

THE VALLEY
a keeping

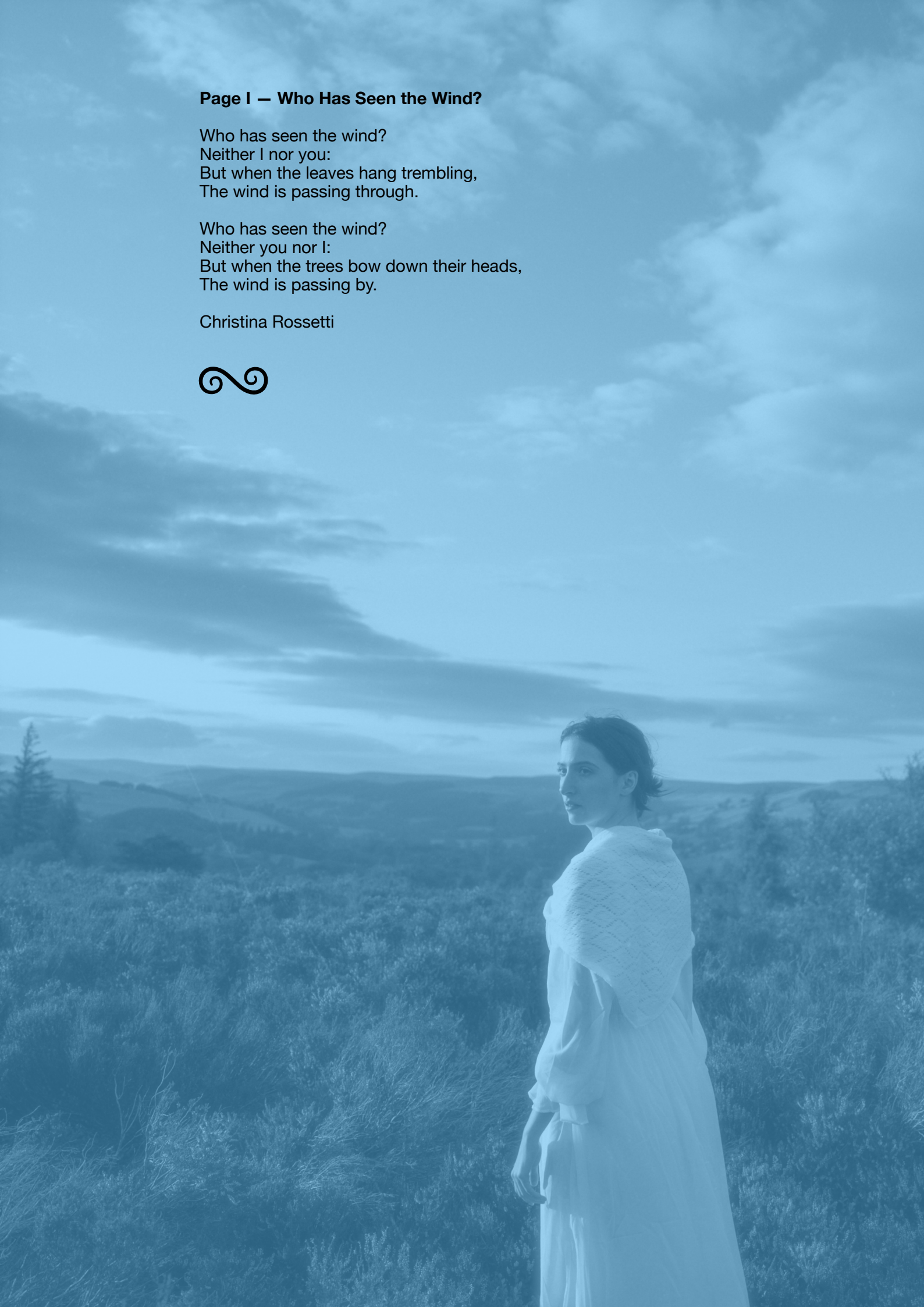


Page I — Who Has Seen the Wind?

