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# A Human Life

a book of poems

by  
pc keeper

book four



# A Human Life

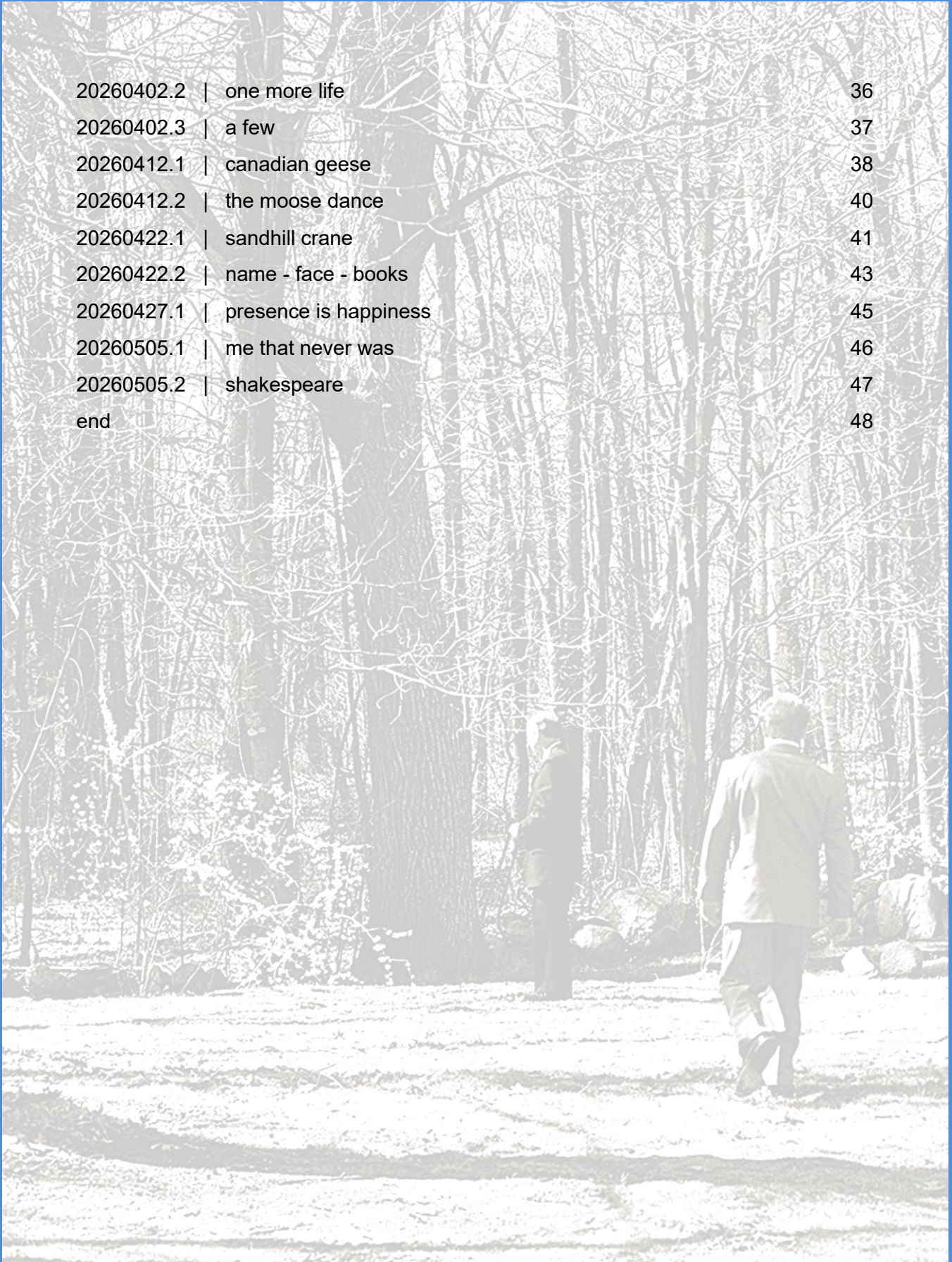
by  
pc keefer

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## 20251105.1 | kids

I've experienced over five decades

Childhood was beautiful: loving, secure family

Teen years were great: friends, laughter, exploration

Twenties were fun: education, travel

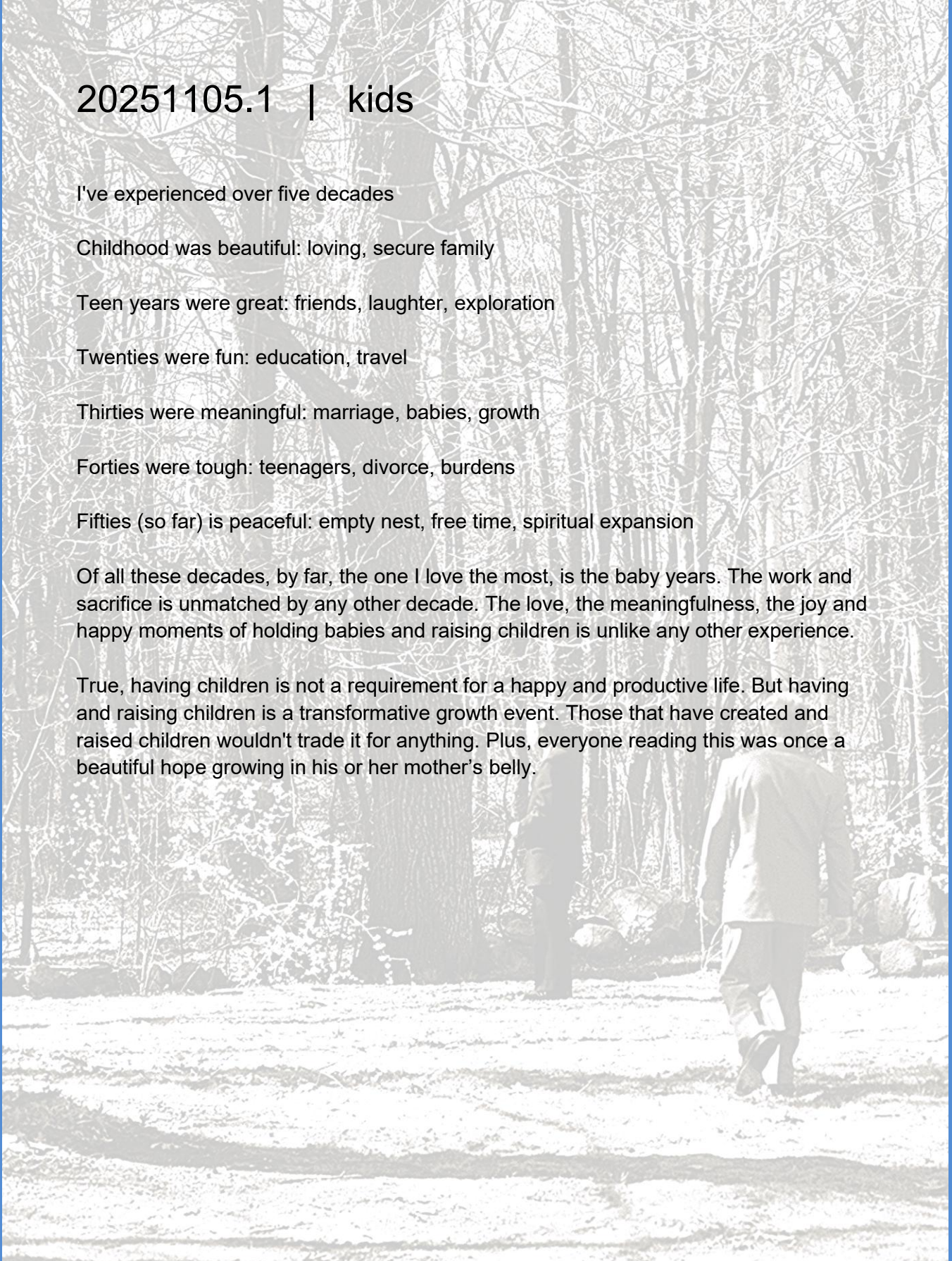
Thirties were meaningful: marriage, babies, growth

Forties were tough: teenagers, divorce, burdens

Fifties (so far) is peaceful: empty nest, free time, spiritual expansion

Of all these decades, by far, the one I love the most, is the baby years. The work and sacrifice is unmatched by any other decade. The love, the meaningfulness, the joy and happy moments of holding babies and raising children is unlike any other experience.

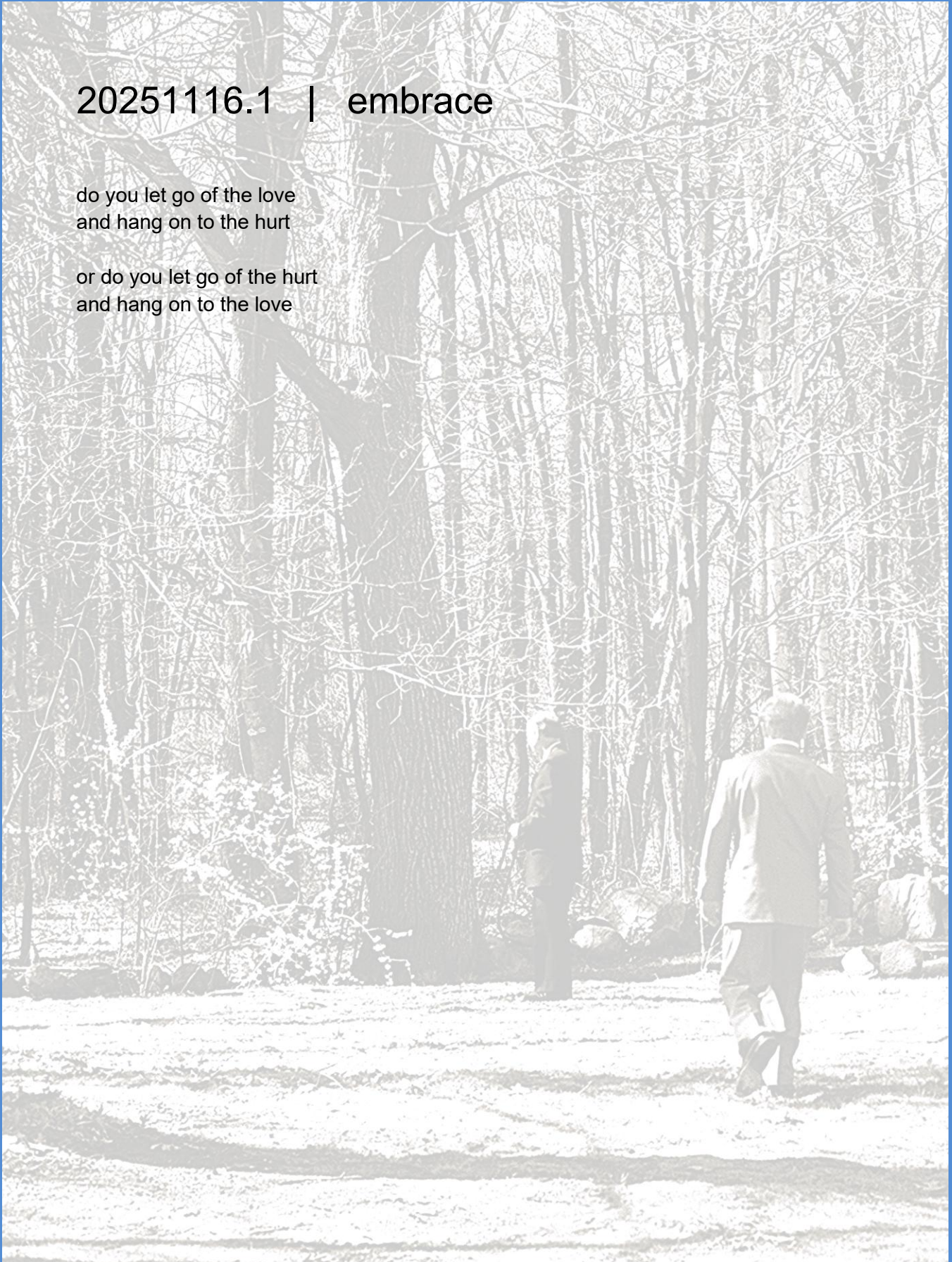
True, having children is not a requirement for a happy and productive life. But having and raising children is a transformative growth event. Those that have created and raised children wouldn't trade it for anything. Plus, everyone reading this was once a beautiful hope growing in his or her mother's belly.



20251116.1 | embrace

do you let go of the love  
and hang on to the hurt

or do you let go of the hurt  
and hang on to the love



## 20251124.1 | motion

i want to be hot in the summer

i want to be cold in the winter

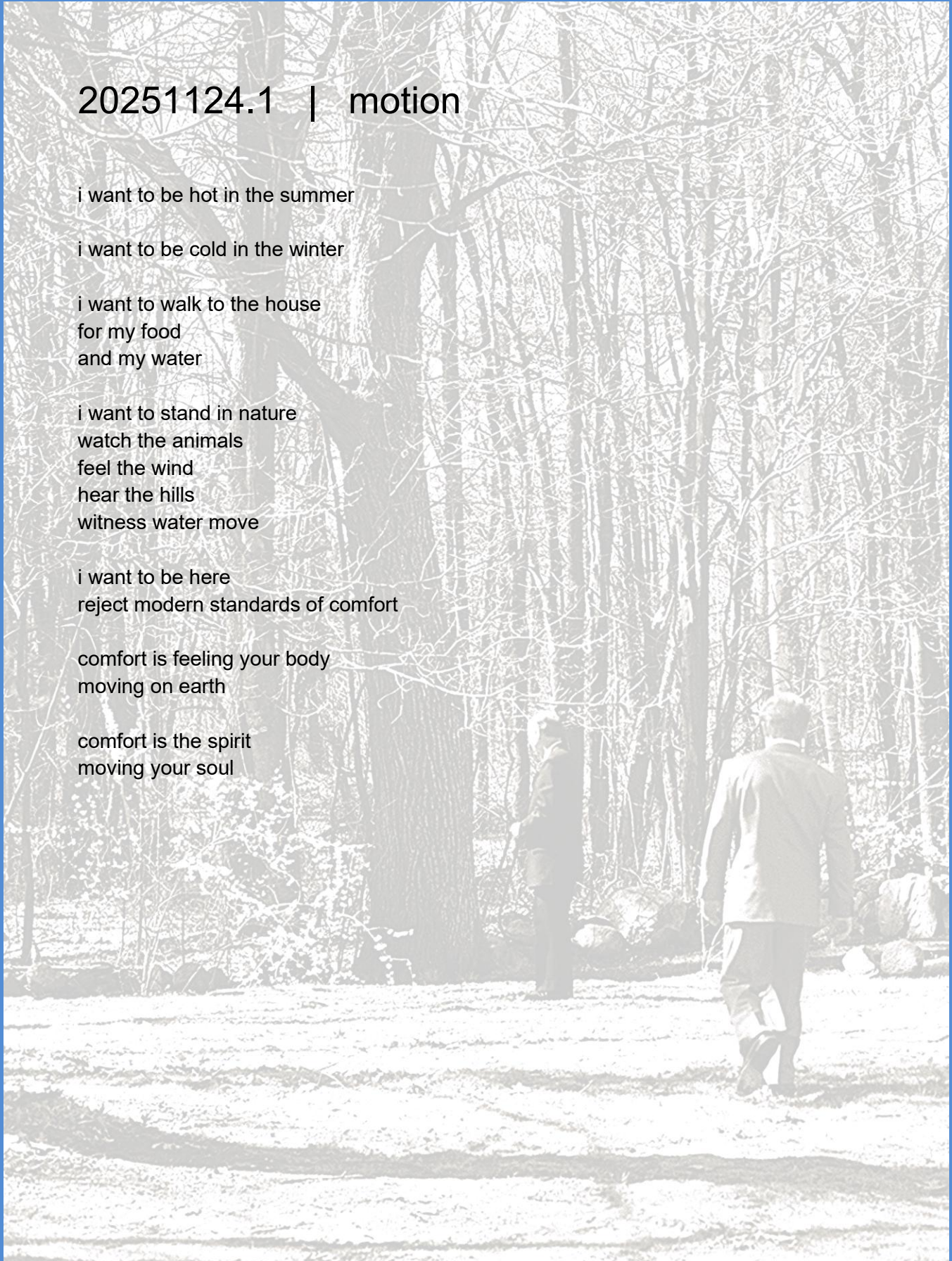
i want to walk to the house  
for my food  
and my water

i want to stand in nature  
watch the animals  
feel the wind  
hear the hills  
witness water move

i want to be here  
reject modern standards of comfort

comfort is feeling your body  
moving on earth

comfort is the spirit  
moving your soul



20251127.1 | joy

the skull is pinched to a cone  
the ribcage squeezed  
hard  
to get the fluid out

trained hands  
pulls the neck  
cuts the cord  
siphons the airways

dry air hits new lungs  
98.6 degrees  
is now 70 and room temperature

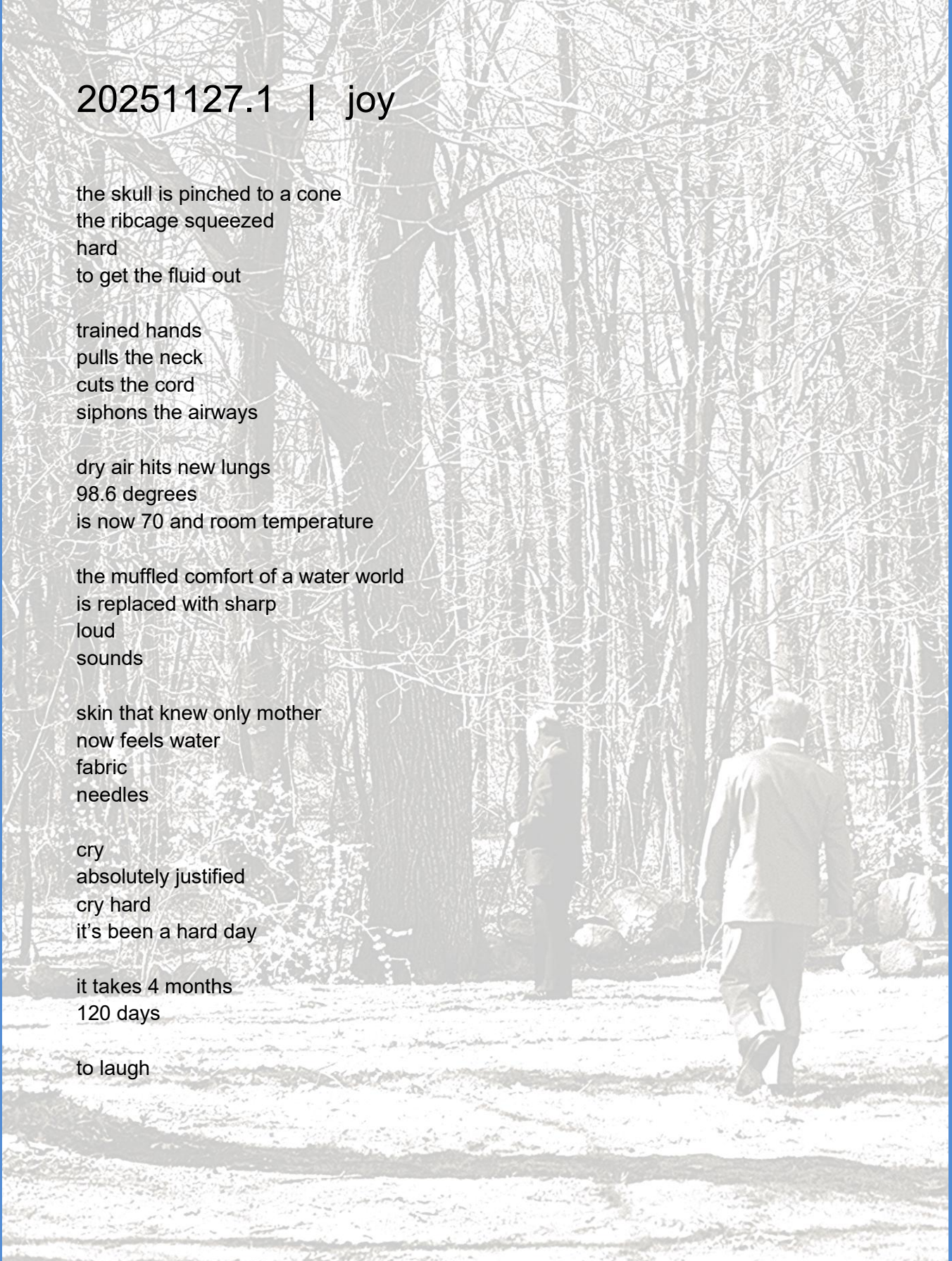
the muffled comfort of a water world  
is replaced with sharp  
loud  
sounds

