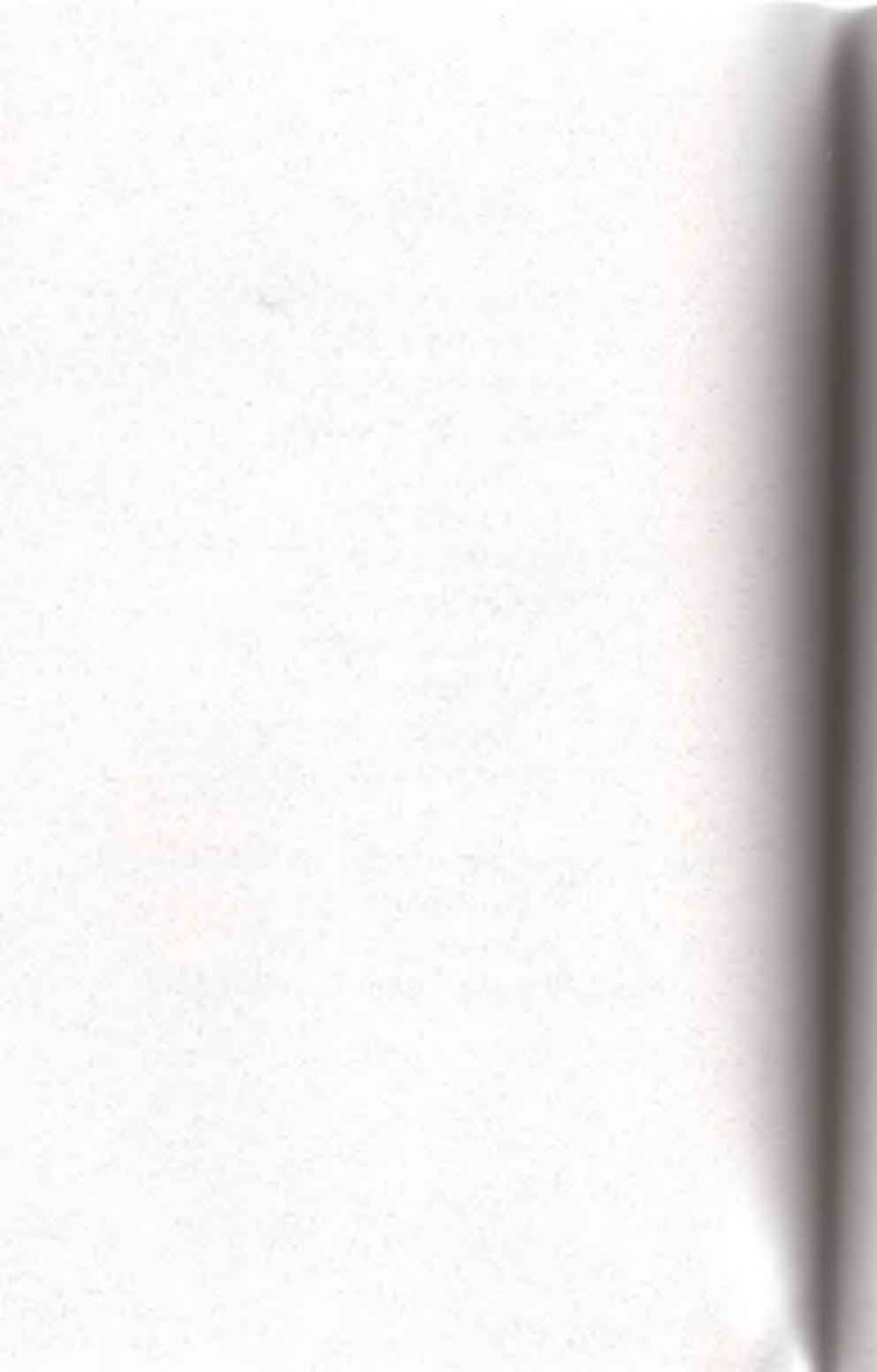


A PUZZLE.

What are sweetbreads?
Do you know?
Are they really sweet
And made of dough?

Long ago
When knights went to pillage villages,
Ladies stayed home.
They cooked sweetbreads
And brewed mead,
To restore energy to
Their stalwart men.