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

Christina Rossetti



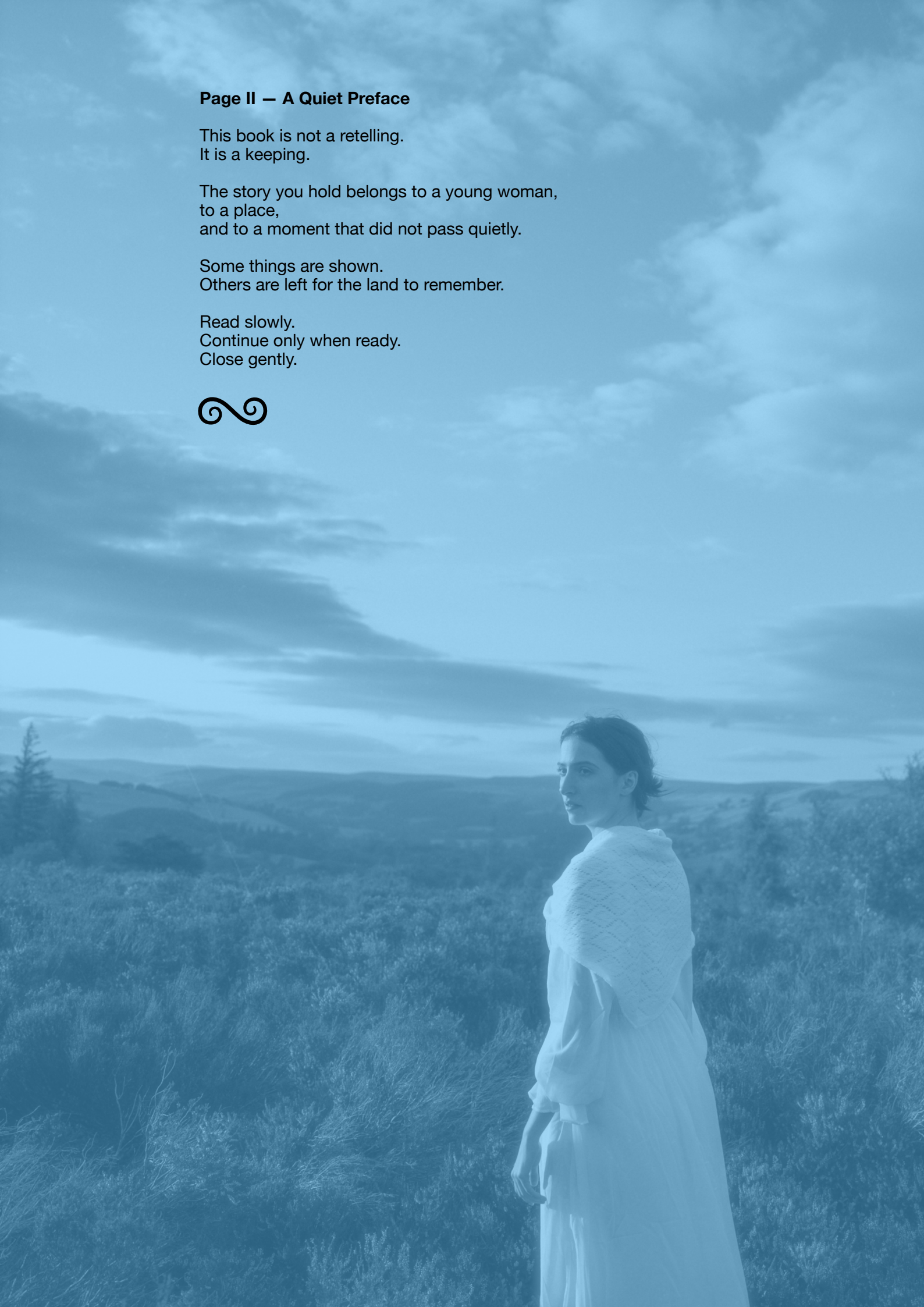
Page II — A Quiet Preface

This book is not a retelling.
It is a keeping.