skin that knew only mother  
now feels water  
fabric  
needles

cry  
absolutely justified  
cry hard  
it's been a hard day

it takes 4 months  
120 days

to laugh



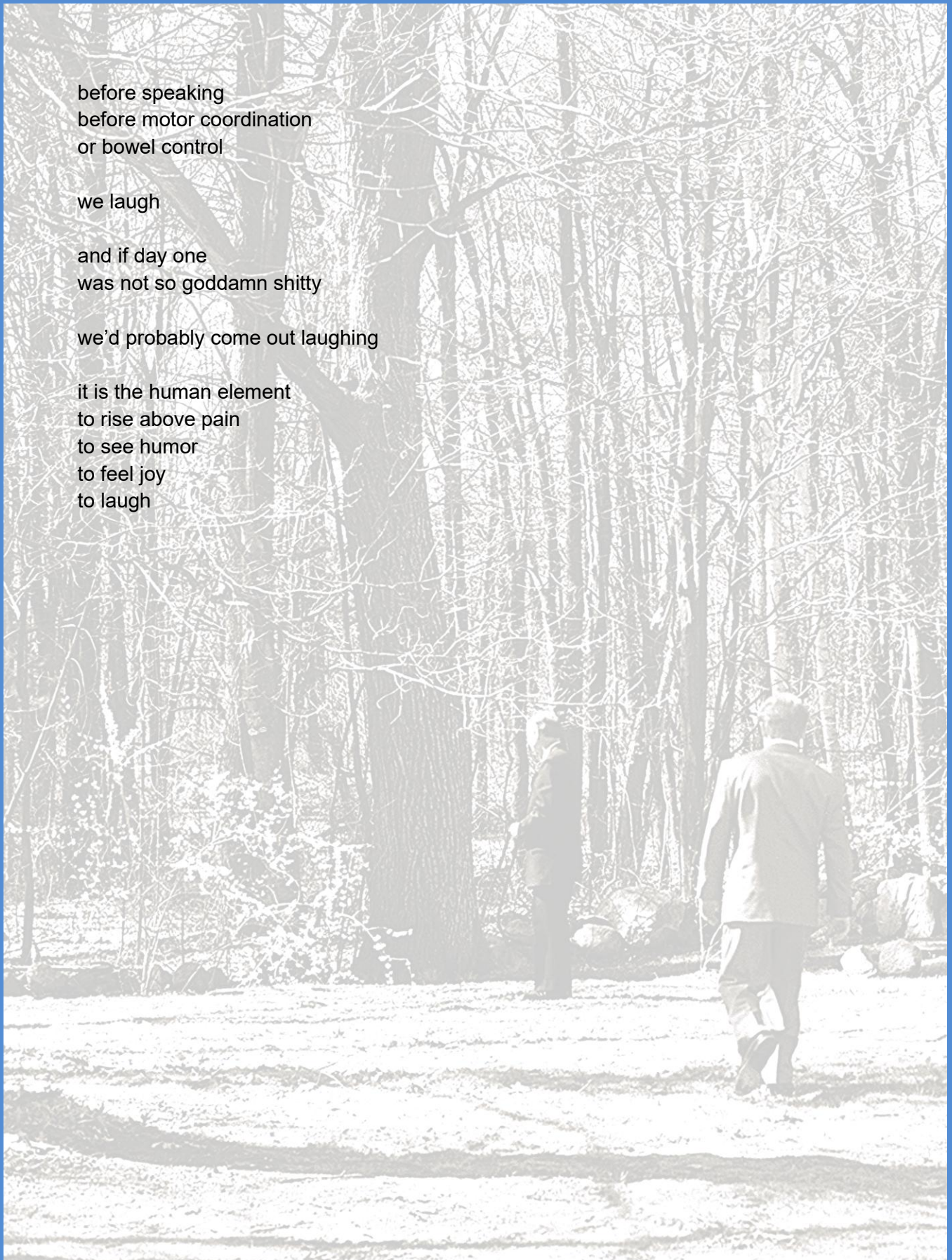
before speaking  
before motor coordination  
or bowel control

we laugh

and if day one  
was not so goddamn shitty

we'd probably come out laughing

it is the human element  
to rise above pain  
to see humor  
to feel joy  
to laugh



## 20251220.1 | once healed

a goddess suffered and injury  
which grounded her

here  
among mortals  
i met her

she needed held  
and i held her

she needed comfort  
and i comforted her

she needed  
laughter  
hope  
a friend

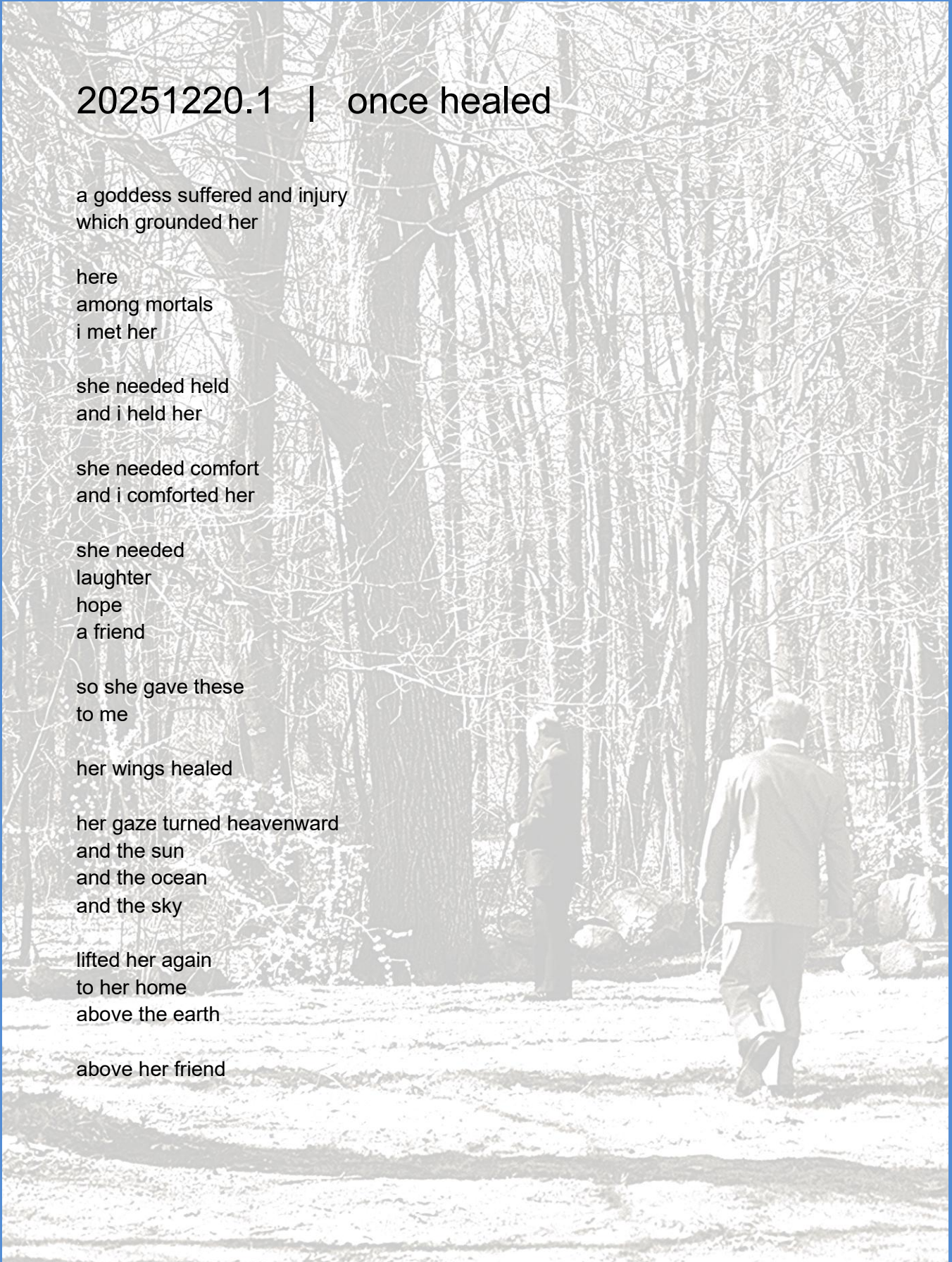
so she gave these  
to me

her wings healed

her gaze turned heavenward  
and the sun  
and the ocean  
and the sky

lifted her again  
to her home  
above the earth

above her friend



## 20251220.2 | a wormhole appears

two years

a text arrives

a wormhole appears out of thin air

i am in awe

i text back into the wormhole

silence

i look around

the room

take stock

of my life

of my worth

it's okay

for a ghost

who you love

to appear

if only for a flash

a dead brother comes forth

and embraces me in a dream

a cherished lover texts

after years of silence

just once

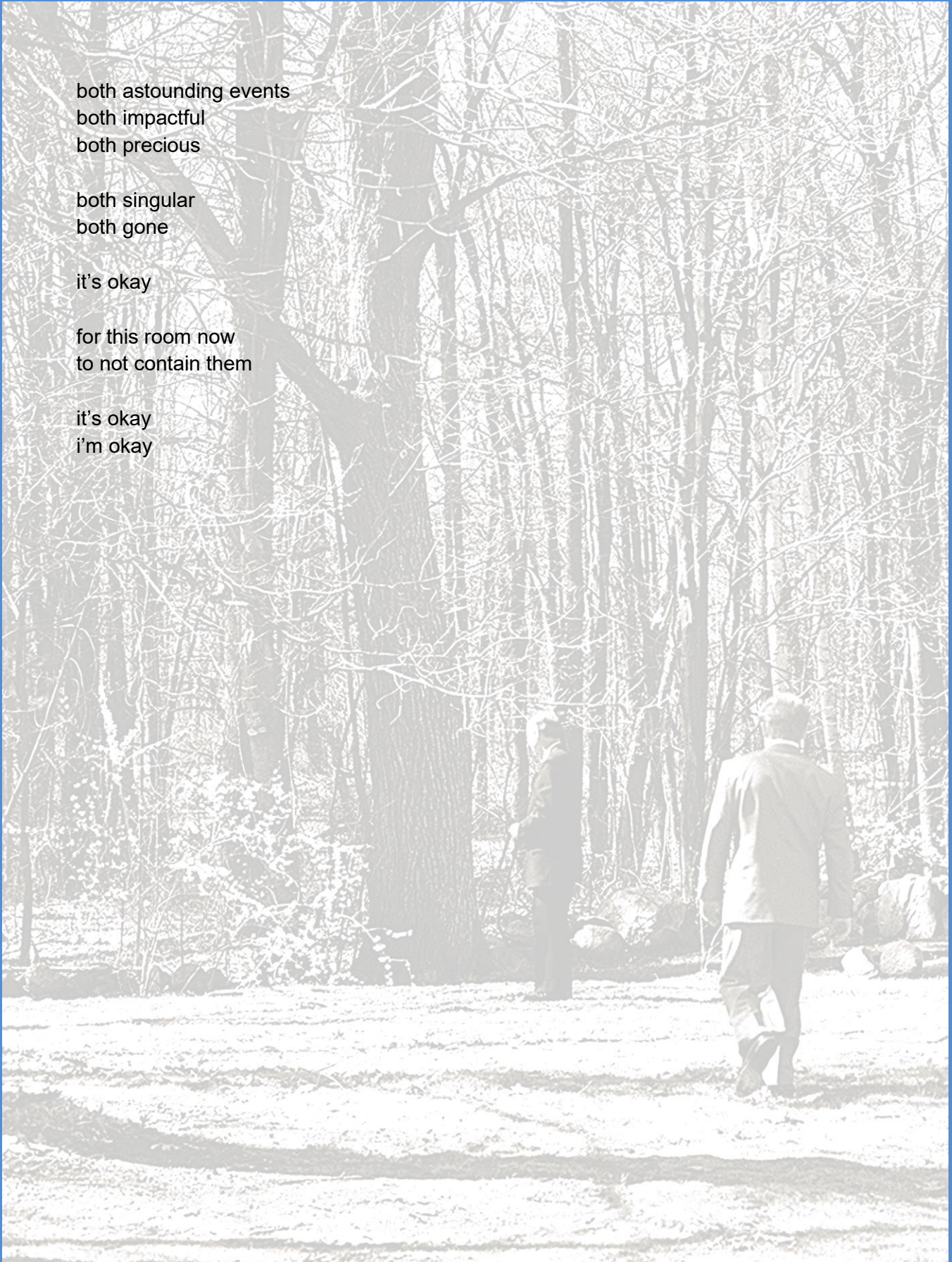
both astounding events  
both impactful  
both precious

both singular  
both gone

it's okay

for this room now  
to not contain them

it's okay  
i'm okay



## 20251221.1 | passing through

my muse is change  
when the pattern you love  
won't repeat  
when echos fall silent  
and the reflection in the mirror  
a stranger

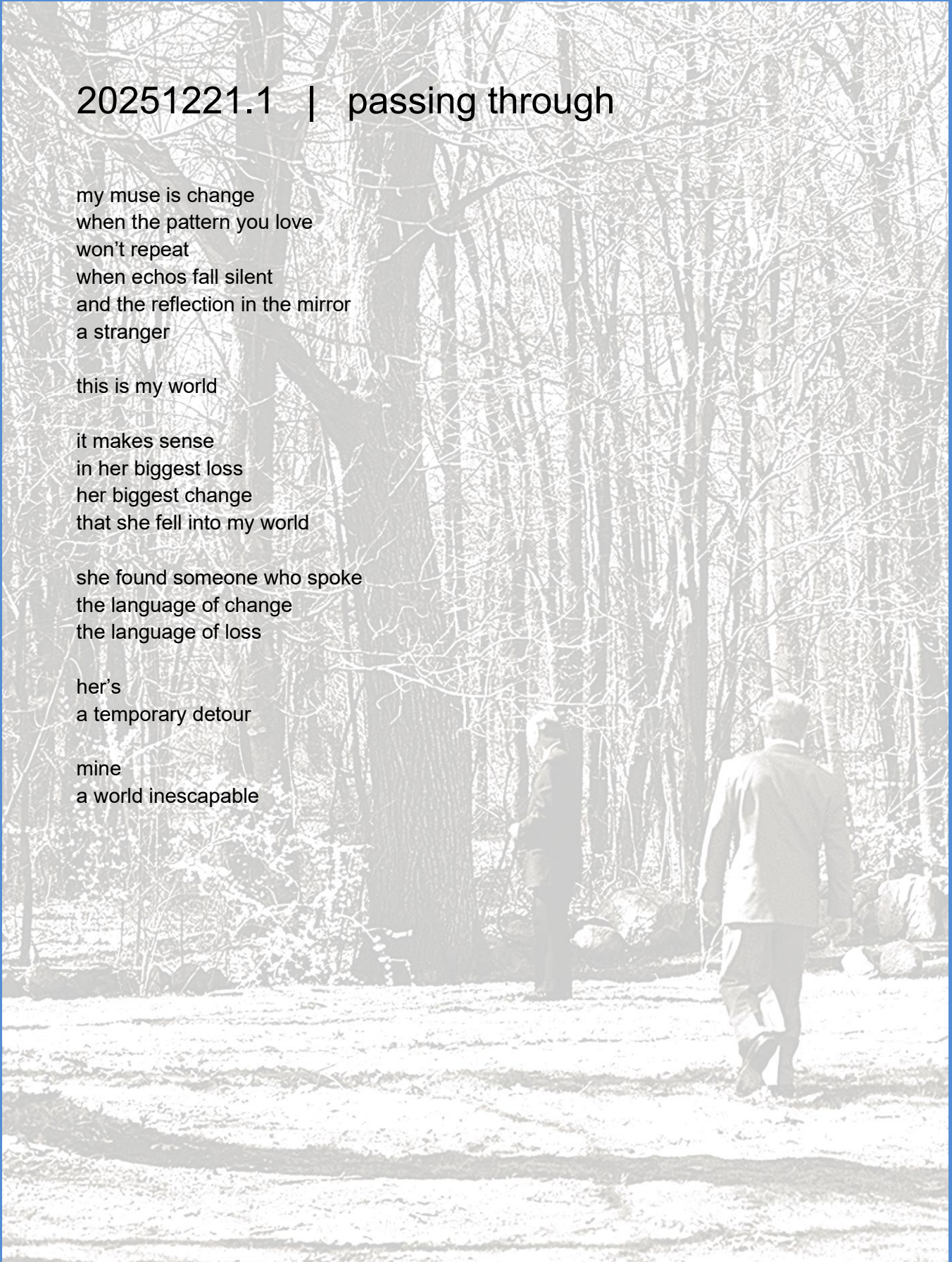
this is my world

it makes sense  
in her biggest loss  
her biggest change  
that she fell into my world

she found someone who spoke  
the language of change  
the language of loss

her's  
a temporary detour

mine  
a world inescapable



## 20260118.1 | poetry in song

jersey girl

i'm not from jersey

neither are you

but boy

when i listen to that song

i am right there

by your side

hand in hand

heart in heart

love swimming in the air

love in every touch

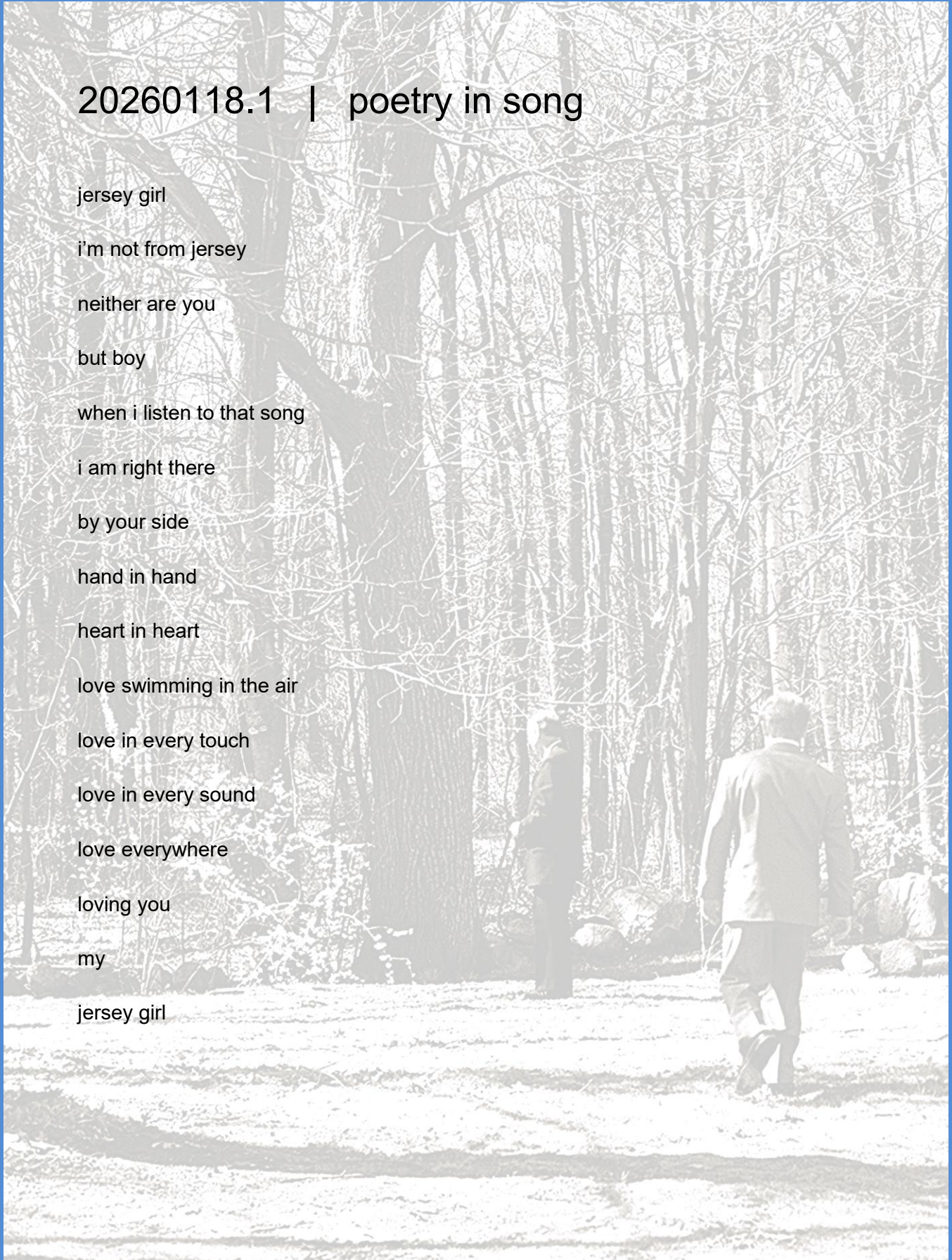
love in every sound

love everywhere

loving you

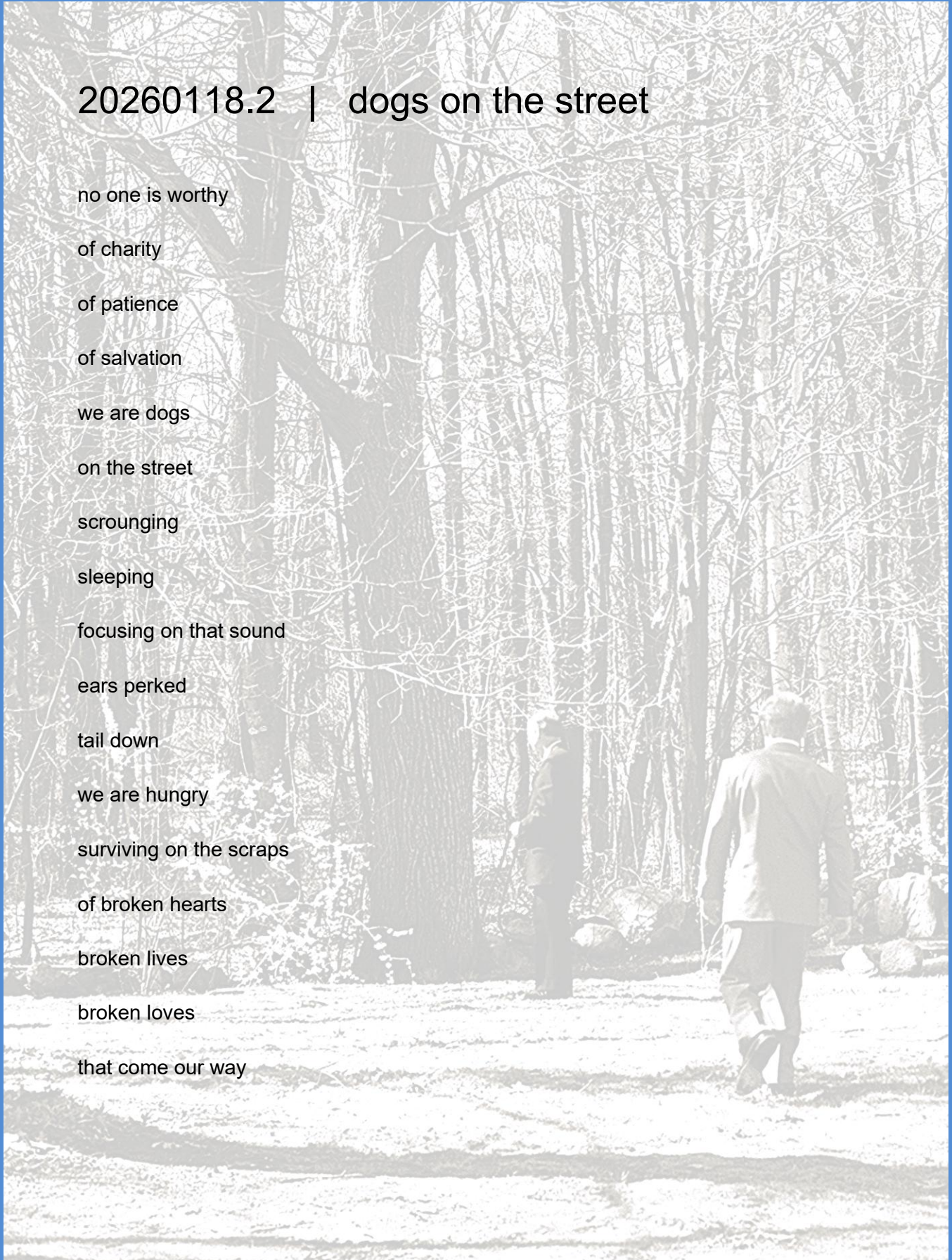
my

jersey girl



## 20260118.2 | dogs on the street

no one is worthy  
of charity  
of patience  
of salvation  
we are dogs  
on the street  
scrounging  
sleeping  
focusing on that sound  
ears perked  
tail down  
we are hungry  
surviving on the scraps  
of broken hearts  
broken lives  
broken loves  
that come our way