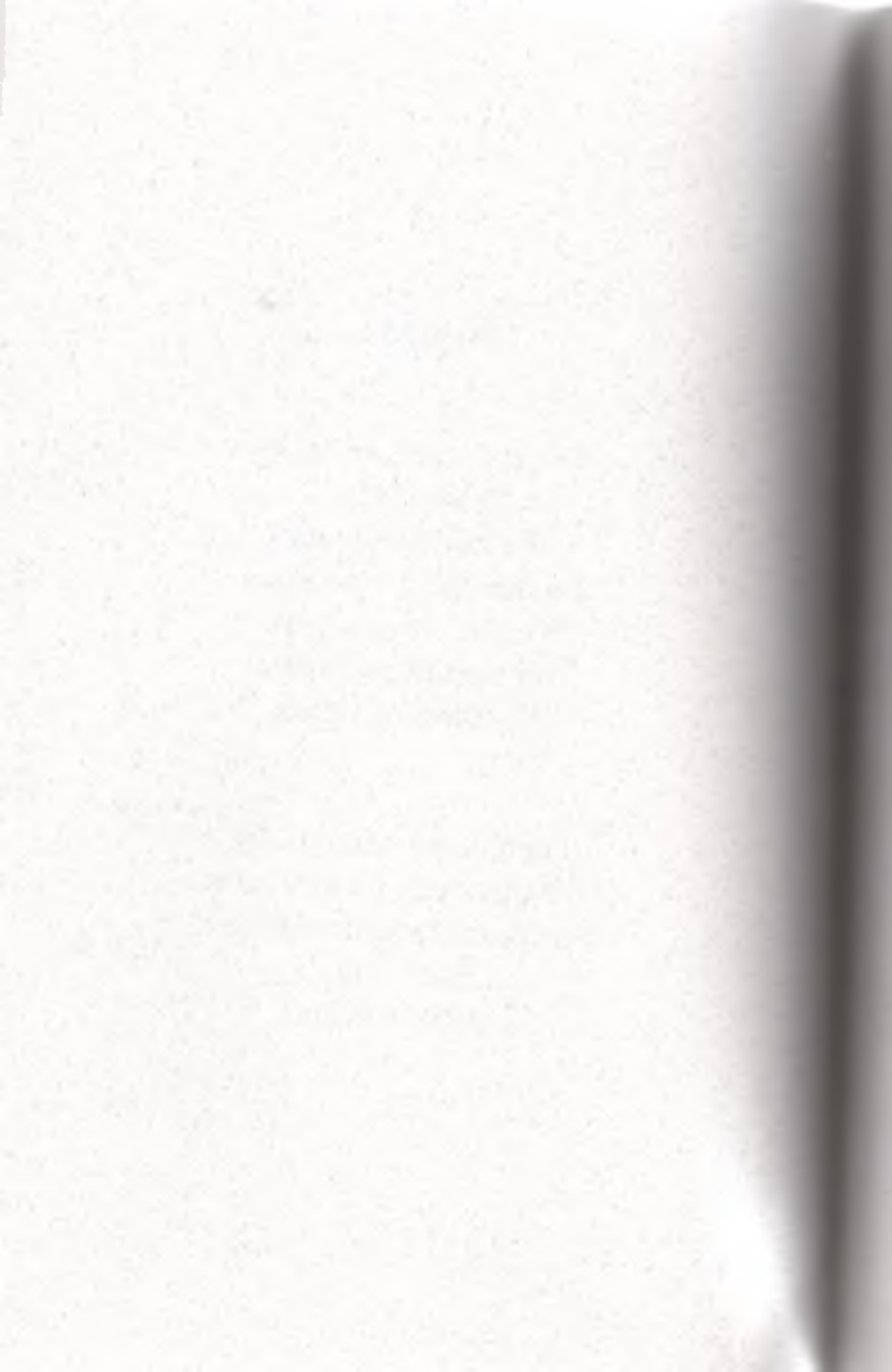
Did they give them sugar on their bread?
Or a sticky bun?
Ask Emeril the Chef
He will know about sweetbreads.



RISING.

We rise each morning
From sleep,
We rise from pain
We rise from loneliness.
We rise from sorrow
We rise from anger,
We rise from tears.

There is no need to die
To experience resurrection.
The miracle is manifested
Each day.
God is at work.



ROADS.

Roads that are straight,
And that end at a gate,
Are not half
So inviting to follow.
As the long roads
That twist,
And get lost in the mist,
And end up
At a cliff,
With the ocean below.