The story you hold belongs to a young woman,
to a place,
and to a moment that did not pass quietly.

Some things are shown.
Others are left for the land to remember.

Read slowly.
Continue only when ready.
Close gently.



Page IIa — On Moments

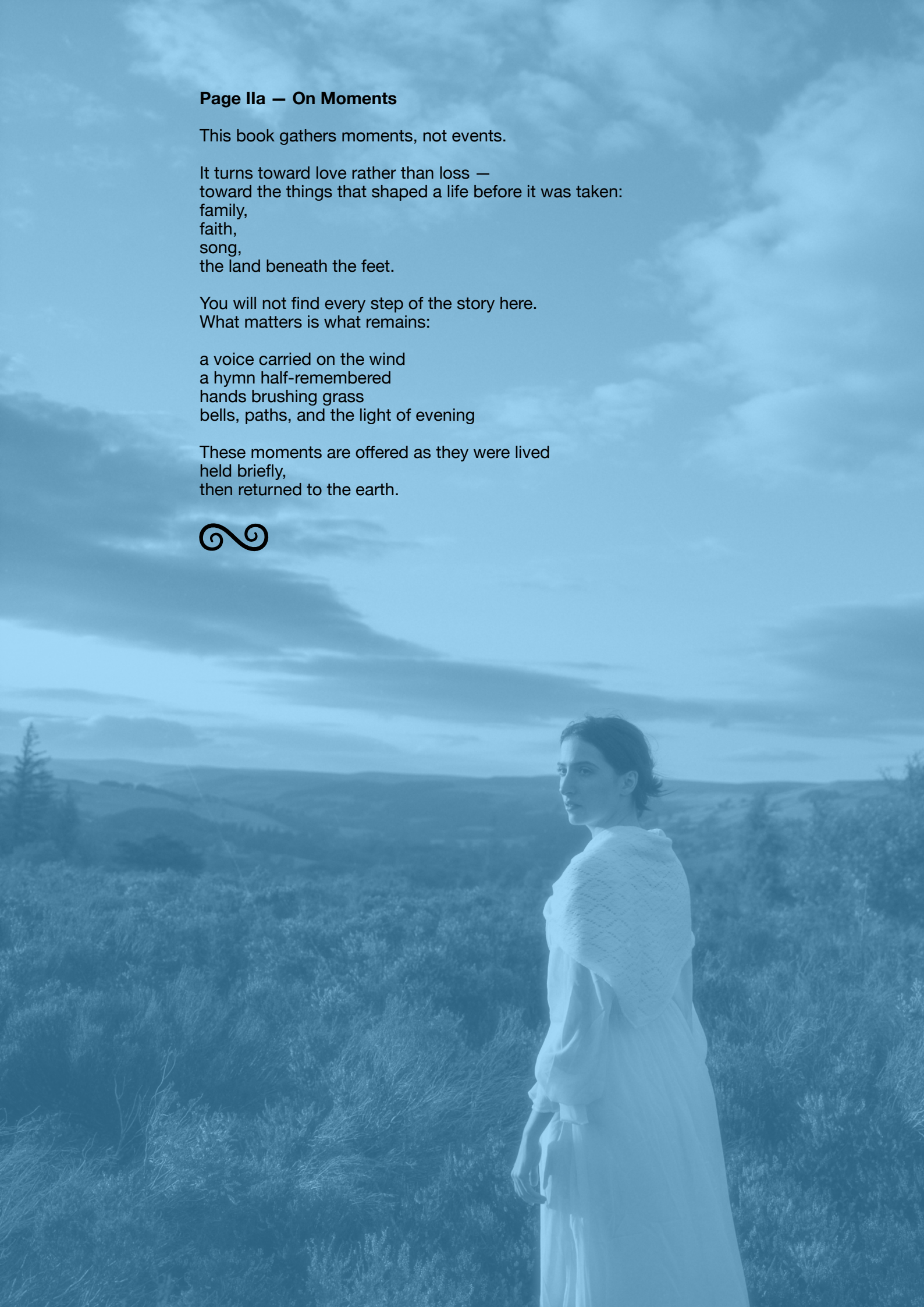
This book gathers moments, not events.