## 20260208.1 | frankenlove

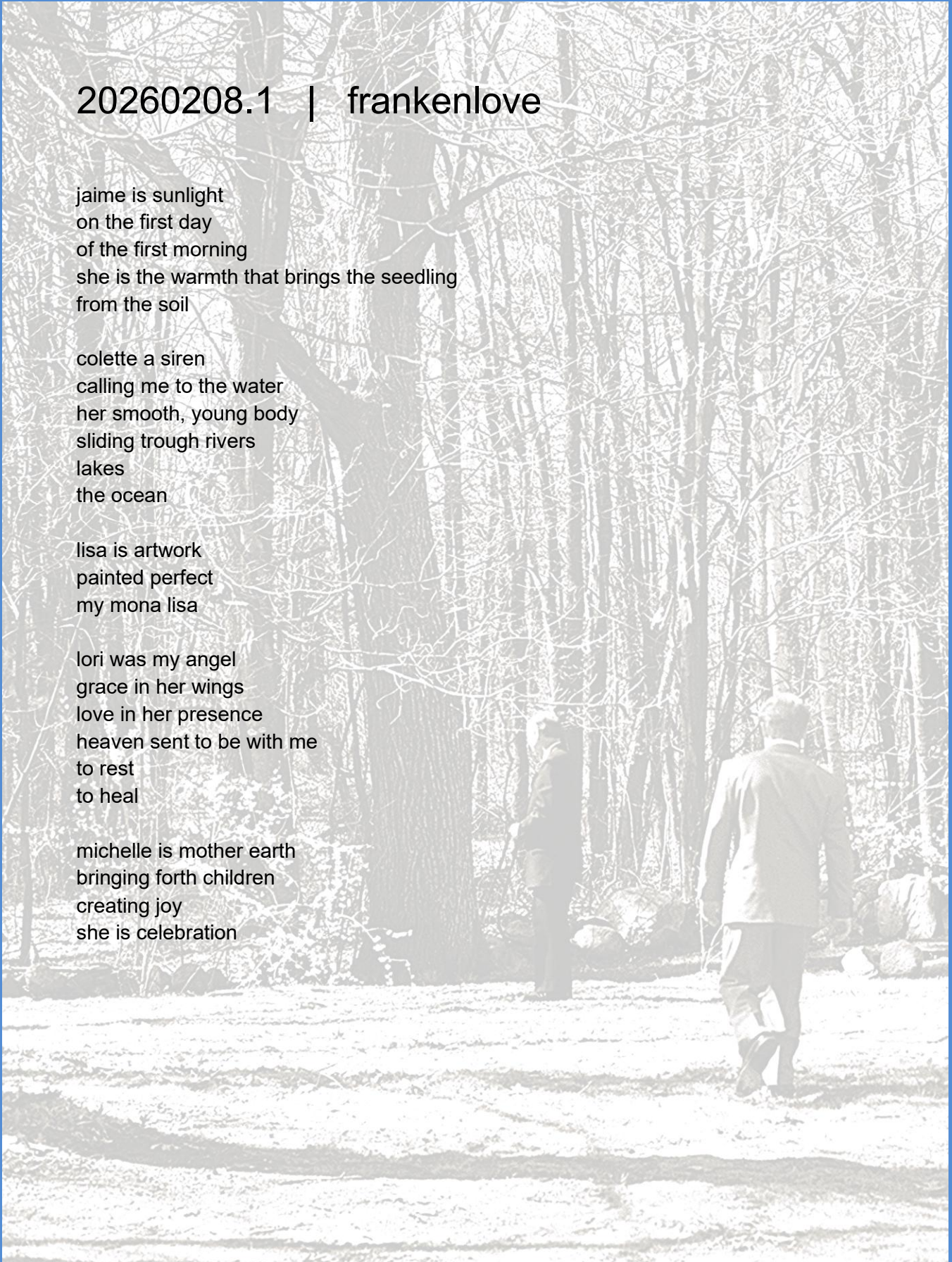
jaime is sunlight  
on the first day  
of the first morning  
she is the warmth that brings the seedling  
from the soil

colette a siren  
calling me to the water  
her smooth, young body  
sliding trough rivers  
lakes  
the ocean

lisa is artwork  
painted perfect  
my mona lisa

lori was my angel  
grace in her wings  
love in her presence  
heaven sent to be with me  
to rest  
to heal

michelle is mother earth  
bringing forth children  
creating joy  
she is celebration



sandra is yellow and gray  
beauty and sadness  
a place i could have easily stayed

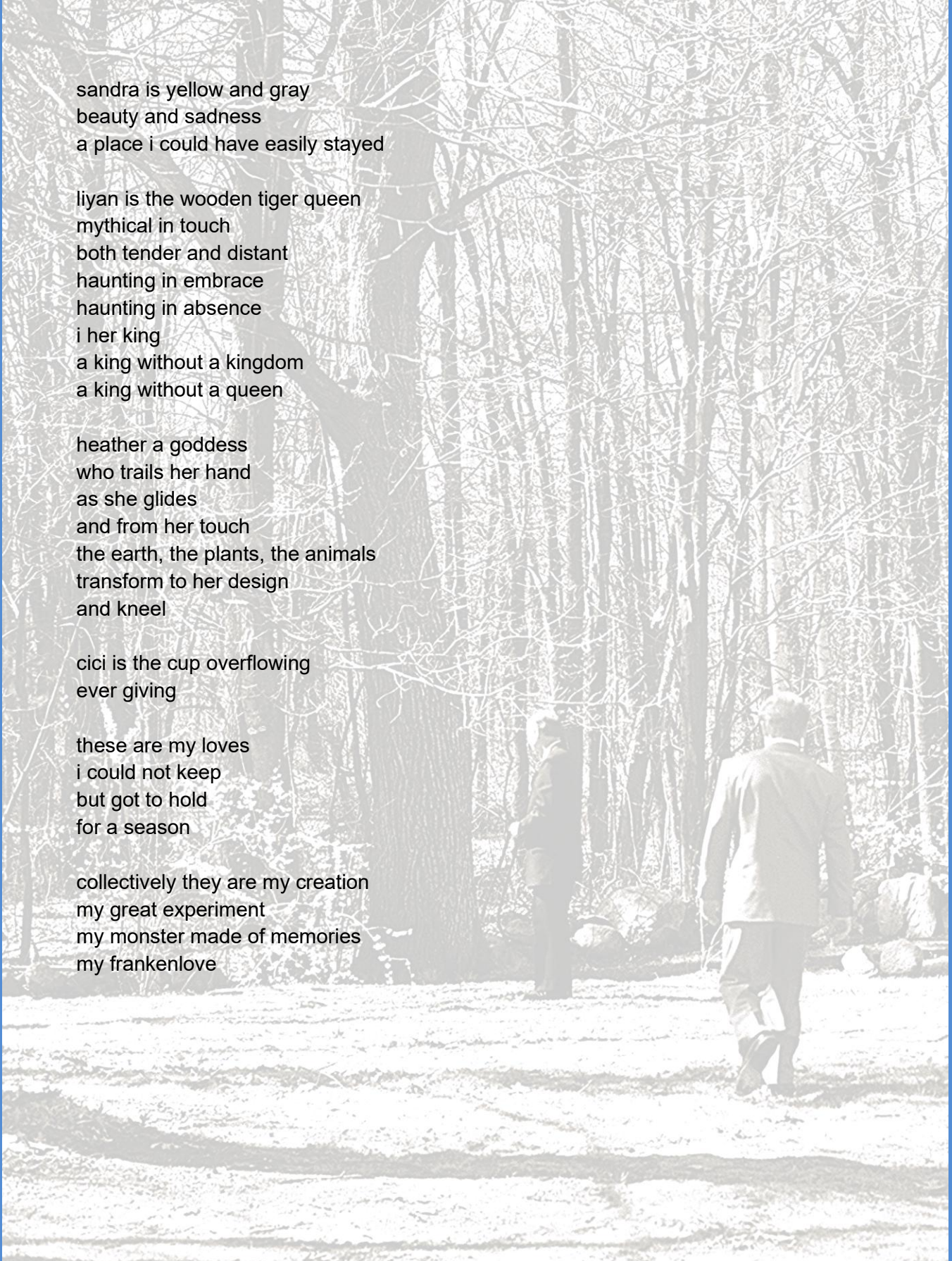
liyan is the wooden tiger queen  
mythical in touch  
both tender and distant  
haunting in embrace  
haunting in absence  
i her king  
a king without a kingdom  
a king without a queen

heather a goddess  
who trails her hand  
as she glides  
and from her touch  
the earth, the plants, the animals  
transform to her design  
and kneel

cici is the cup overflowing  
ever giving

these are my loves  
i could not keep  
but got to hold  
for a season

collectively they are my creation  
my great experiment  
my monster made of memories  
my frankenlove



## 20260208.2 | cost of depression

the cost of depression is  
the removal of gratitude

gratitude is  
the releasing of the ego

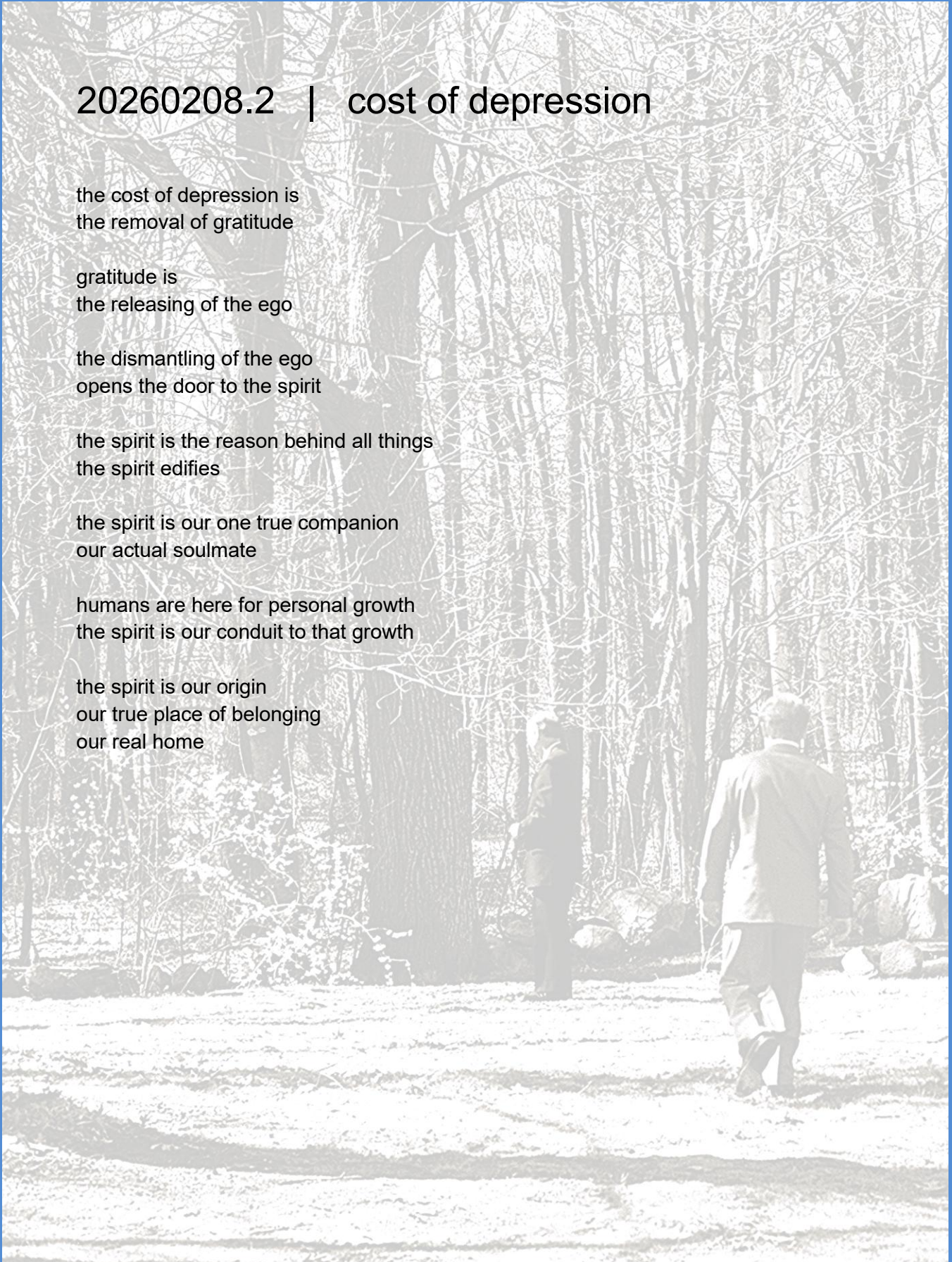
the dismantling of the ego  
opens the door to the spirit

the spirit is the reason behind all things  
the spirit edifies

the spirit is our one true companion  
our actual soulmate

humans are here for personal growth  
the spirit is our conduit to that growth

the spirit is our origin  
our true place of belonging  
our real home



## 20260208.3 | walden 2.0

in my youth  
my north star becomes walden  
my mentor henry david thoreau  
in society  
but rejecting society  
embracing solitude  
then rejecting solitude  
immersing in nature  
then growing beyond nature

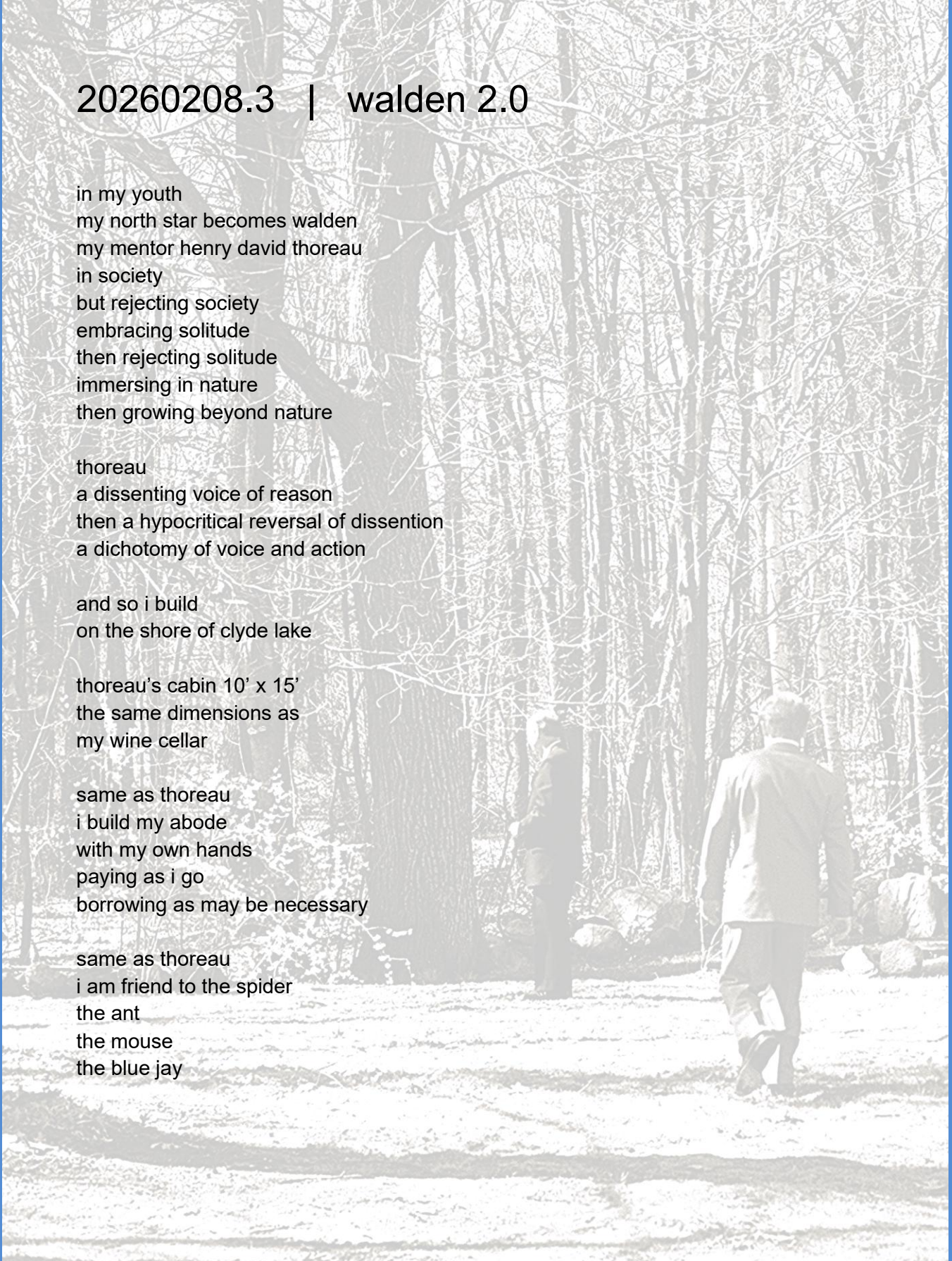
thoreau  
a dissenting voice of reason  
then a hypocritical reversal of dissention  
a dichotomy of voice and action