ROMANCE.

There was a young man
On a date,
In his convertible,
With a new mate.
He admired the way
Her long hair moved in the air,
And savored the wind on his face.

He soon had to stop.
To his chagrin and shock,
To retrieve the long hair.
From the highway.



THE BENCH.

It is not a bench
Where a judge sits.
Or that lawyers approach.
Or criminals stand before
To hear their fate.
It is a wooden bench
Placed near a dark door.

Tiny spiders traverse its surface.
Small ants hide in its crevices,
At twilight deer come up
To investigate it.
Sometimes at moonrise
A lone skinny coyote
Comes to examine Its surface.

CONT.



THE BENCH CONT.

Its purpose is for rest,
Or for Seniors to enjoy,
To share a conversation,
Or a memory, or gossip.
Secrets are shared here,
And blessings exchanged.

Who would think
A lone bench
Could be a haven for life.

96A.



THE GOLDEN YEARS.

They say old age is golden,
But it is sadly tarnished
By losses.

Loss of vision, of hearing,
Of mobility, of comprehension.
Losses mourned daily.

Pain is the gatekeeper of
The golden age.



THE SHAPESHIFTER.

The body expands
Grows, plays, exercises,
Expands up and out.

The mind expands
Communicates
Interacts
Studies.

The spirit expands,
Succeeds,
Loves
Accepts,
Affirms,
Laughs.

All three are leading us
Toward the eternal.



TRANSITIONS.

Looking in the mirror,
At the old robe,
Worn, thin in places,
Familiar.

A new robe?
I don't wait to see how it fits
Back to the old and familiar.

I look in the mirror,
The new robe is awkward
And uncomfortable.
Perhaps it will bring me
Blessings unknown.
Leading me to touch the sacred.
So goes a transition.



WEEKEND.

The best thing about Saturday,
Is waking up slowly
And clinging to a half dream state.
The sunlight shines through the trees,
Slides through the windows,
Dances slowly up the wall.

Knowing nothing absolutely
Has to be done.

And there could be a
Thousand opportunities.

All there was ,was Saturday,
And the lazy enjoyment of it.



WINTER EVENING.

The dim light of the dying evening,
Spills through the windows.
It is twilight.

The trees are dark and denuded,
But for the ice
That covers twig and branch,
There is a chilly window
Between winter and spring.



THE WISHER.

She went to the store,
She bought a lotto ticket
She said
O my God let me win.

She waited two days,
Nothing happened,
The deity in question
Was out to lunch.



THE WORD.