It turns toward love rather than loss —
toward the things that shaped a life before it was taken:
family,
faith,
song,
the land beneath the feet.

You will not find every step of the story here.
What matters is what remains:

a voice carried on the wind
a hymn half-remembered
hands brushing grass
bells, paths, and the light of evening

These moments are offered as they were lived
held briefly,
then returned to the earth.



Page III — Nidd Valley

Footsteps flow gracefully across the valley's floor,
like a dance of remembrance.

We glide over glacial lands,
stone carved from rock beneath our soles, souls.

Our memories fade too fast.
Graveyards still in the summer air.

Sweet perfume kisses our senses.
Our cheeks blush in the sun's gaze.

...abide with me...

Earth remembers its tune.
The grass gracious to the end.

...there is a happy land...

Places unknown to you.

Our will is not our command.

A land of remembrance
is beyond our dream.

...far, far away...

...the darkness deepens...

The deeper we see.

Close me for a while
and look.



Page IV — Hartwith Moor

Low mist curls like a wolf
at the feet of its master.

Sprigs of arctic white heather
dance on the breeze.

Barefoot.
Graceful.
Free.

Alone —
but not unseen.

She is smart, active, yet delicate,
rather below medium height,
with a sprightly demeanour.

Her white Sunday dress
catches in the wind
as she dances among the heather.

At the edges of sight,
FAIRIES flicker —
brief flashes of old folklore,
there,
then not.

The gaze —
still.
Silent.

Her eyes wide:
not afraid,
but knowing.

Above her,
a star-filled sky.

Polaris shines steady —
a promise
in the dark.



Page V — Hartwith Chapel (Afternoon Tide)

The chapel bell continues —
ethereal.

Glimpses of people
passing in and out of light.

God's congregation oozes into the afternoon,
lungs filling with fresh, chattering air.

The fold unfolds.

Bees murmur.
A lazy, soft shuffle of bodies.
The rustle of Sunday best.

Hymn lines drift,
still clinging to memory.

The chapel door groans shut.

Fingers brush against tall grass.

She hums —
a snatch of a hymn
half-remembered.

The sun snuggles her shoulder.

Heaven on earth.

There is a happy land...
far, far away...



INTERLUDE — The Secret Place

(unnumbered)

Evening light drifts through the trees —
gold,
and fading.

A narrow woodland path.
Laughter, soft.

A lone yew tree,
hung with ribbons
drifting like spirits in the air.

Wind.
Distant bells.

A thought, held close:

What is this place?

My secret place.
Only I know of it.

Where I go
when I feel sad,
or happy.

Her eyes bright —
childlike.

Somewhere to make my dreams.

These are all my dreams.

This one's us.
These are our children.
Our home.

My family's with our Lord —
ribbons for the women,
kersey cloth for the men.

Dreams.
Prayers.



Page VI — Home — Skaife Cottage

Stone gathers the evening.

Home —
a place of love.

The house holds its breath
as she crosses the threshold —
not dramatic,
just known.

Beams dark with age
carry the weight of years.
Walls remember hands leaned against them,
backs rested,
heads bowed.

Light settles low.

Three flames tremble on the table,
their glow caught in crockery,
in the soft dents of wood
worn smooth by use.

A clock keeps time
without hurry.

Outside, the yard breathes.