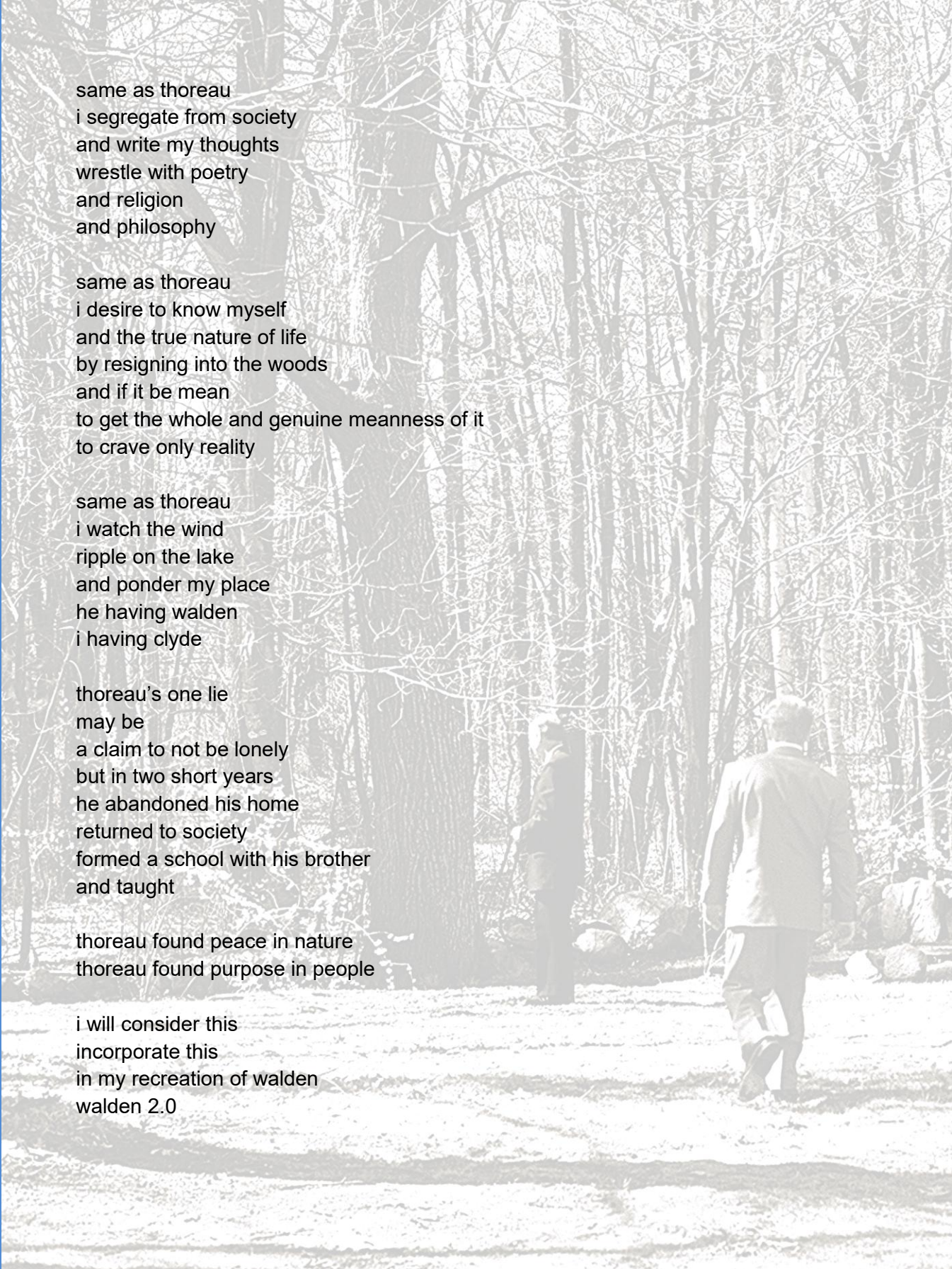
and so i build  
on the shore of clyde lake

thoreau's cabin 10' x 15'  
the same dimensions as  
my wine cellar

same as thoreau  
i build my abode  
with my own hands  
paying as i go  
borrowing as may be necessary

same as thoreau  
i am friend to the spider  
the ant  
the mouse  
the blue jay





same as thoreau  
i segregate from society  
and write my thoughts  
wrestle with poetry  
and religion  
and philosophy

same as thoreau  
i desire to know myself  
and the true nature of life  
by resigning into the woods  
and if it be mean  
to get the whole and genuine meanness of it  
to crave only reality

same as thoreau  
i watch the wind  
ripple on the lake  
and ponder my place  
he having walden  
i having clyde

thoreau's one lie  
may be  
a claim to not be lonely  
but in two short years  
he abandoned his home  
returned to society  
formed a school with his brother  
and taught

thoreau found peace in nature  
thoreau found purpose in people

i will consider this  
incorporate this  
in my recreation of walden  
walden 2.0

## 20260220.1 | howitzers in the distance

i hear howitzers in the distance  
105 mm shells  
rocketing to targets  
explosions

my grandmother heard explosions  
took her baby, my mother, quickly into her arms  
ran to the basement  
or the underground  
sometimes under the stairs

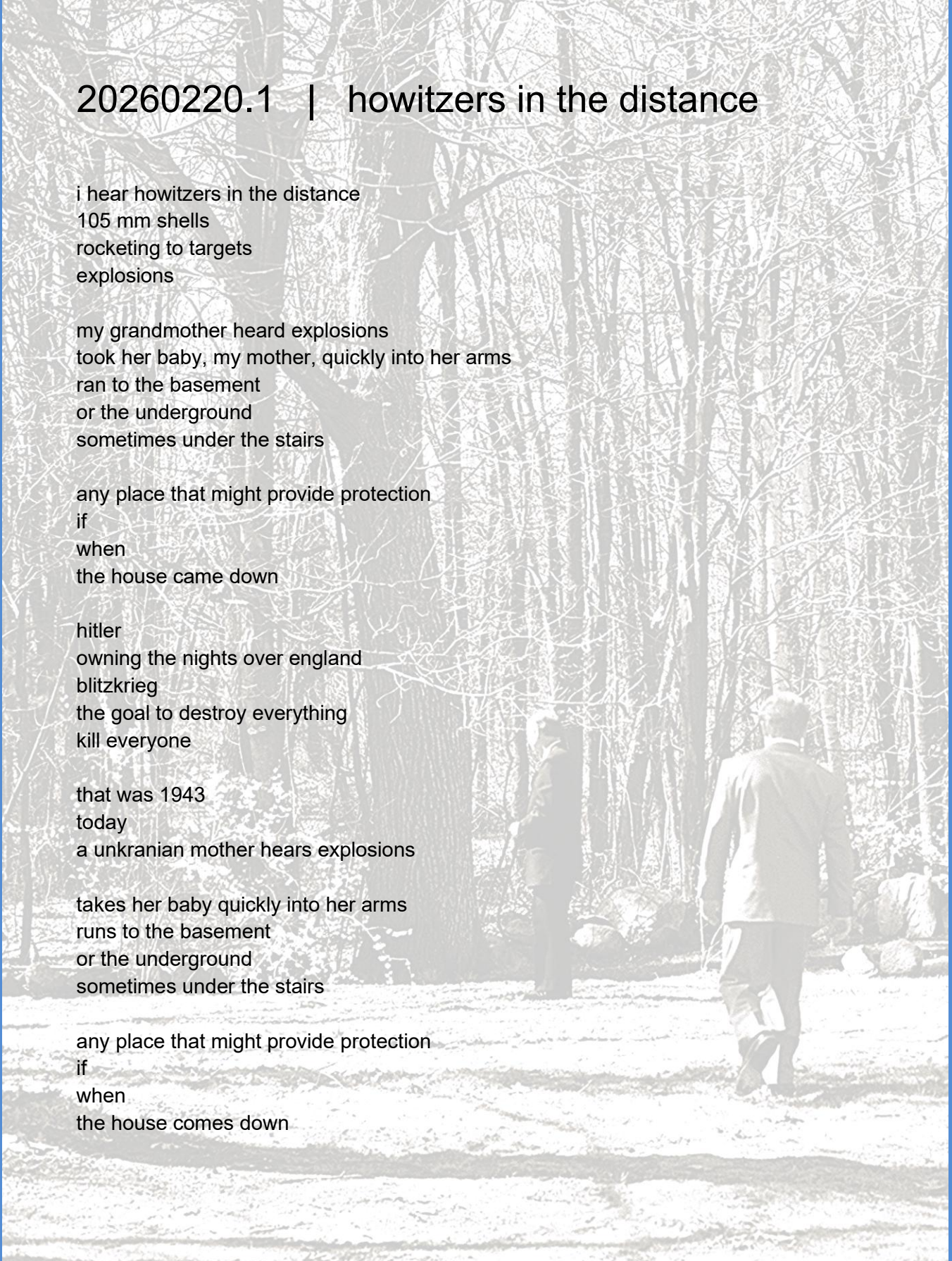
any place that might provide protection  
if  
when  
the house came down

hitler  
owning the nights over england  
blitzkrieg  
the goal to destroy everything  
kill everyone

that was 1943  
today  
a unkranian mother hears explosions

takes her baby quickly into her arms  
runs to the basement  
or the underground  
sometimes under the stairs

any place that might provide protection  
if  
when  
the house comes down

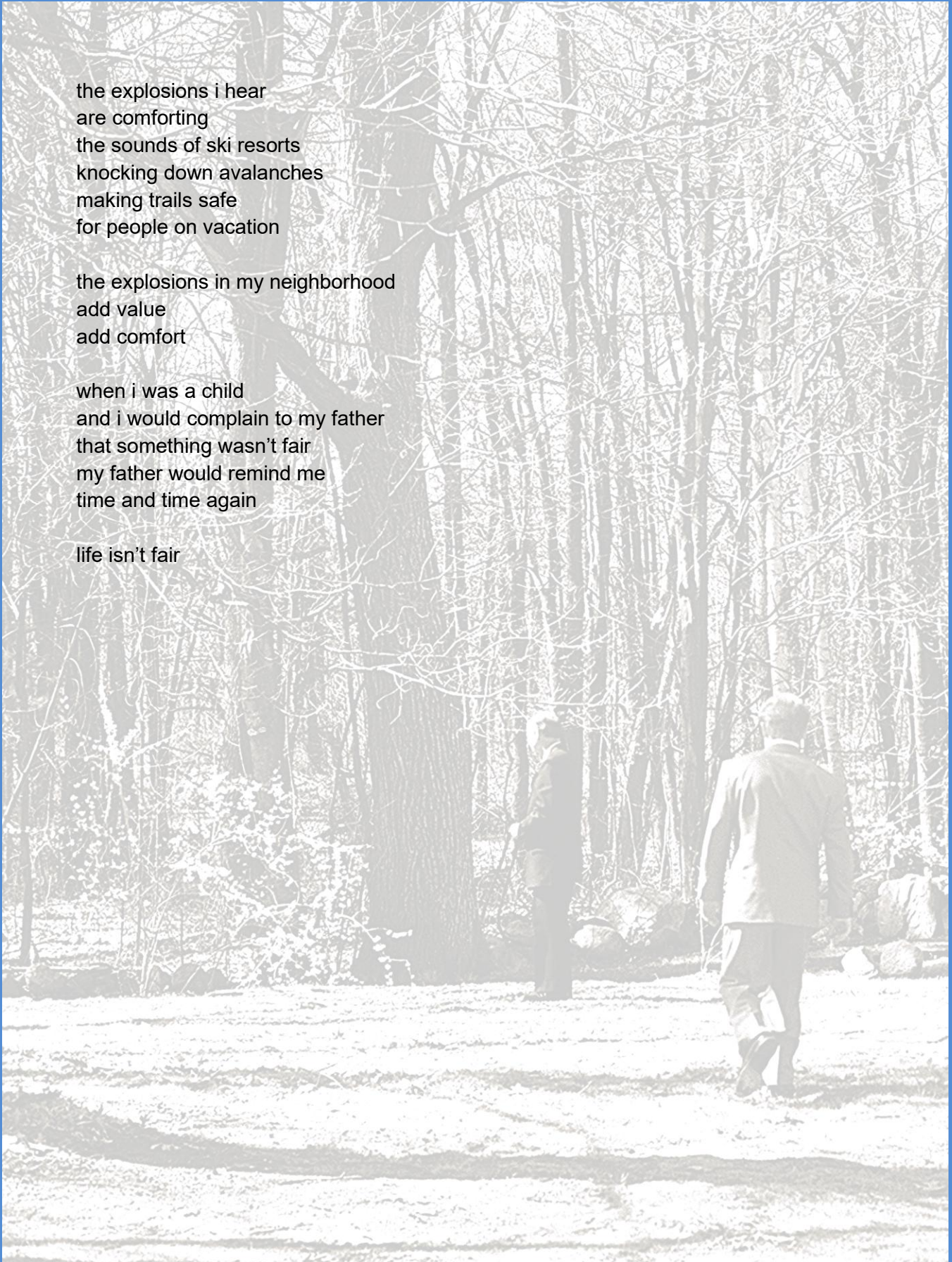


the explosions i hear  
are comforting  
the sounds of ski resorts  
knocking down avalanches  
making trails safe  
for people on vacation

the explosions in my neighborhood  
add value  
add comfort

when i was a child  
and i would complain to my father  
that something wasn't fair  
my father would remind me  
time and time again

life isn't fair



## 20260220.2 | john campbell

john campbell is my cousin  
about ten years my senior

john was raised in los angeles  
and when grown  
moved to san francisco  
and rented on market street

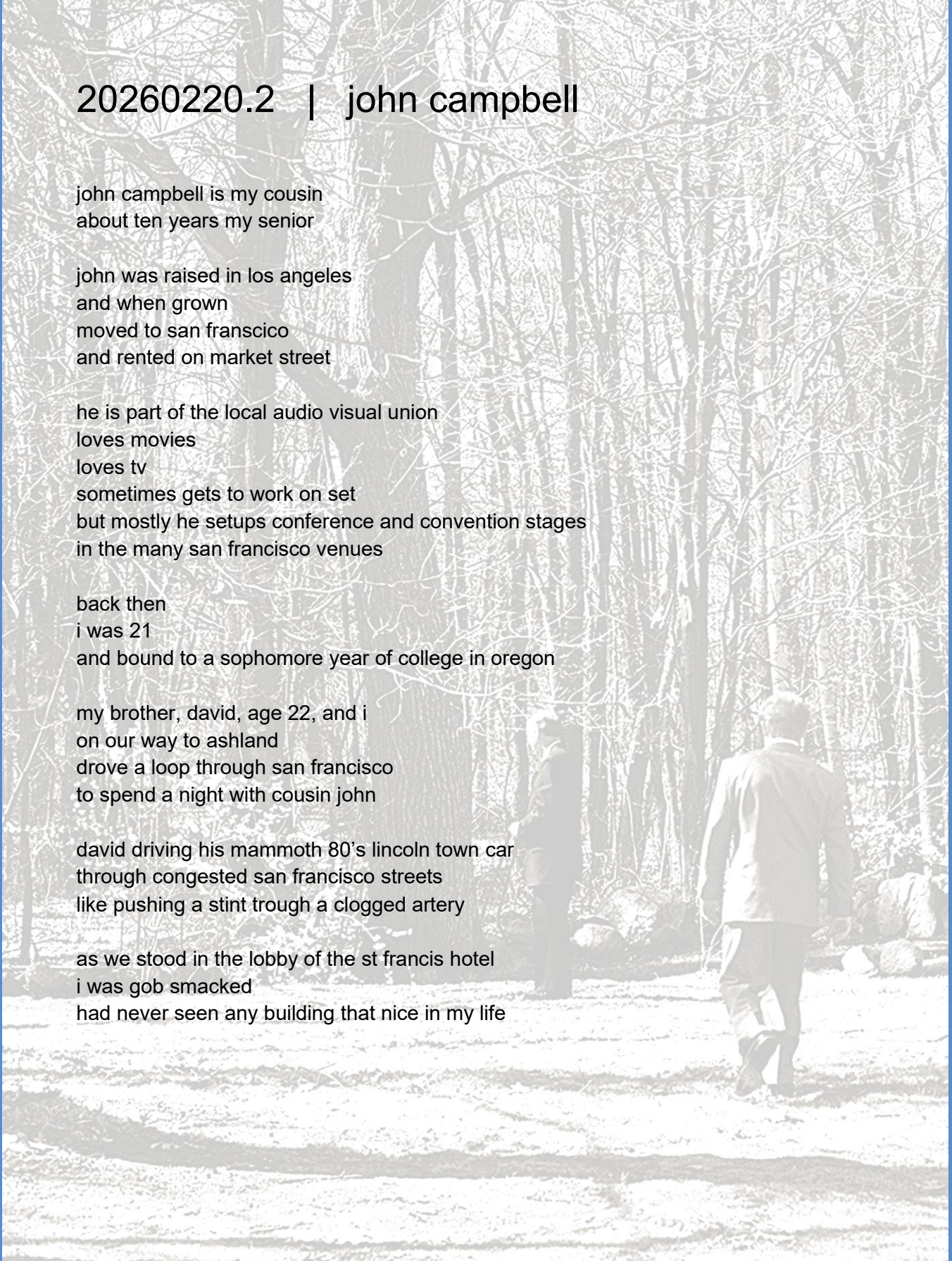
he is part of the local audio visual union  
loves movies  
loves tv  
sometimes gets to work on set  
but mostly he setups conference and convention stages  
in the many san francisco venues

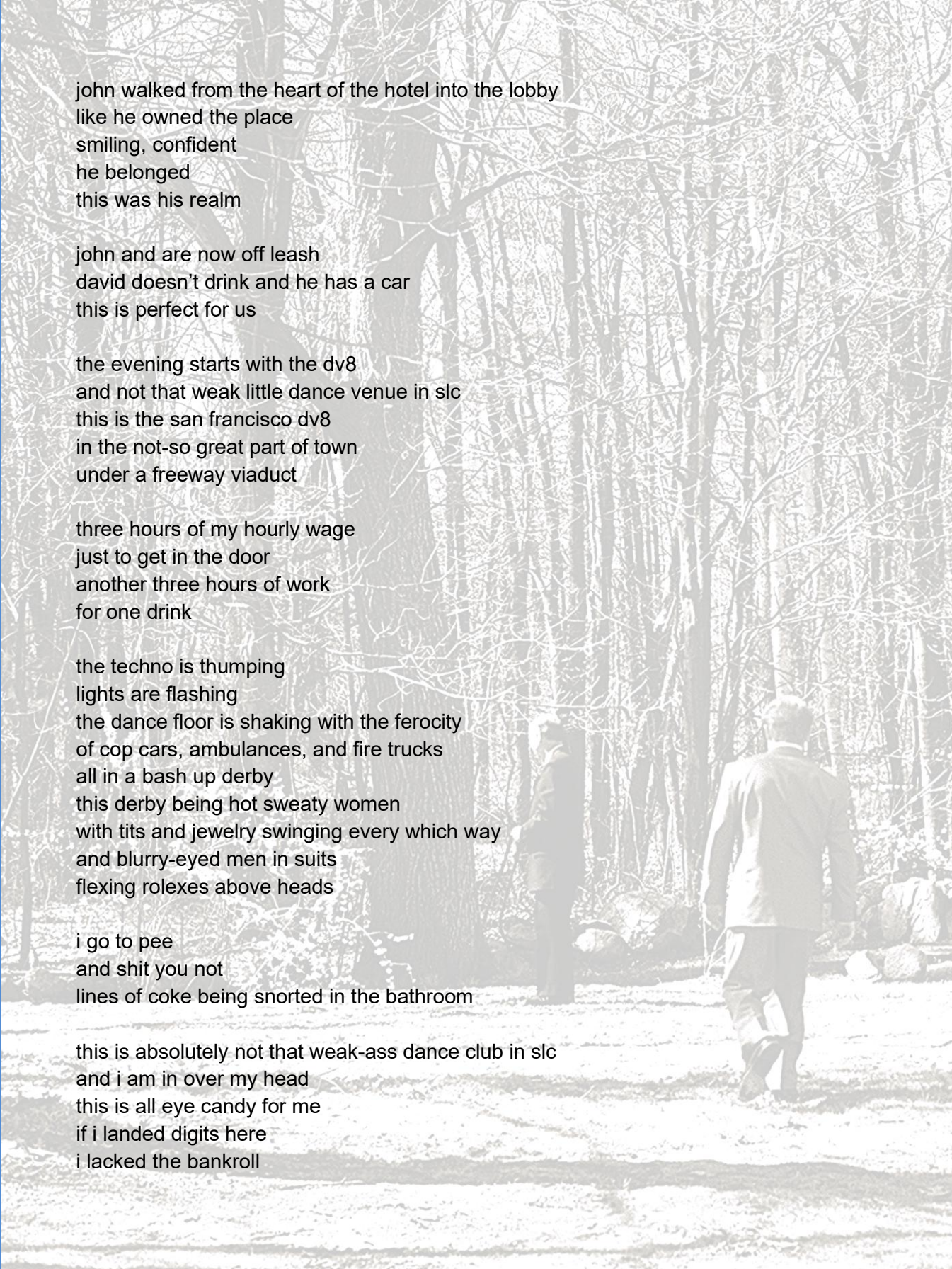
back then  
i was 21  
and bound to a sophomore year of college in oregon

my brother, david, age 22, and i  
on our way to ashland  
drove a loop through san francisco  
to spend a night with cousin john

david driving his mammoth 80's lincoln town car  
through congested san francisco streets  
like pushing a stint trough a clogged artery

as we stood in the lobby of the st francis hotel  
i was gob smacked  
had never seen any building that nice in my life





john walked from the heart of the hotel into the lobby  
like he owned the place  
smiling, confident  
he belonged  
this was his realm

john and are now off leash  
david doesn't drink and he has a car  
this is perfect for us

the evening starts with the dv8  
and not that weak little dance venue in slc  
this is the san francisco dv8  
in the not-so great part of town  
under a freeway viaduct

three hours of my hourly wage  
just to get in the door  
another three hours of work  
for one drink

the techno is thumping  
lights are flashing  
the dance floor is shaking with the ferocity  
of cop cars, ambulances, and fire trucks  
all in a bash up derby  
this derby being hot sweaty women  
with tits and jewelry swinging every which way  
and blurry-eyed men in suits  
flexing rolexes above heads

i go to pee  
and shit you not  
lines of coke being snorted in the bathroom

this is absolutely not that weak-ass dance club in slc  
and i am in over my head  
this is all eye candy for me  
if i landed digits here  
i lacked the bankroll

the game  
or the balls  
to even dial her area code  
for me, this is a trip to adult disneyland  
enjoy the ride  
but keep your hands and feet in at all times  
it was so fucking cool

but i would be broke  
before i got drunk  
so we moved to an irish bar

three campbells  
generations removed from scotland  
in an irish bar  
in san francisco  
throwing darts  
two of us slugging guinness  
alternating with long island ice teas  
and shots of jagermeister