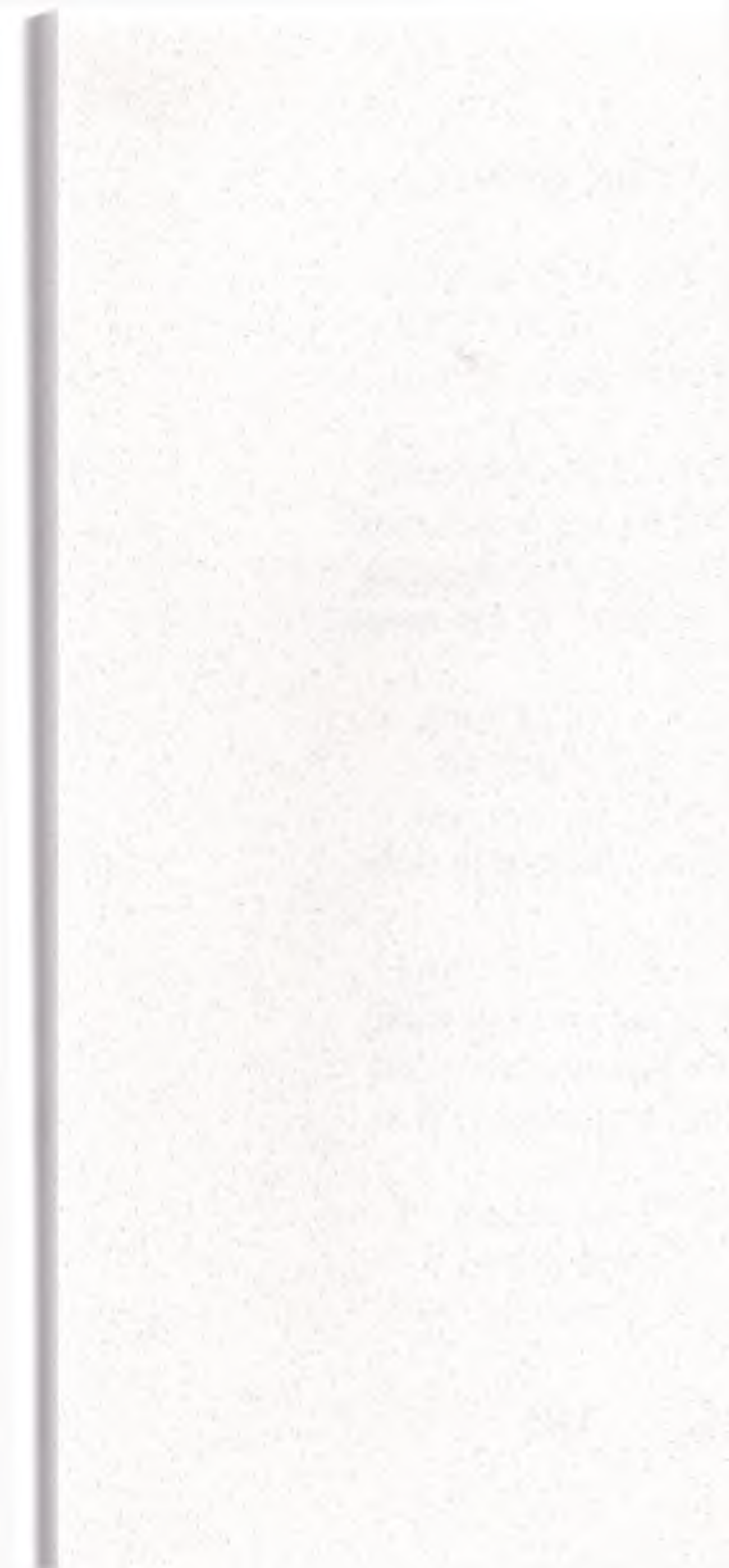
The Word speaks
As it did to Elijah
In the gentle breeze.

A word of wondering
What makes words work
To keep alive meaning
In the corridors of our memory?

A word of hope.
For if a thing
Can be dreamed
It becomes real in time.

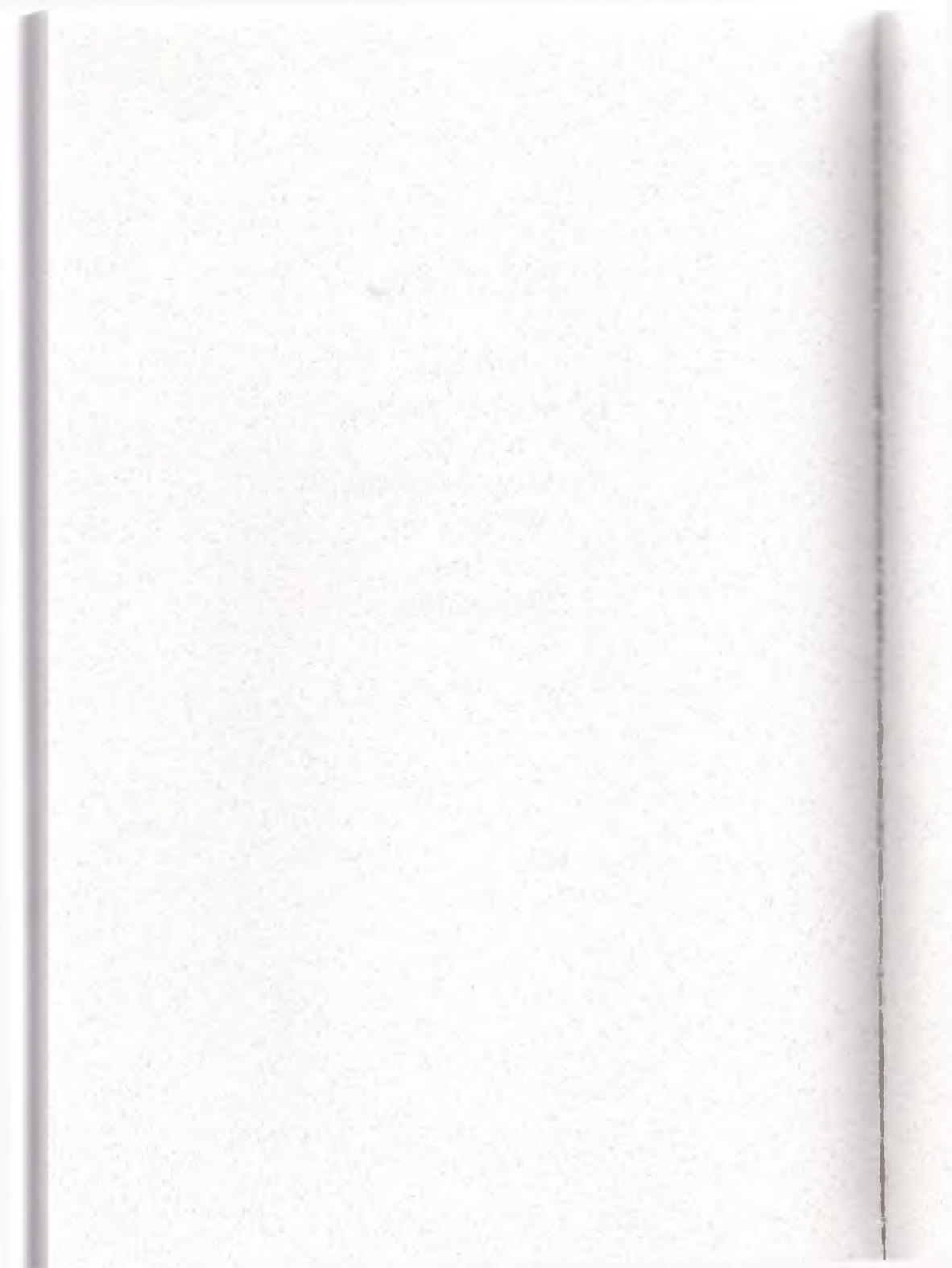
A word of waiting
For the word of truth
To be comprehended
And vision takes it in.