Cows shift their weight,
leather-soft sounds in the dark.
A horse stamps once —
patient,
waiting.

From the sty, a pig grunts —
settling,
safe.

The living sounds of keeping.

Fields hug this place.

Beyond the yard,
water lies still.

Ponds cupped by earth,
paths known without thought.

She has sat here.
Let the day idle.
Watched light pass
across the skin of water.

Nearby,
the working mill turns —
Fringill Mill,
bound to water.



Flax drawn,
thread spun,
the slow labour of making.

water pushes in
silver steam clouds gather
gas, oil giggle
Currents flow free

The mill endures.
So does the sound of it.

Inside, everything is familiar.
Chair.
Table.
Fire waiting to be fed.

A Bible rests where it belongs —
not opened,
but present.

This is a place of listening.

Of warnings spoken quietly,
not to wound
but to protect.

Of love that sees ahead
when youth cannot.

She sits, straight-backed,
as she always has.

Her hand slips to her pocket —
not to reveal,
only to reassure.

Silver cool against the skin.
Folded cloths, kept close.
Dreams tucked carefully away.

Nothing here rushes her.

The house does not judge.
It holds.

Outside, an animal shifts again.
Breath steams.
Hooves scuff earth.

The wind lifts, then eases.

The candles gutter —
but stay lit.

The wind remembers. The home.



Ancestral Echo — Ripley

(unnumbered)

Deep in a vale this ancient village stands,
An emblem fair of famed Elysian lands.

'Tis here the primrose finds its early bed,
And here the snowdrop hangs its spotless head.

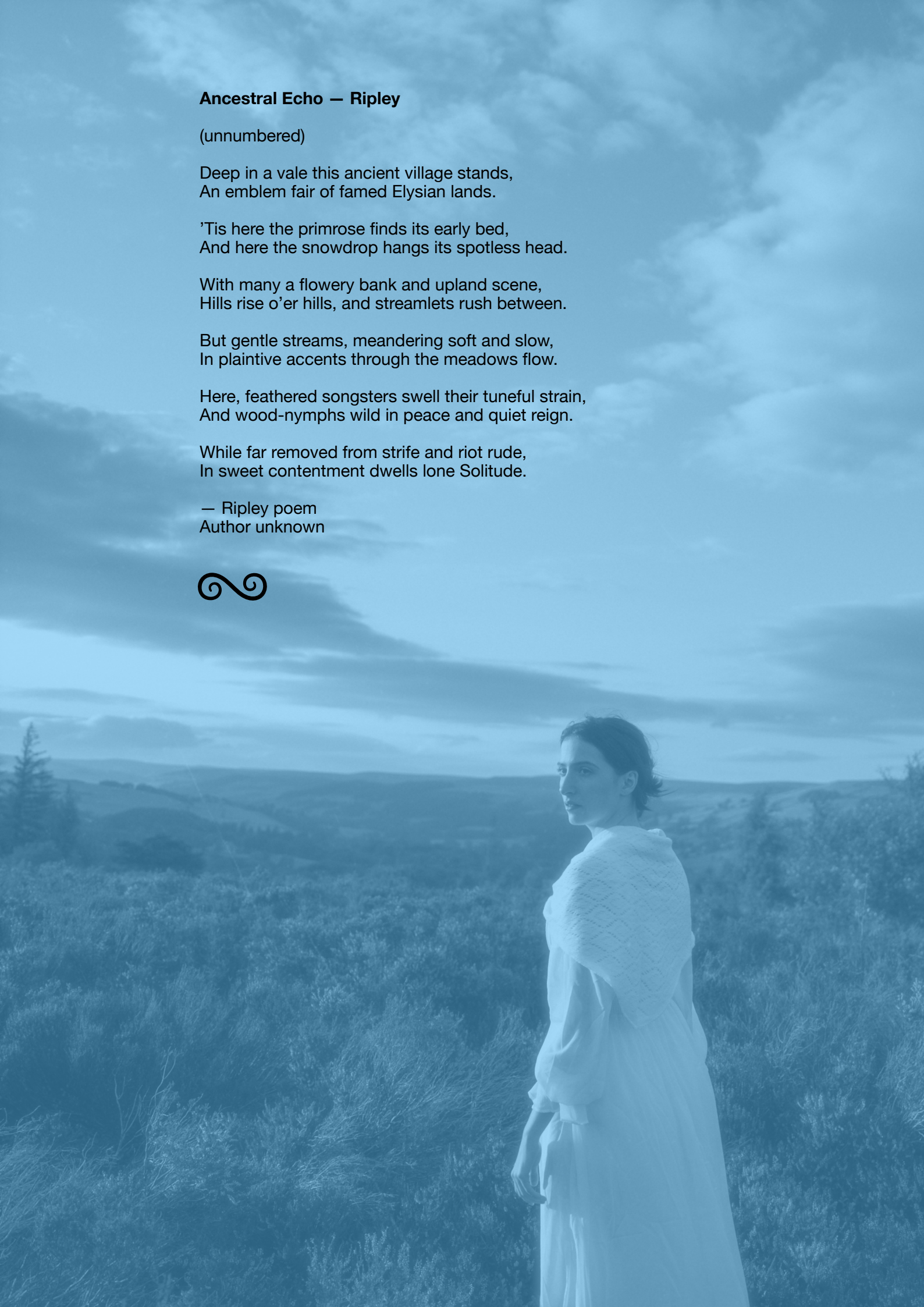
With many a flowery bank and upland scene,
Hills rise o'er hills, and streamlets rush between.