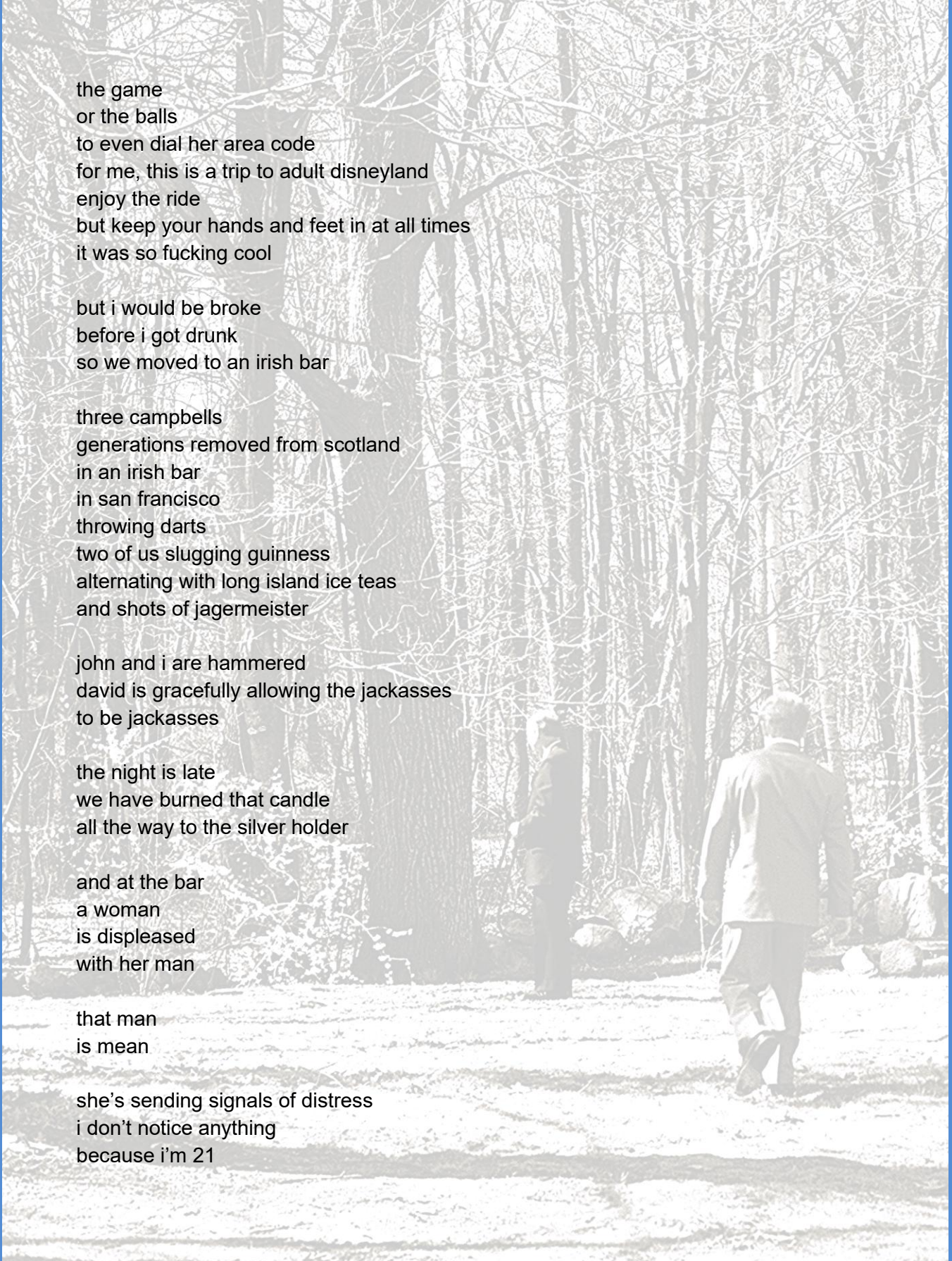
john and i are hammered  
david is gracefully allowing the jackasses  
to be jackasses

the night is late  
we have burned that candle  
all the way to the silver holder

and at the bar  
a woman  
is displeased  
with her man

that man  
is mean

she's sending signals of distress  
i don't notice anything  
because i'm 21



and fully hammered

but john notices  
he says to her  
in front of mean man  
'leave with us, we'll walk you home'

mean man says  
if you leave with them  
i will kick all your asses  
he is selling this statement with conviction

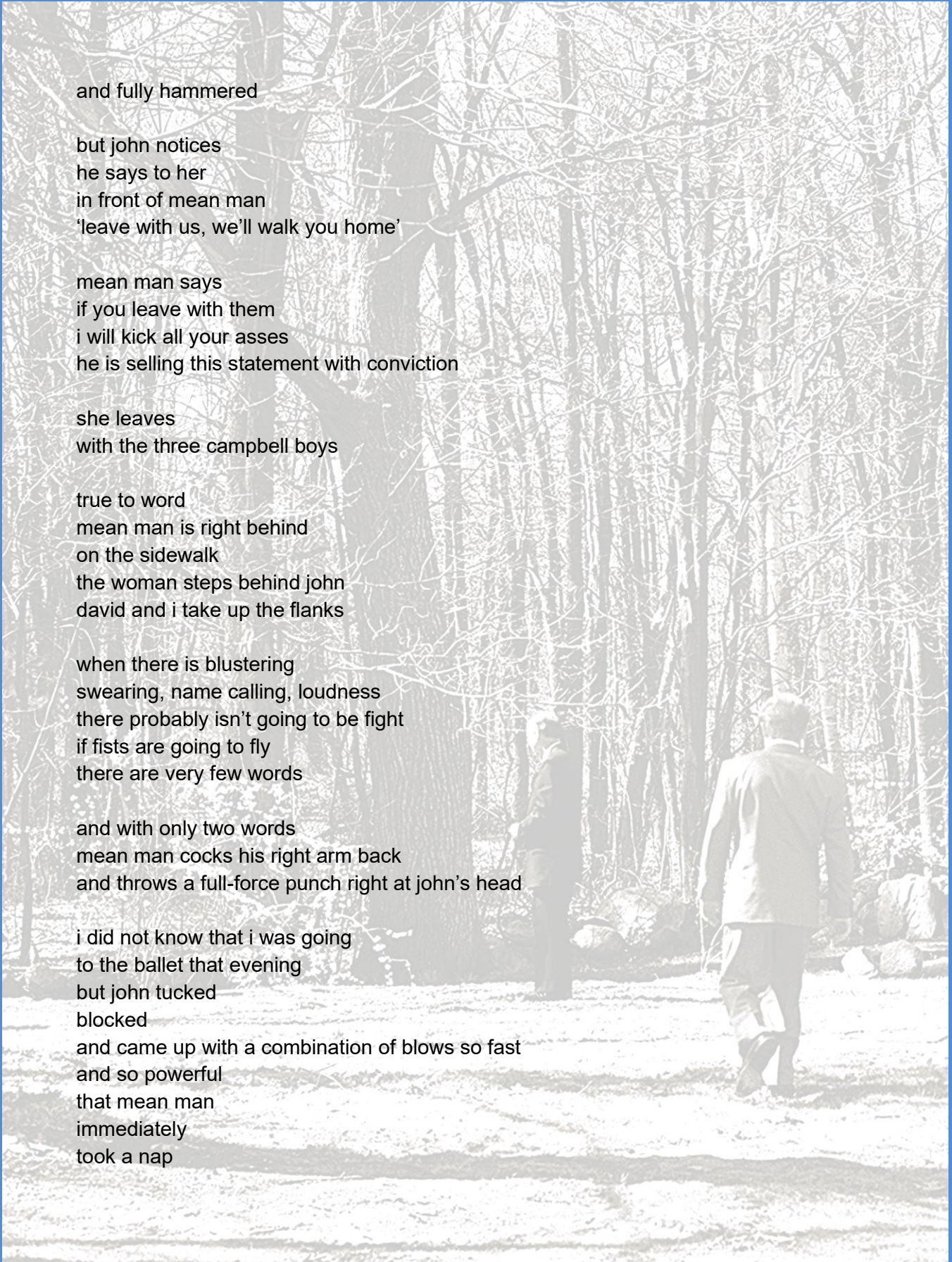
she leaves  
with the three campbell boys

true to word  
mean man is right behind  
on the sidewalk  
the woman steps behind john  
david and i take up the flanks

when there is blustering  
swearing, name calling, loudness  
there probably isn't going to be fight  
if fists are going to fly  
there are very few words

and with only two words  
mean man cocks his right arm back  
and throws a full-force punch right at john's head

i did not know that i was going  
to the ballet that evening  
but john tucked  
blocked  
and came up with a combination of blows so fast  
and so powerful  
that mean man  
immediately  
took a nap

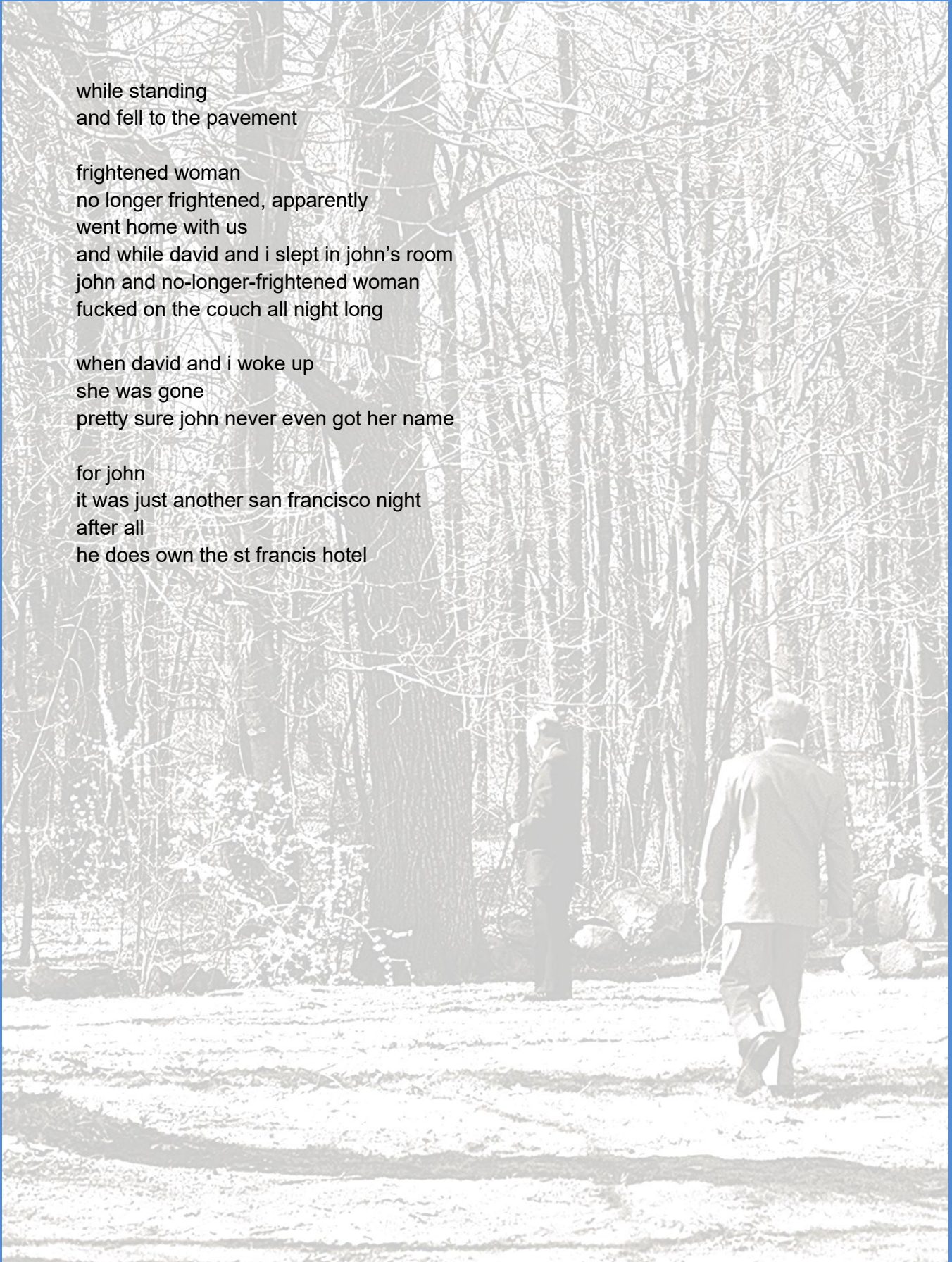


while standing  
and fell to the pavement

frightened woman  
no longer frightened, apparently  
went home with us  
and while david and i slept in john's room  
john and no-longer-frightened woman  
fucked on the couch all night long

when david and i woke up  
she was gone  
pretty sure john never even got her name

for john  
it was just another san francisco night  
after all  
he does own the st francis hotel



## 20260227.1 | this much i know

black hair  
moves past the kitchen window

i rise from the tasks  
at my desk

open the door

liyan  
and her dog

in winter  
on the side of a mountain

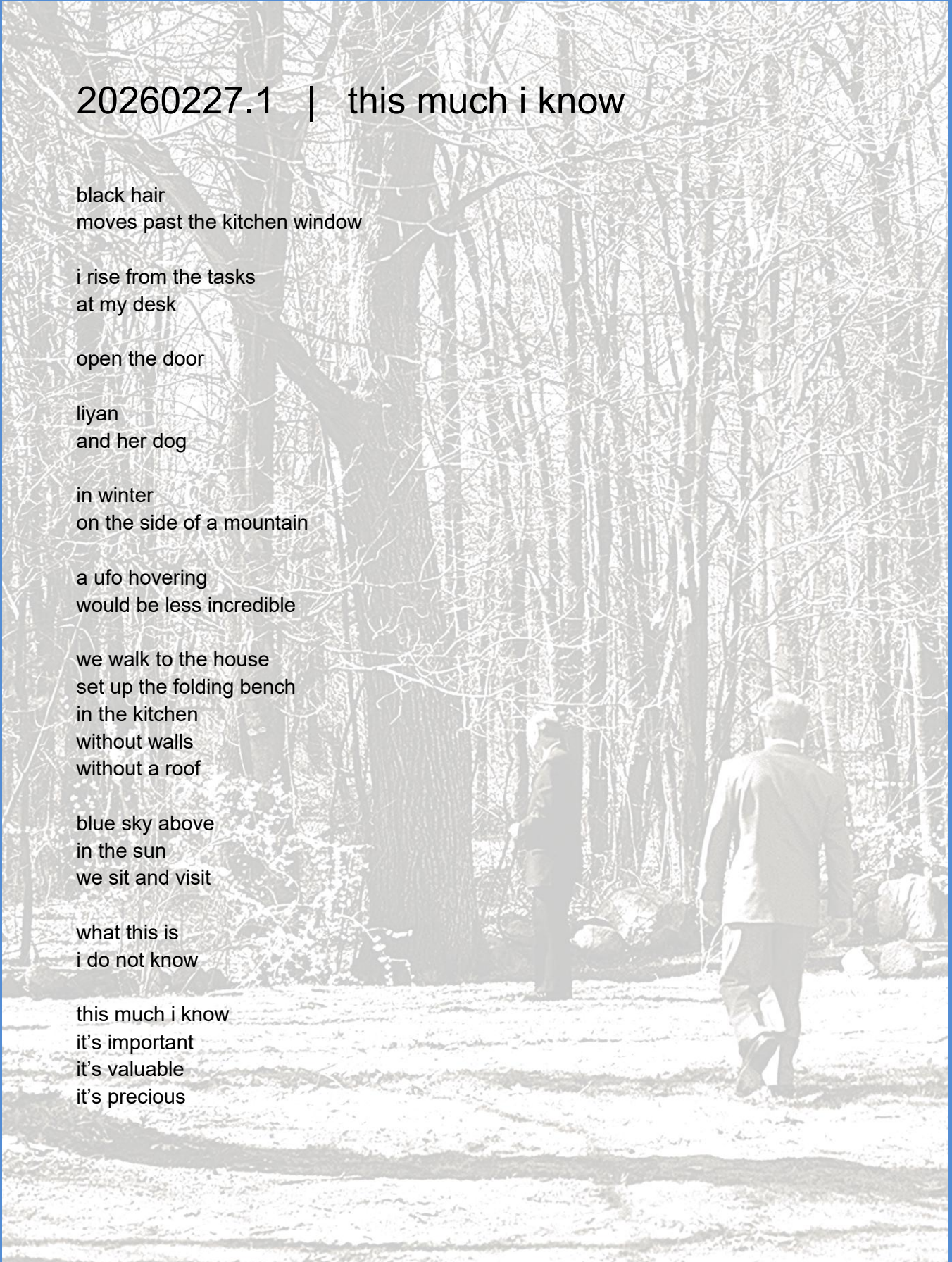
a ufo hovering  
would be less incredible

we walk to the house  
set up the folding bench  
in the kitchen  
without walls  
without a roof

blue sky above  
in the sun  
we sit and visit

what this is  
i do not know

this much i know  
it's important  
it's valuable  
it's precious



## 20260301.1 | up from the mud

an appraiser  
walks the house  
walks the property  
measures  
photographs  
generates a market analysis  
an appraisal report

in that report  
a term called  
'highest and best use'