God speaks
And listens
Eternally.



FINALITY.

The end
Is not a termination,
It is just
Holding its breath,
Waiting for
**A New
Beginning.**



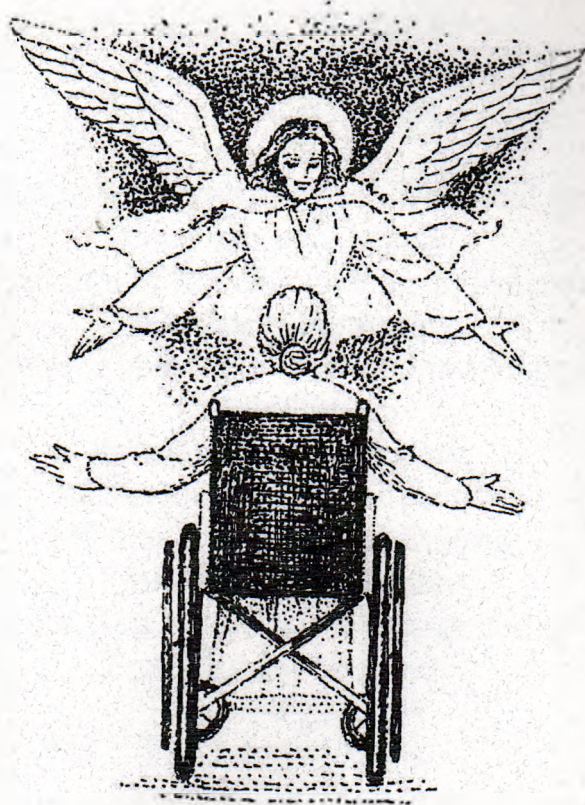
ENDING.

To flowing grasses,
On we go
At the end.

To sparkling waters,
On we go
At the end.

To angel's arms
And wings
Outstretched
We go at the end.

To eternal bliss,
We go
At the end.