But gentle streams, meandering soft and slow,
In plaintive accents through the meadows flow.

Here, feathered songsters swell their tuneful strain,
And wood-nymphs wild in peace and quiet reign.

While far removed from strife and riot rude,
In sweet contentment dwells lone Solitude.

— Ripley poem
Author unknown



Page VII — Night — Eventide

Abide with me;
fast falls the eventide...

Moonlight spills across the rugged field.

Along the drystone wall,
a small flock of sheep huddle —
pale fleeces pressed to stone,
seeking comfort
from the earth itself.

The moon bleaches them white.

Wind moves low across the field,
a long, grieving sound.

From nowhere,
glimmers lift —
FAIRIES,
not seen whole,
only hinted:
twinkling specks
rising,
drifting,
gone.

Near her hand
lie a primrose,
a Bible,
an ancient silver box.

Her fingers are curled —
almost still holding them.

The stars fade,
one by one.

But the North Star remains —
steady
in the thinning dark.

It glows above the valley,
a silent witness,
a guide home.

Hold —
eyes lifted toward heaven.

On the wind,
faint children's voices begin to rise...



Afterword — The Nidd

The river does not stop.

Born high on the moor —
stone holding sky.
Waters gather
beneath Great Whernside.

An ancient tongue
named it
bright,
brilliant —
a shining river
moving through shadow.

Downward.

Through dale.
Pasture.
Wooded bends.
Open fields.

Villages raised.
Unraised.

Churches older than memory.
Trees counting centuries.
Hands that worked.
Prayed.
Waited.
Slept.

The river keeps its own counsel.

Quiet.

But there are moments
when the river speaks.

It gathers
to pass its waters on.

Becks.
Streams.

At the Gauge
it rises.

Rain from high ground.
Snowmelt.



The weight of days.

Measured
not to master it
but to listen.
To watch.
To be warned.

The shining river becomes force.

It carries
what the land gives —
footsteps,
fragments,
names spoken once
and never again.

At last —
the wide plains.

Old ways.
Stone paths.
Crossings watched.

The giving-over
to a greater river.

The Ouse.

No loss of name.
No loss of purpose.

It remembers.

What is taken
returns to it.

What is given
flows on.



TEMPUS MANET