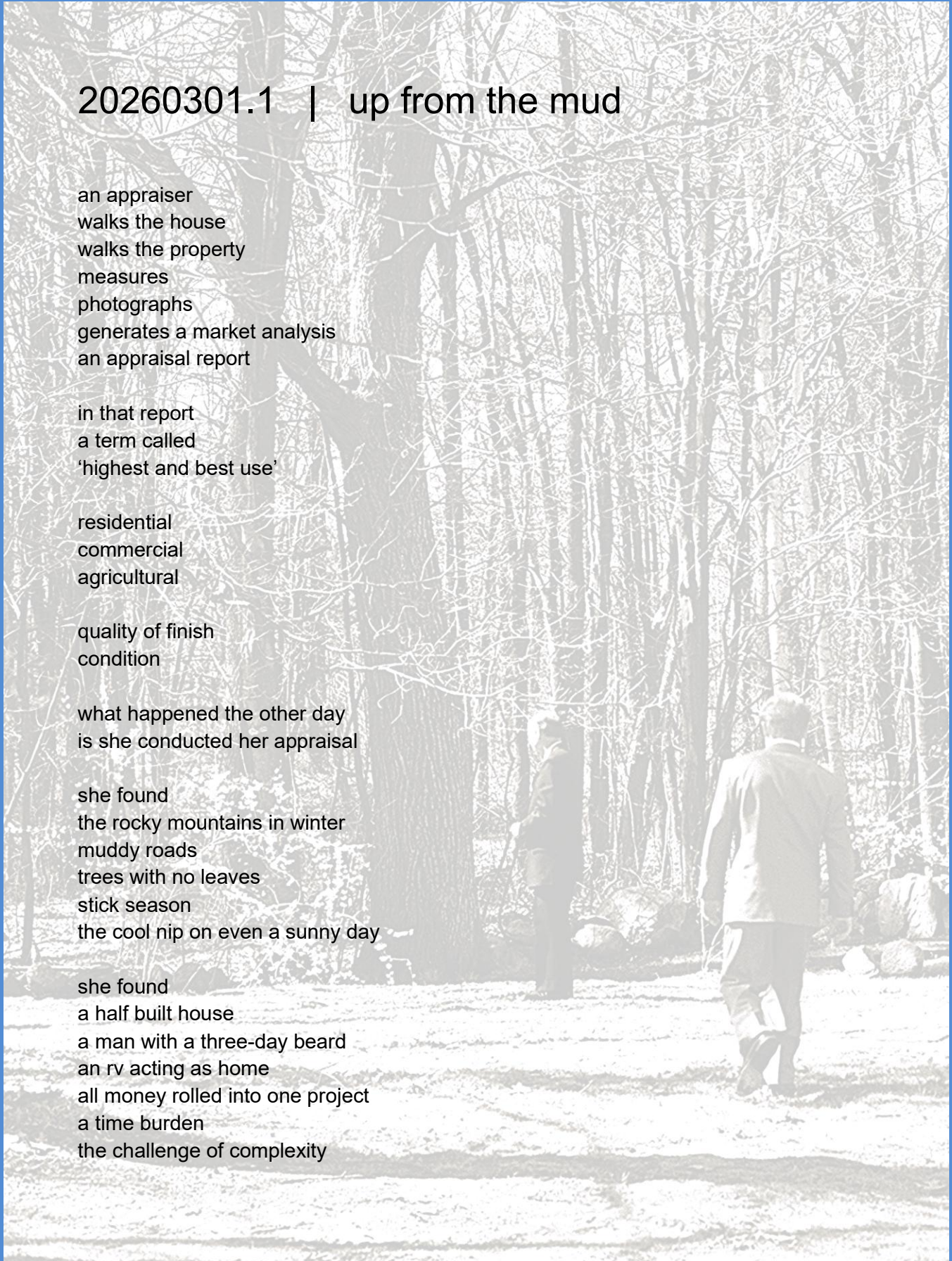
residential  
commercial  
agricultural

quality of finish  
condition

what happened the other day  
is she conducted her appraisal

she found  
the rocky mountains in winter  
muddy roads  
trees with no leaves  
stick season  
the cool nip on even a sunny day

she found  
a half built house  
a man with a three-day beard  
an rv acting as home  
all money rolled into one project  
a time burden  
the challenge of complexity



labor, inspections, approvals  
all still ahead

she returned home  
performed her analysis  
finished her appraisal report

not her highest  
not her best  
use

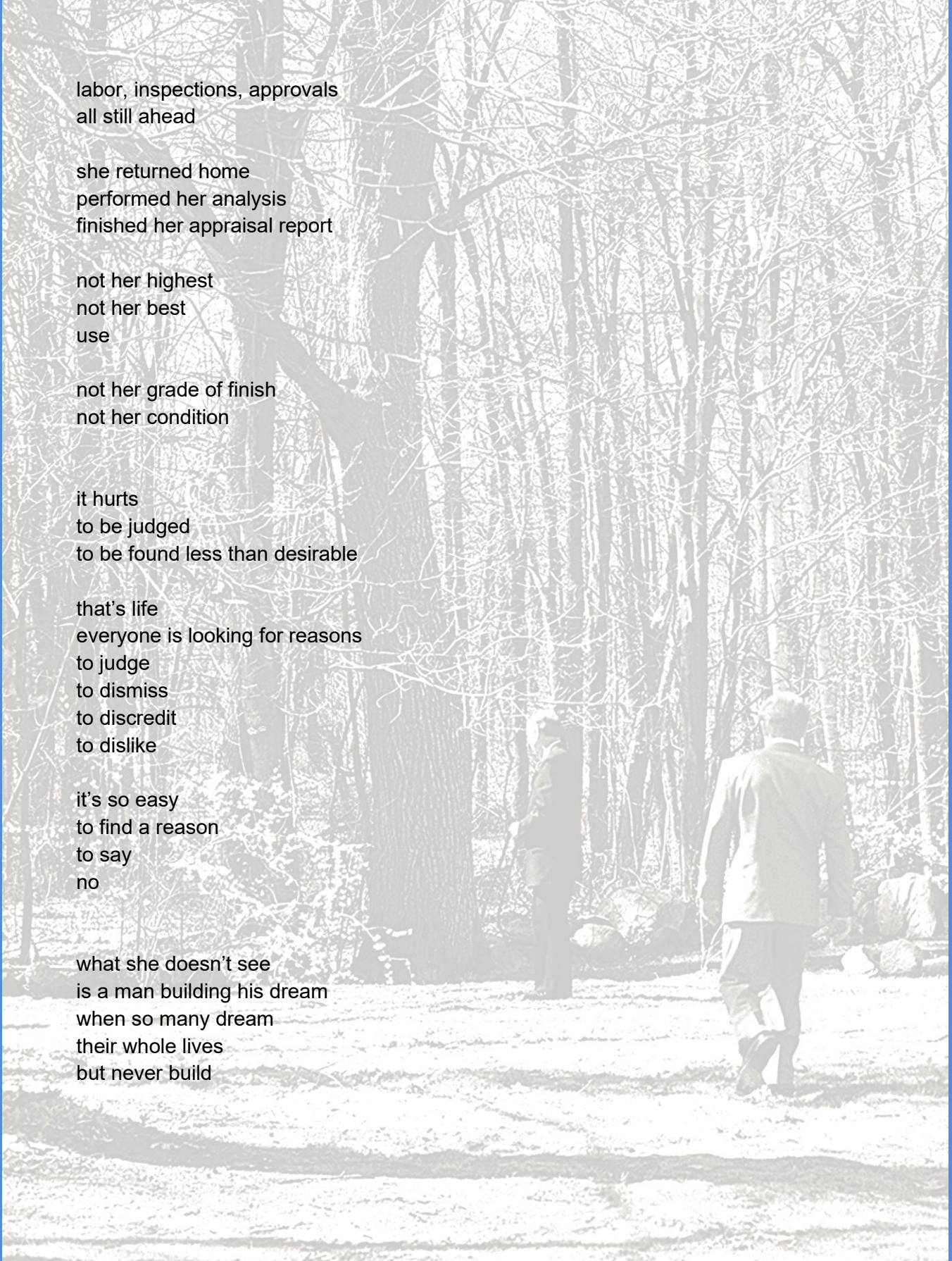
not her grade of finish  
not her condition

it hurts  
to be judged  
to be found less than desirable

that's life  
everyone is looking for reasons  
to judge  
to dismiss  
to discredit  
to dislike

it's so easy  
to find a reason  
to say  
no

what she doesn't see  
is a man building his dream  
when so many dream  
their whole lives  
but never build



what she doesn't see  
is a free and clear house  
six months from the finish line

what she doesn't see  
is final grade  
rock over mud  
traction-tread stairways  
for winter access

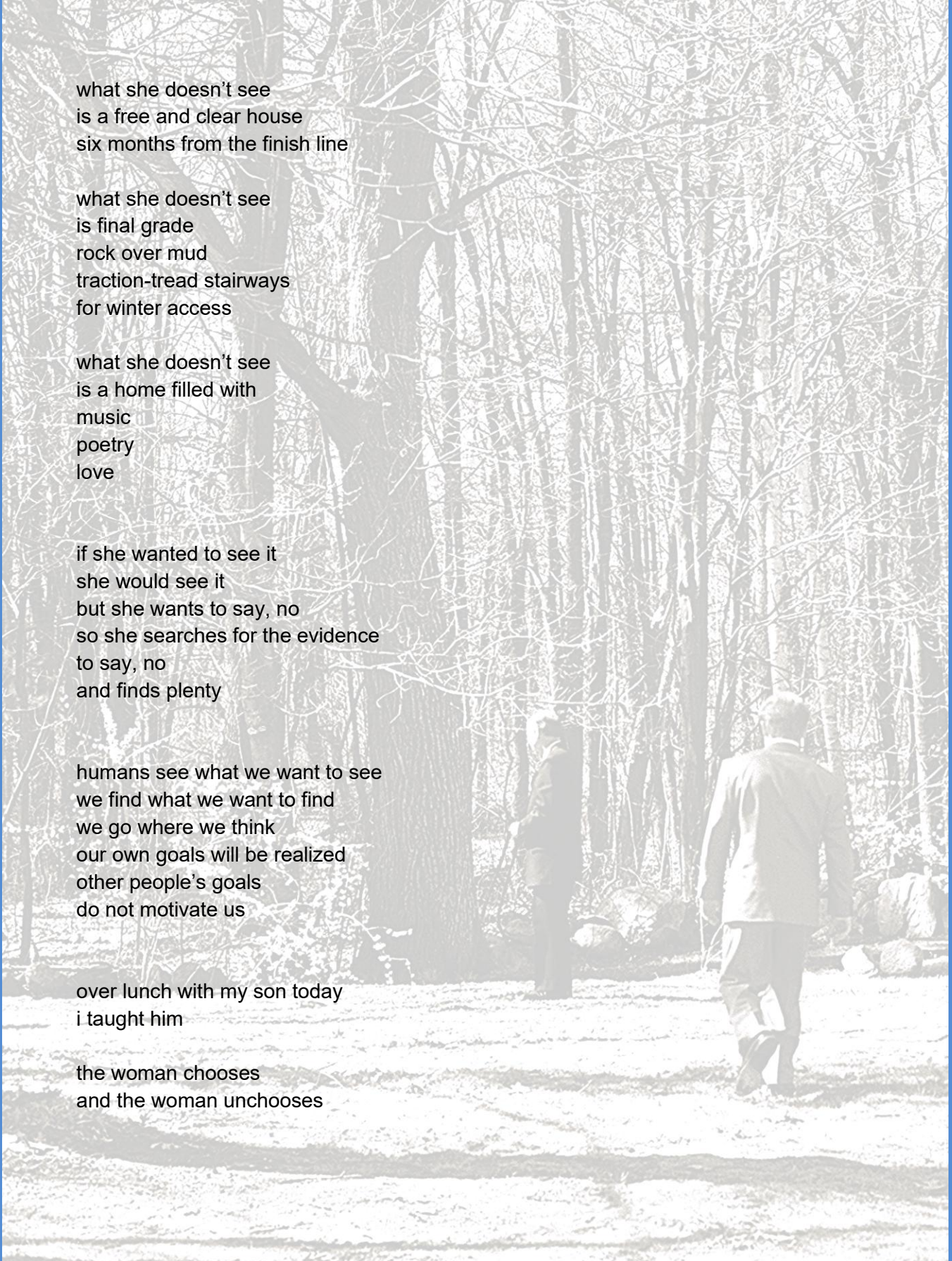
what she doesn't see  
is a home filled with  
music  
poetry  
love

if she wanted to see it  
she would see it  
but she wants to say, no  
so she searches for the evidence  
to say, no  
and finds plenty

humans see what we want to see  
we find what we want to find  
we go where we think  
our own goals will be realized  
other people's goals  
do not motivate us

over lunch with my son today  
i taught him

the woman chooses  
and the woman unchooses



the best thing you can do as a man  
is to be a man  
set your goals  
work your path  
accomplish your dreams

and if a woman walks with you  
for part of the journey  
big or small  
enjoy her  
love her  
every day a blessing

but do not give up being a man  
for her

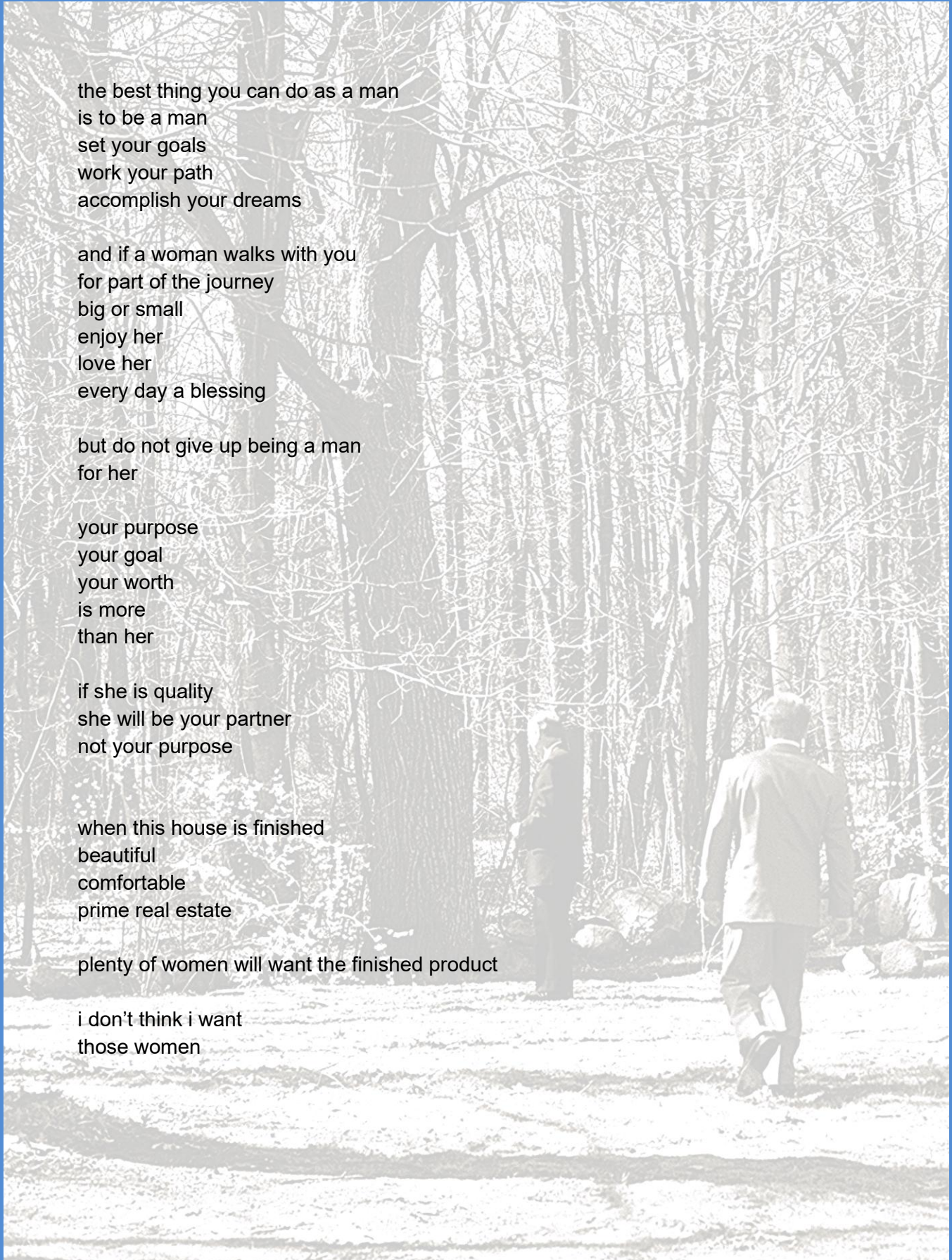
your purpose  
your goal  
your worth  
is more  
than her

if she is quality  
she will be your partner  
not your purpose

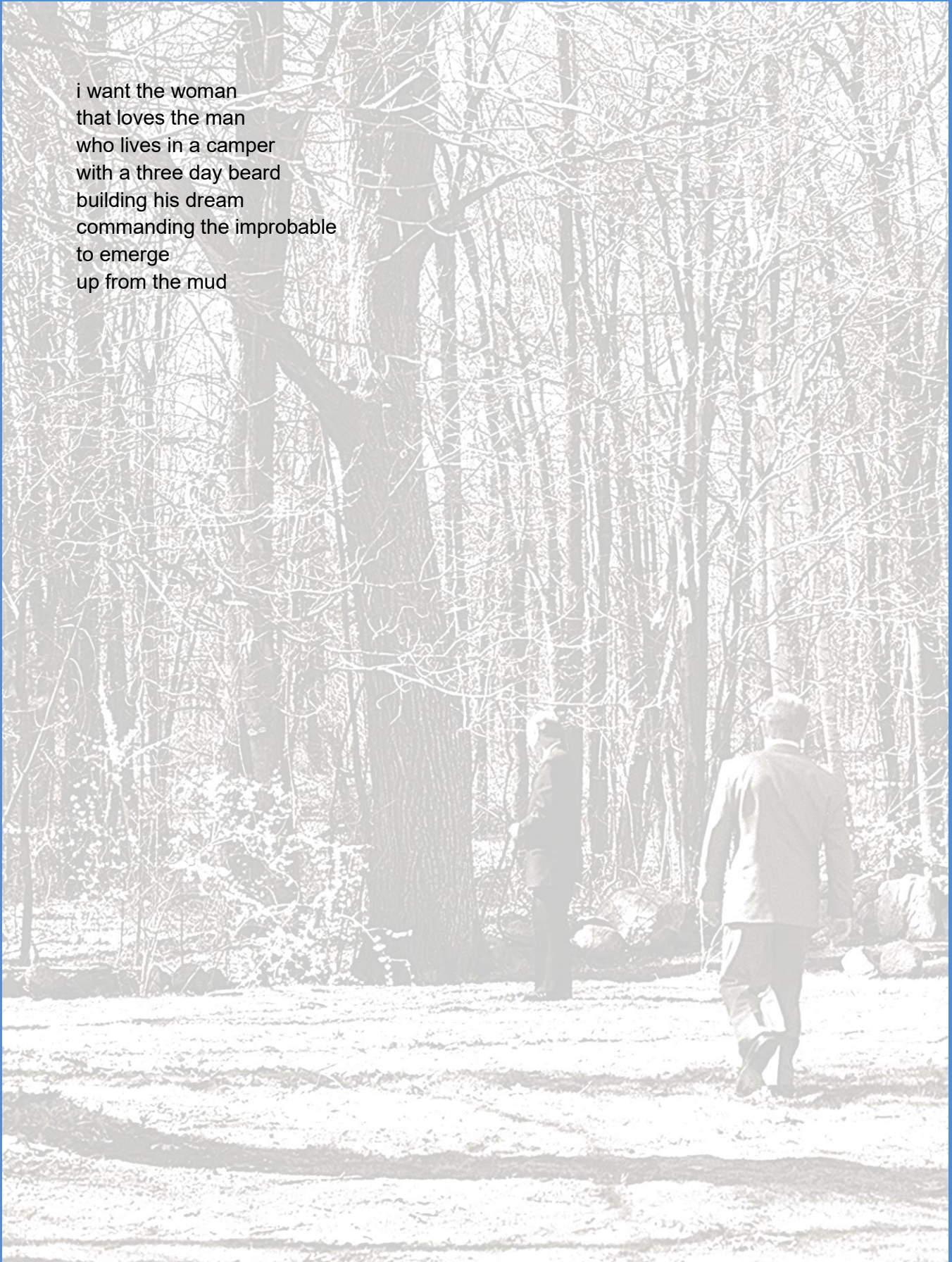
when this house is finished  
beautiful  
comfortable  
prime real estate

plenty of women will want the finished product

i don't think i want  
those women



i want the woman  
that loves the man  
who lives in a camper  
with a three day beard  
building his dream  
commanding the improbable  
to emerge  
up from the mud



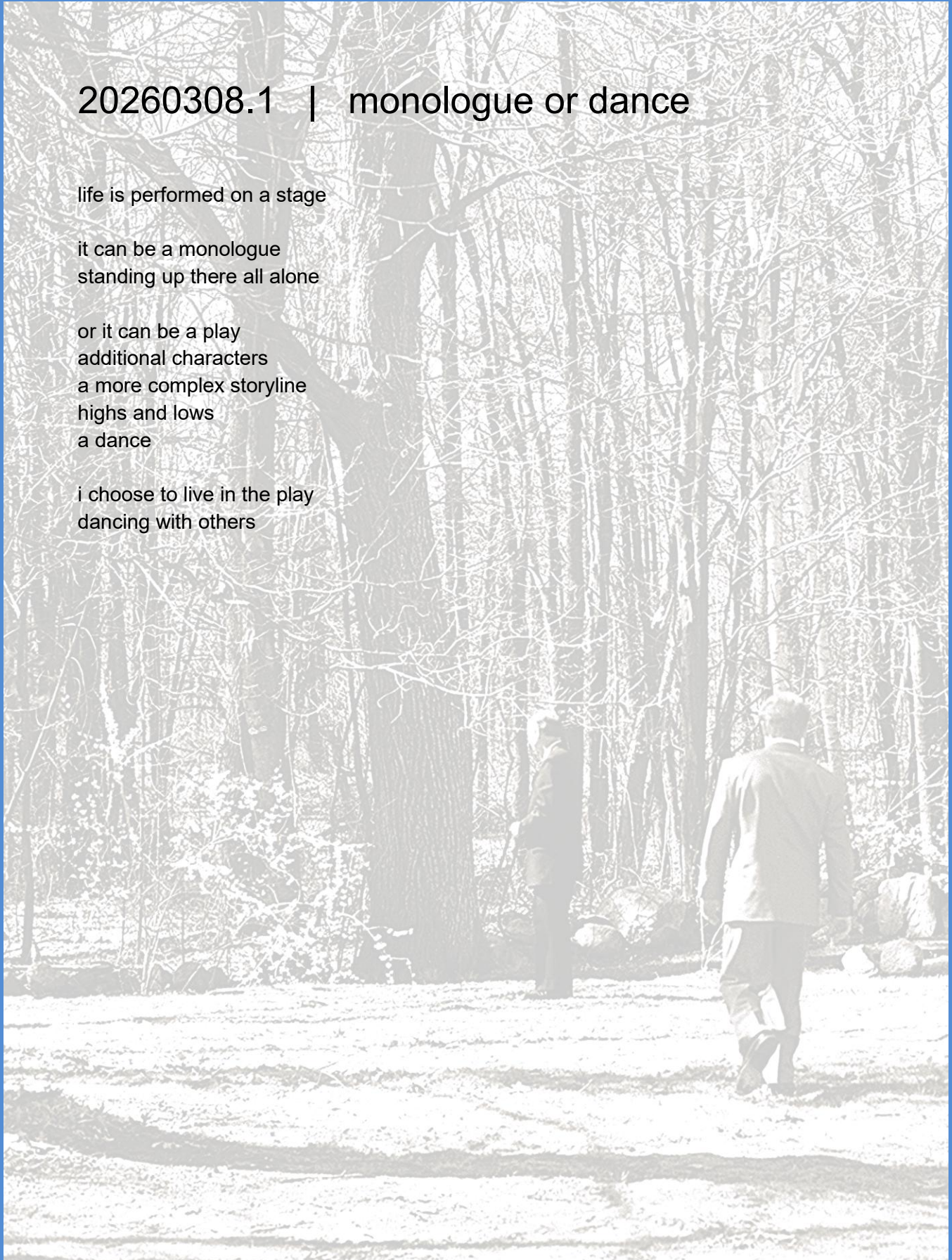
## 20260308.1 | monologue or dance

life is performed on a stage

it can be a monologue  
standing up there all alone

or it can be a play  
additional characters  
a more complex storyline  
highs and lows  
a dance