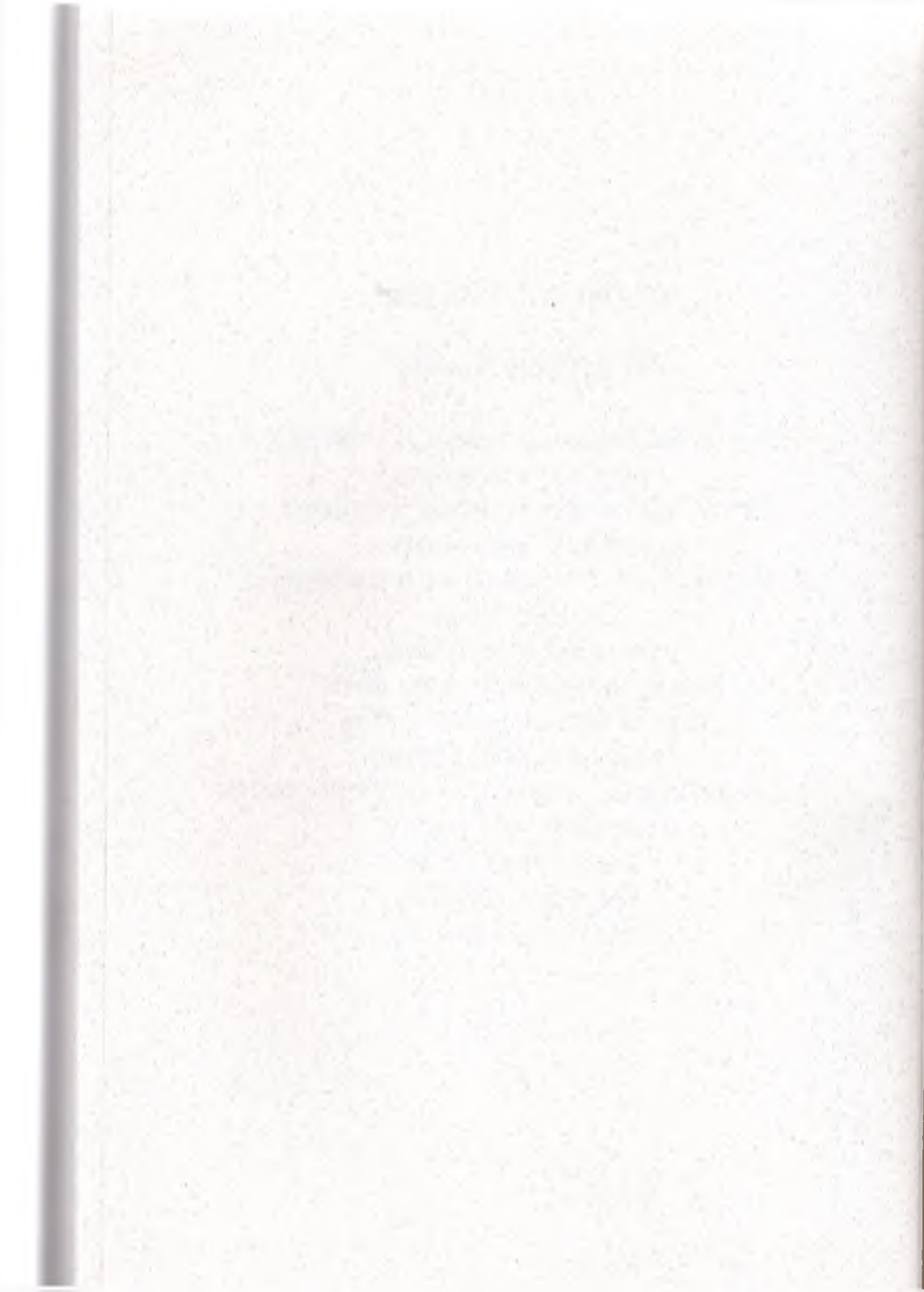




CLOSING PRAYER.

By J. Philip Newell.

That in the elements of earth, sea and sky
I may see your beauty,
That in wild winds, birdsong and silence
I may hear your beauty,
That in the body of another and intermingling
Of relationship
I may touch your beauty,
That in the moisture of the earth
And its flowering and fruiting
I may smell your beauty,
That in the flowing waters of springs and streams
: I may taste your beauty,
These things I look
For today, O GOD
These things I look for.





Sister Monica Melvin
Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary

August 9, 1938 – September 9, 2012

Sister Monica was an active member of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary for over 50 years.

Her wide and varied experience include earning a Master's Degree in Social Work at Fordham University; working with the aged at Catholic Family Services of NYC. She was an educator for many years, teaching children in NYC and Medellin and Barranquilla Colombia.

As a poet she has touched the lives of many people, reminding us that life is both an individual and shared journey of the mind, the body, the emotions and most of all the Spirit.

If you would like to receive a copy of this book, make a donation in check or money order in the amount of \$20.00, payable to: Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

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