i choose to live in the play  
dancing with others



## 20260319.1 | man in the woman – woman in the man

everyone is under  
insurmountable pressure  
life  
dogpiles

applies the weight  
of imperfection  
of mortality  
upon our neck

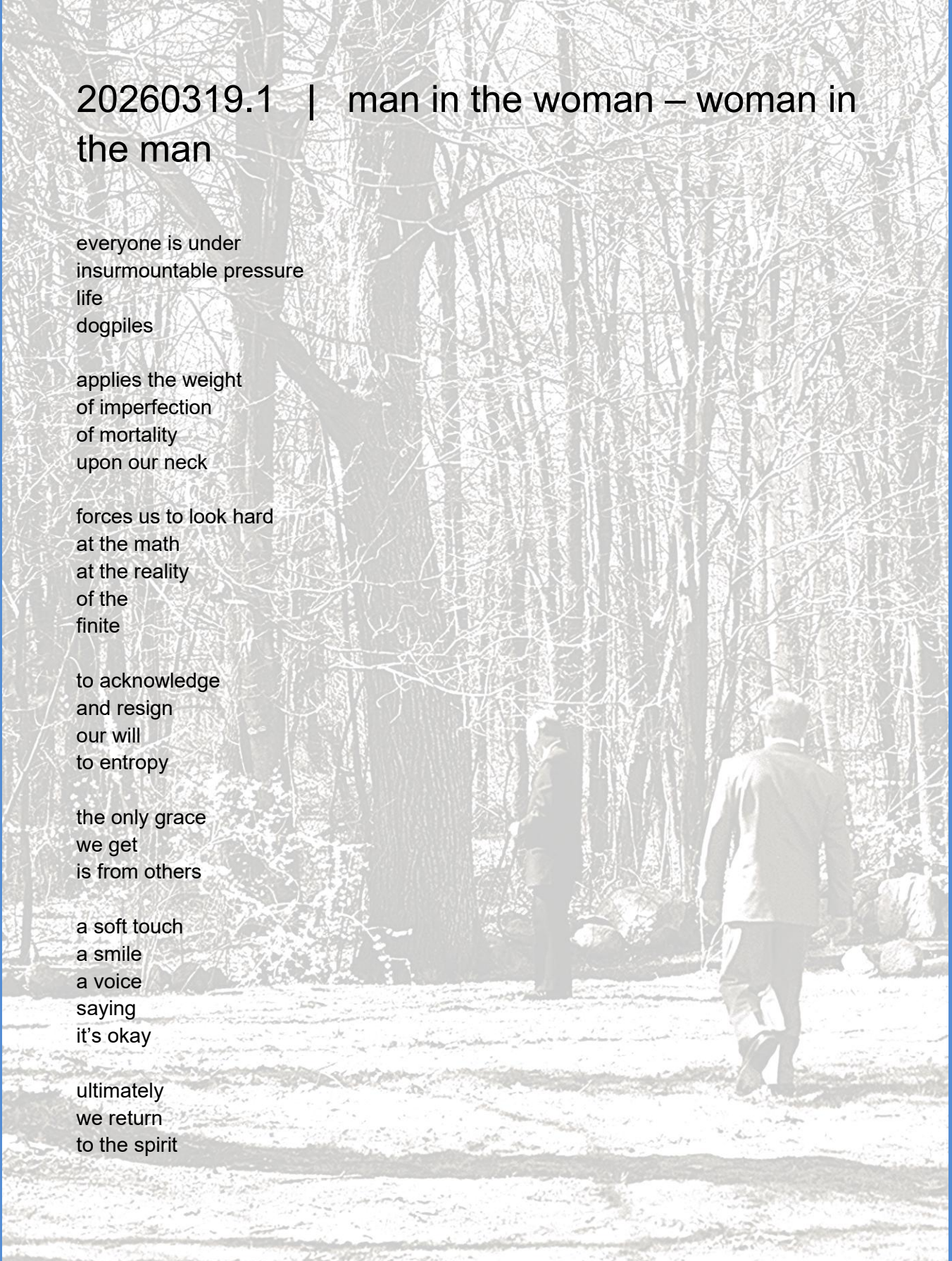
forces us to look hard  
at the math  
at the reality  
of the  
finite

to acknowledge  
and resign  
our will  
to entropy

the only grace  
we get  
is from others

a soft touch  
a smile  
a voice  
saying  
it's okay

ultimately  
we return  
to the spirit



flesh  
shed

mortality  
escaped

until then  
we need love

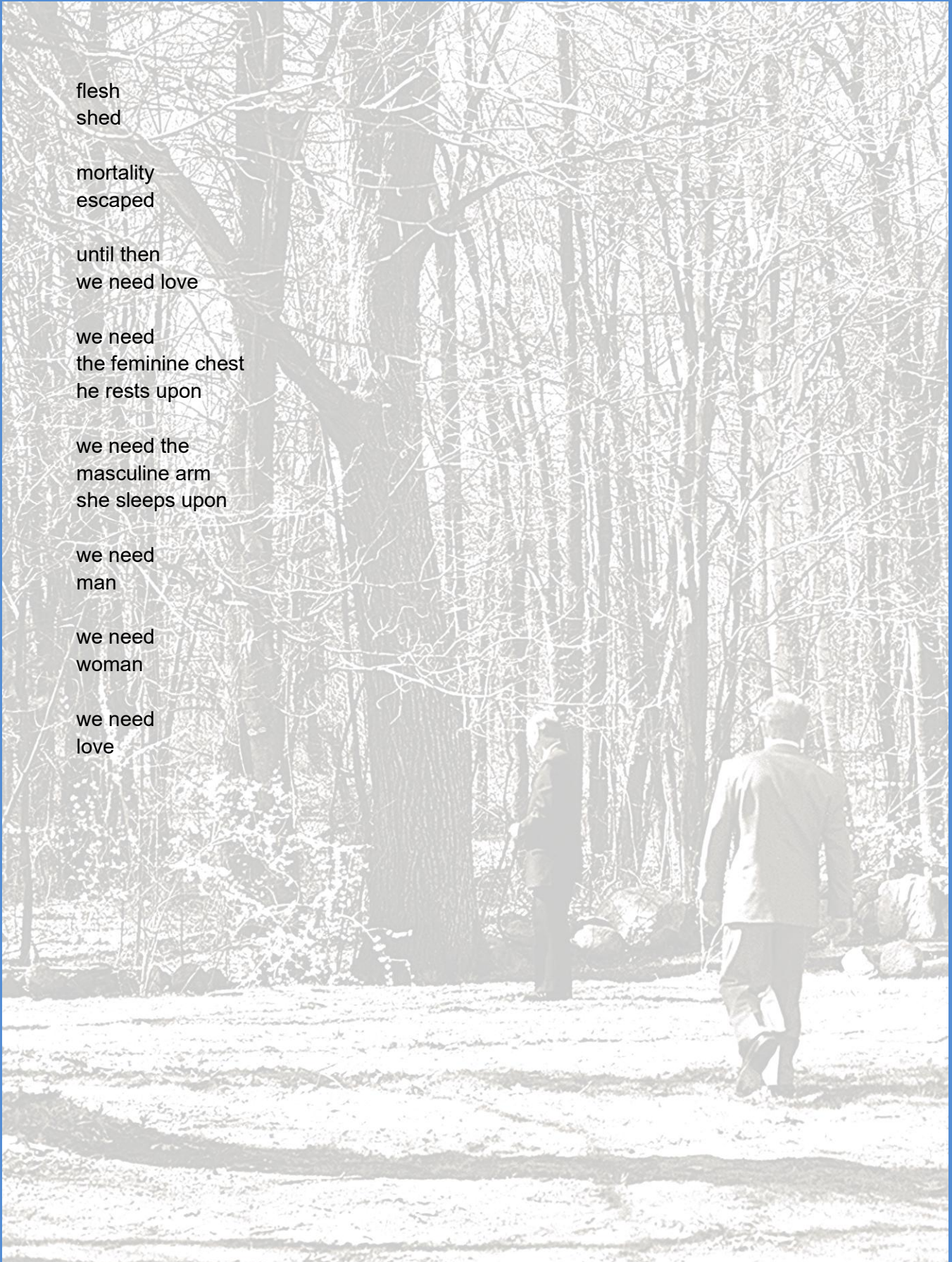
we need  
the feminine chest  
he rests upon

we need the  
masculine arm  
she sleeps upon

we need  
man

we need  
woman

we need  
love



## 20260402.1 | a rare beauty

she rises in the morning  
slender arms reaching  
black hair flowing midback  
over her tank top

a rare beauty

she walks our dog  
in the morning  
through the trees  
sunrise and nature

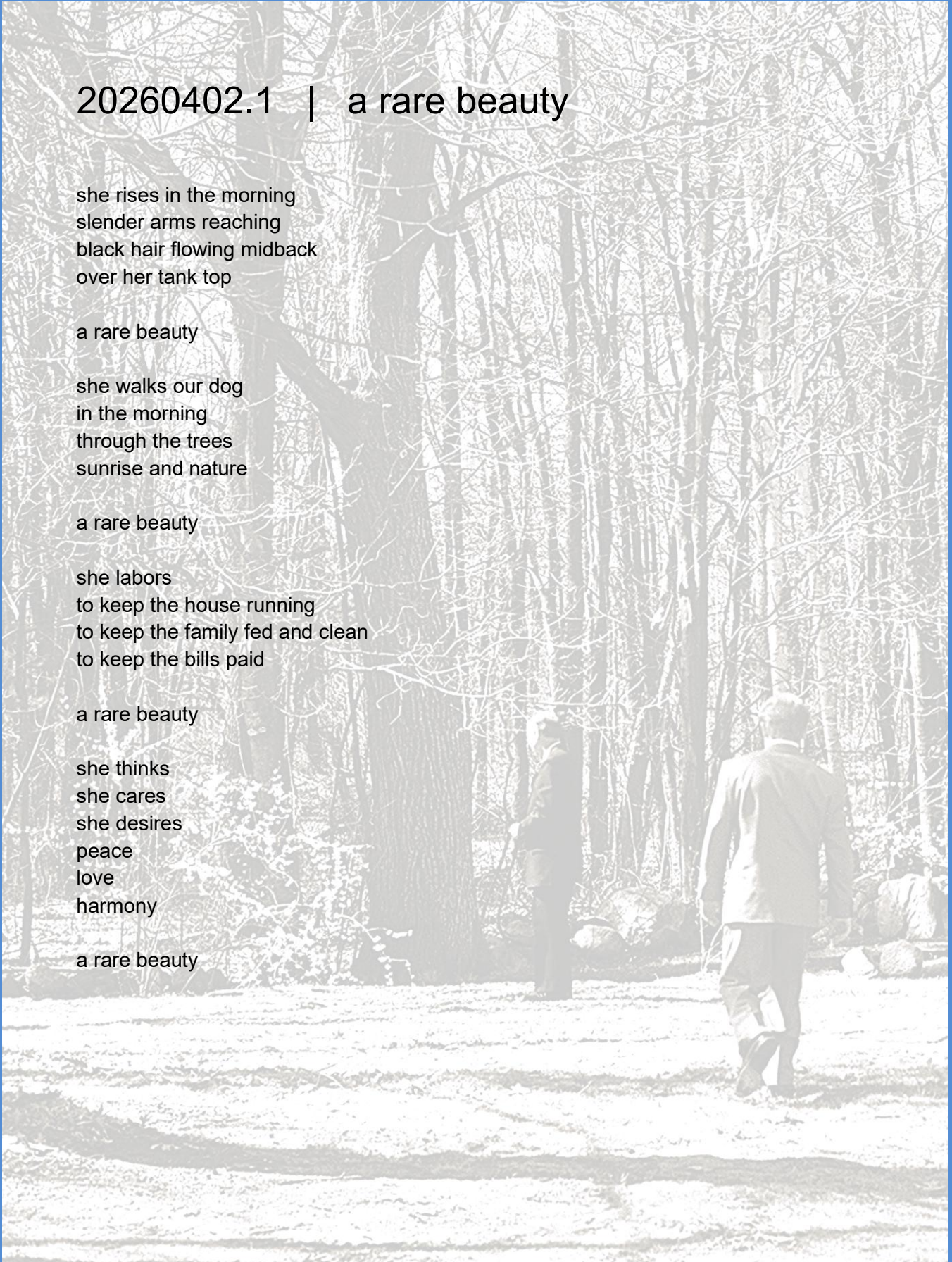
a rare beauty

she labors  
to keep the house running  
to keep the family fed and clean  
to keep the bills paid

a rare beauty

she thinks  
she cares  
she desires  
peace  
love  
harmony

a rare beauty



## 20260402.2 | one more life

every person  
who has lived long enough  
loved deep enough  
has wished  
has pleaded

for one more day

if god gave  
one more day  
just one more day  
would it matter

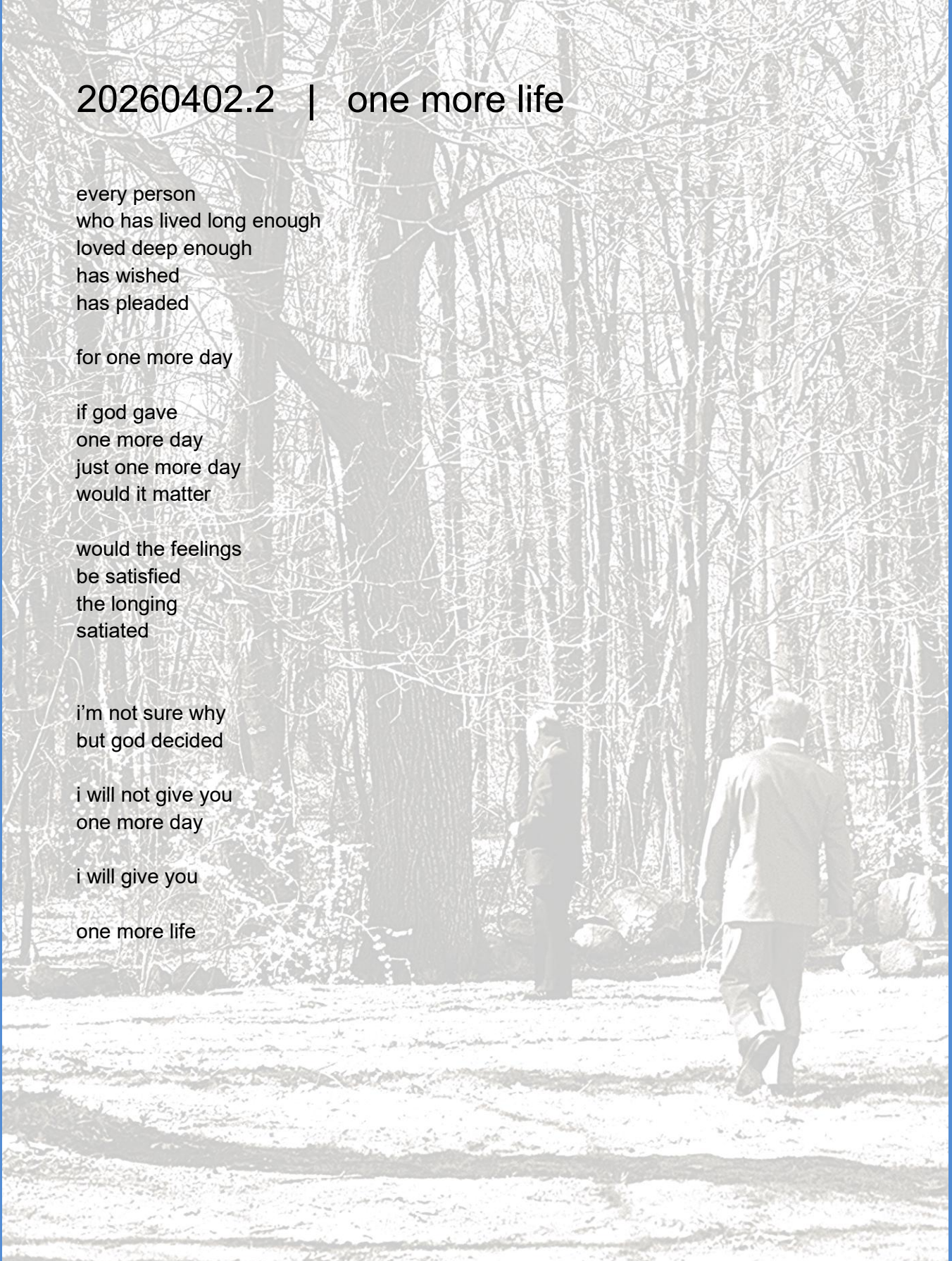
would the feelings  
be satisfied  
the longing  
satiated

i'm not sure why  
but god decided

i will not give you  
one more day

i will give you

one more life



## 20260402.3 | a few

the world is full of people

we don't need billions  
or millions  
or hundreds

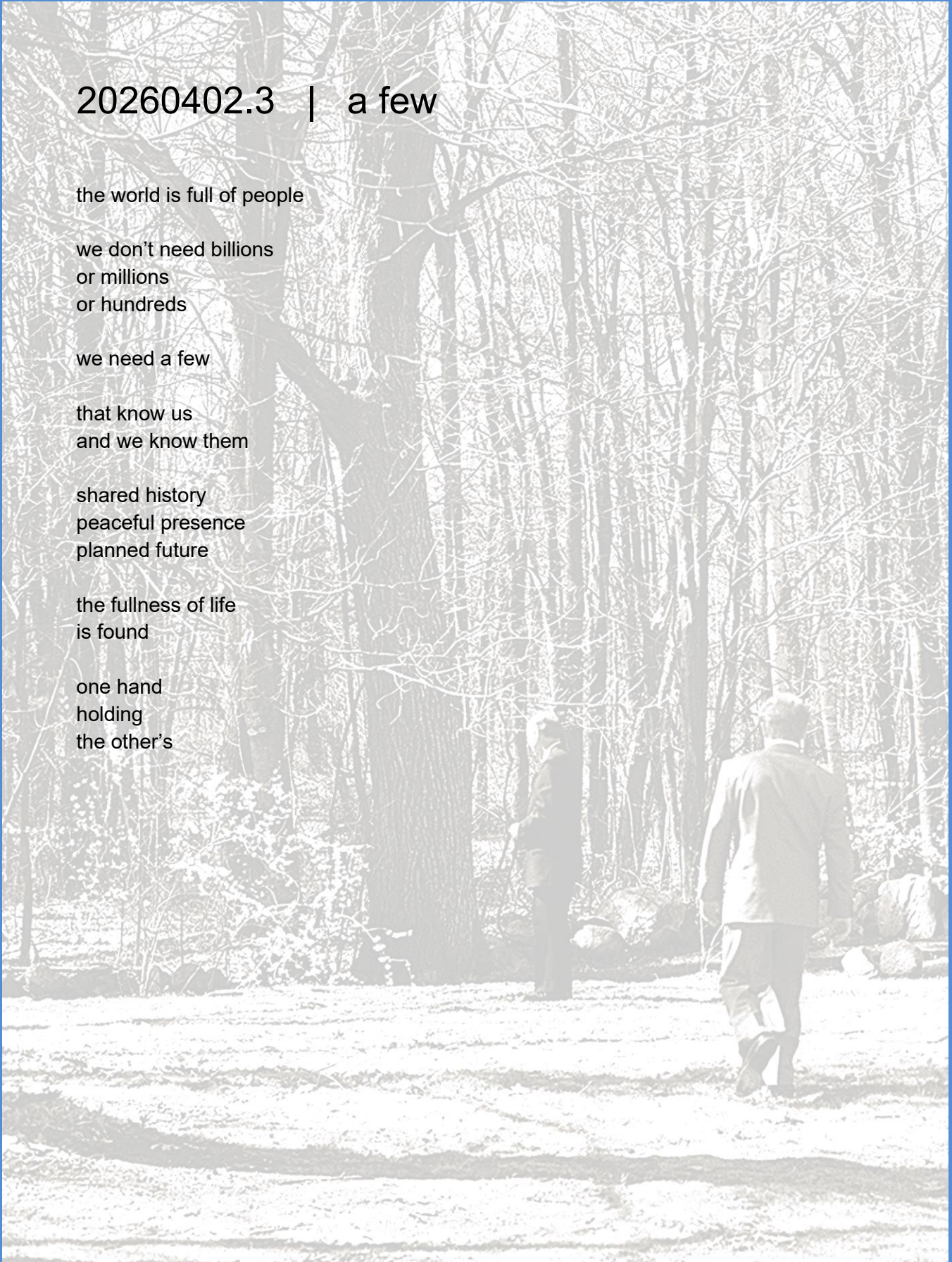
we need a few

that know us  
and we know them

shared history  
peaceful presence  
planned future

the fullness of life  
is found

one hand  
holding  
the other's



## 20260412.1 | canadian geese

i live under air space  
the noise of the approach  
coming from above  
from a distance

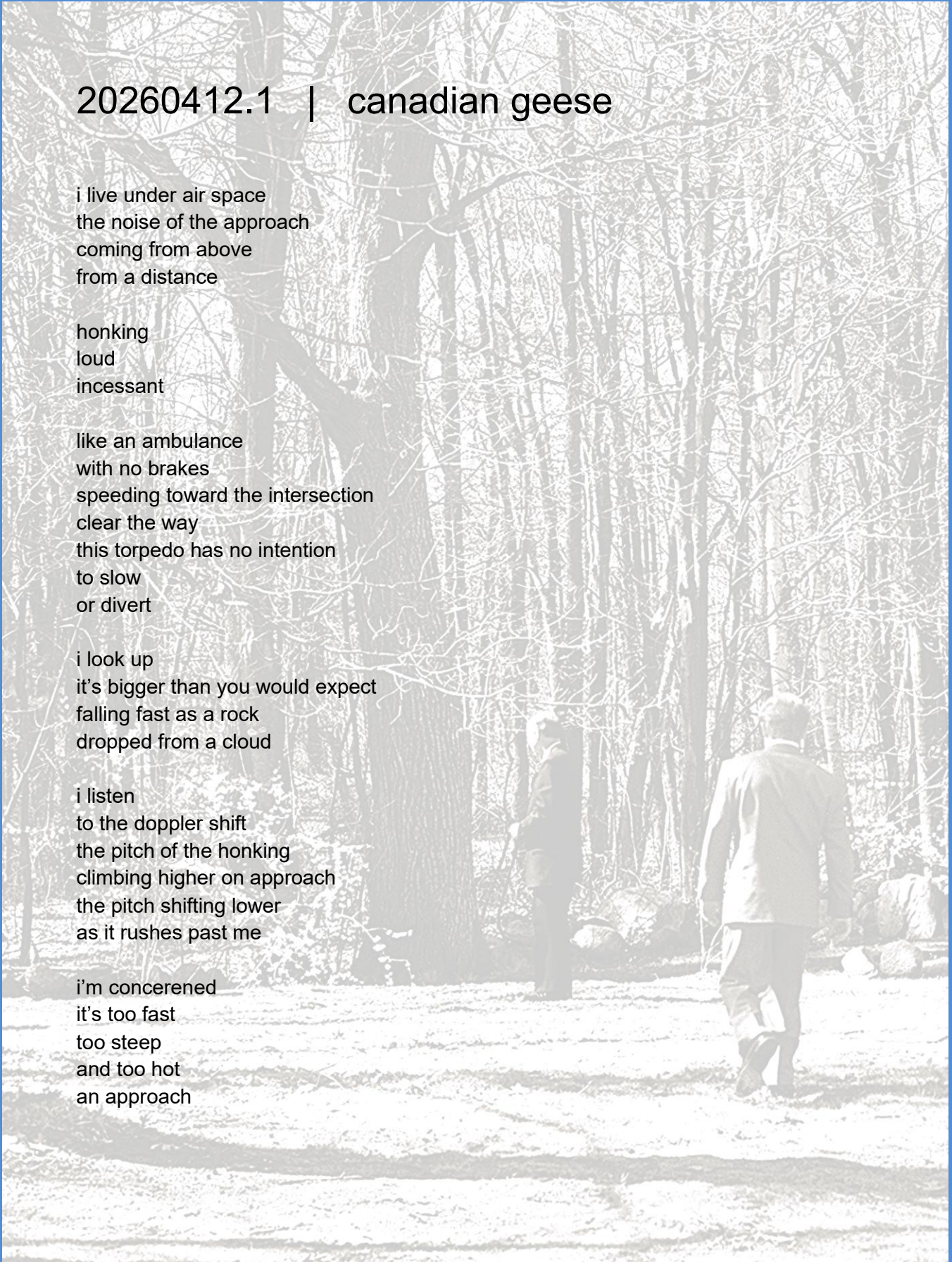
honking  
loud  
incessant

like an ambulance  
with no brakes  
speeding toward the intersection  
clear the way  
this torpedo has no intention  
to slow  
or divert

i look up  
it's bigger than you would expect  
falling fast as a rock  
dropped from a cloud

i listen  
to the doppler shift  
the pitch of the honking  
climbing higher on approach  
the pitch shifting lower  
as it rushes past me

i'm concerned  
it's too fast  
too steep  
and too hot  
an approach



wings fixed  
it plummets  
to the target  
a one-way military drone  
fixed on clyde lake

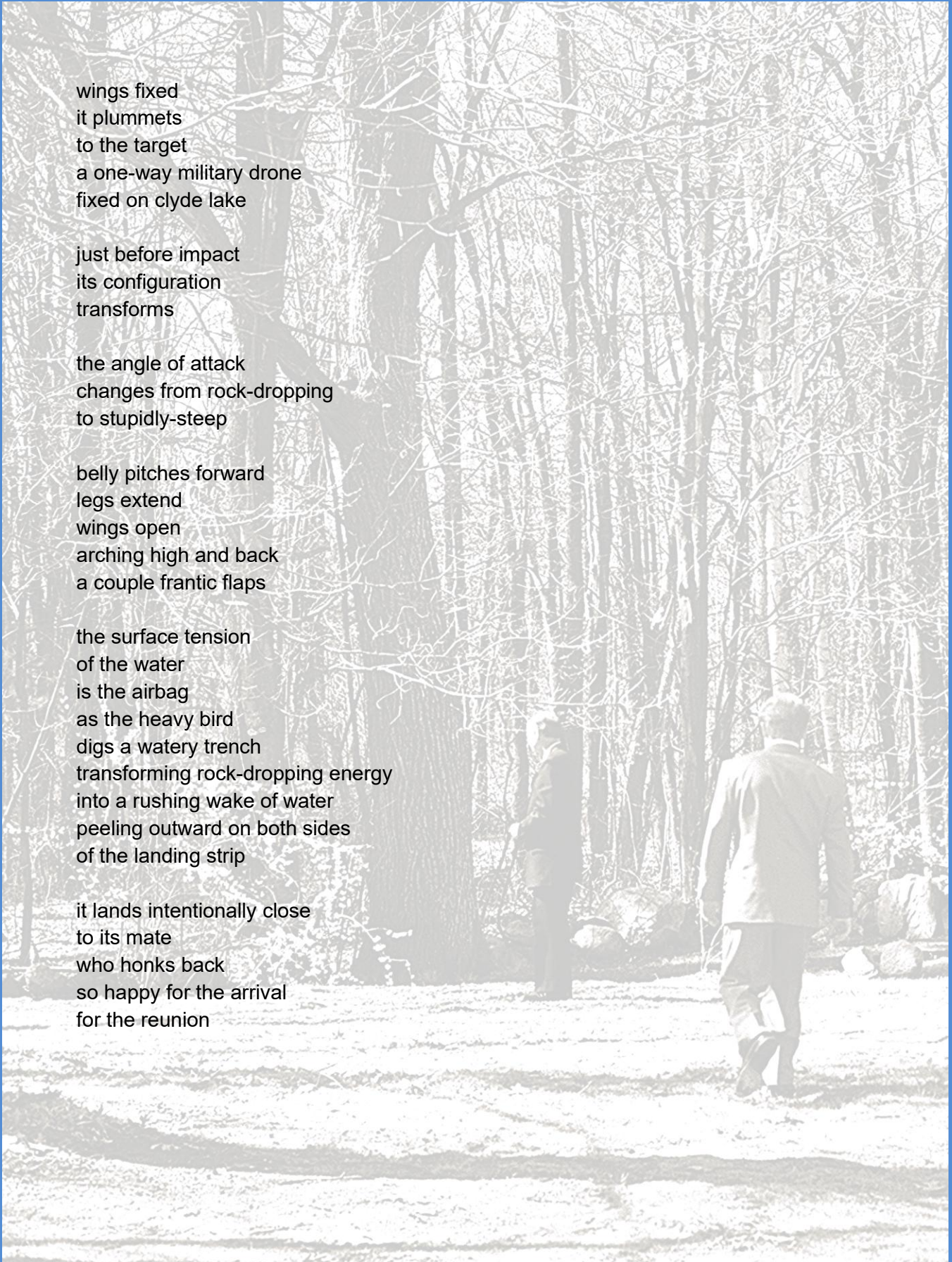
just before impact  
its configuration  
transforms

the angle of attack  
changes from rock-dropping  
to stupidly-steep

belly pitches forward  
legs extend  
wings open  
arching high and back  
a couple frantic flaps

the surface tension  
of the water  
is the airbag  
as the heavy bird  
digs a watery trench  
transforming rock-dropping energy  
into a rushing wake of water  
peeling outward on both sides  
of the landing strip

it lands intentionally close  
to its mate  
who honks back  
so happy for the arrival  
for the reunion



## 20260412.2 | the moose dance

she wanders with baby nearby

we wander with dog on leash

we all watch for movement

queues in the dance

keeping feet where feet belong

we dance to the music of  
last autumn's leaves crunching

twigs snapping

hooves stepping

feet stepping

dog barking

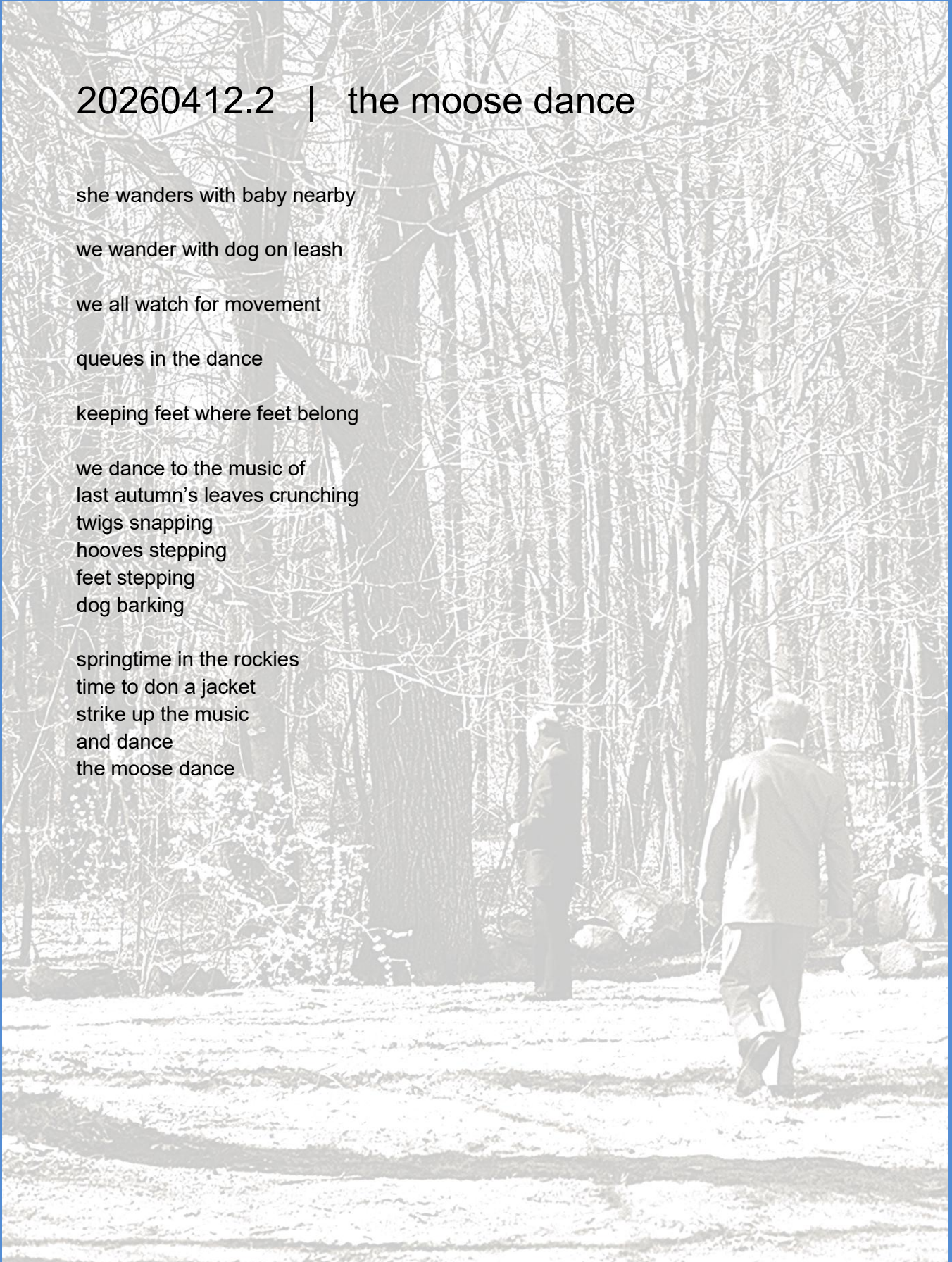
springtime in the rockies

time to don a jacket

strike up the music

and dance

the moose dance



20260422.1 | sandhill crane

i build  
in the sun

above me  
movement

my hands pause  
my head looks up

and it just floats there

like heaven opened  
and an angel descended

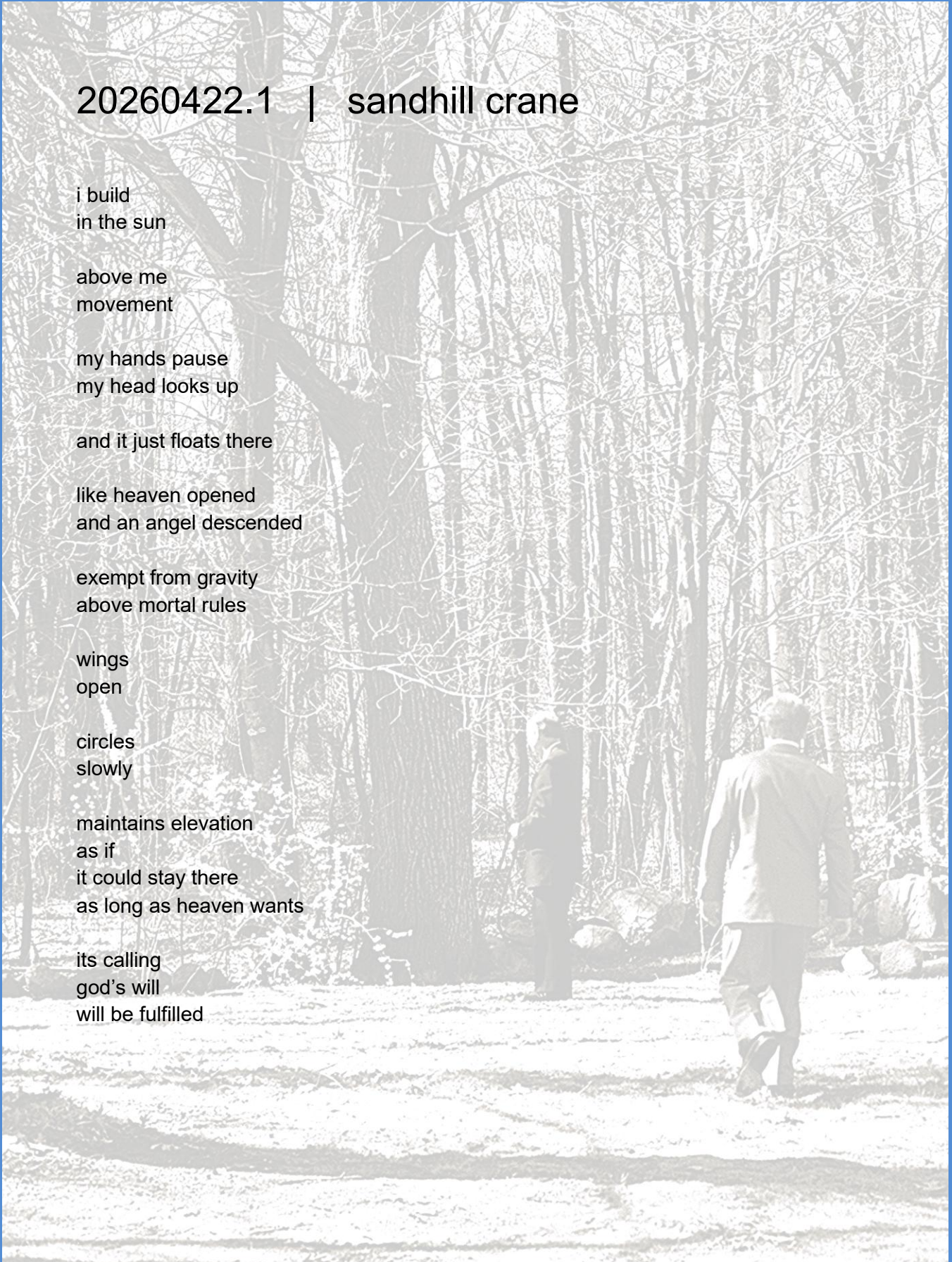
exempt from gravity  
above mortal rules

wings  
open

circles  
slowly

maintains elevation  
as if  
it could stay there  
as long as heaven wants

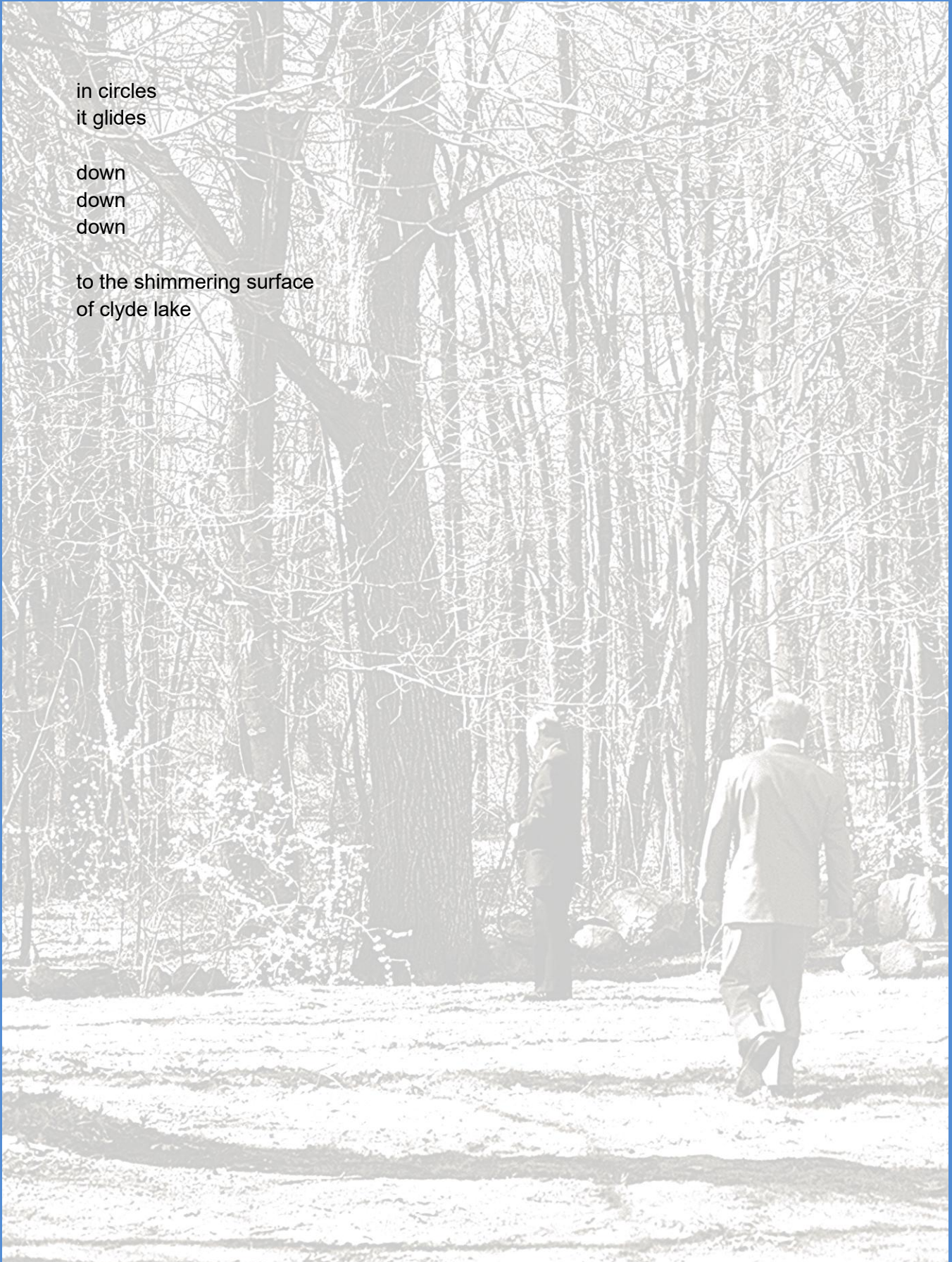
its calling  
god's will  
will be fulfilled



in circles  
it glides

down  
down  
down

to the shimmering surface  
of clyde lake



## 20260422.2 | name - face - books

it is my dewey decimal system  
it is my memory castle  
it is my library  
it is my temple

each name  
tied to a face

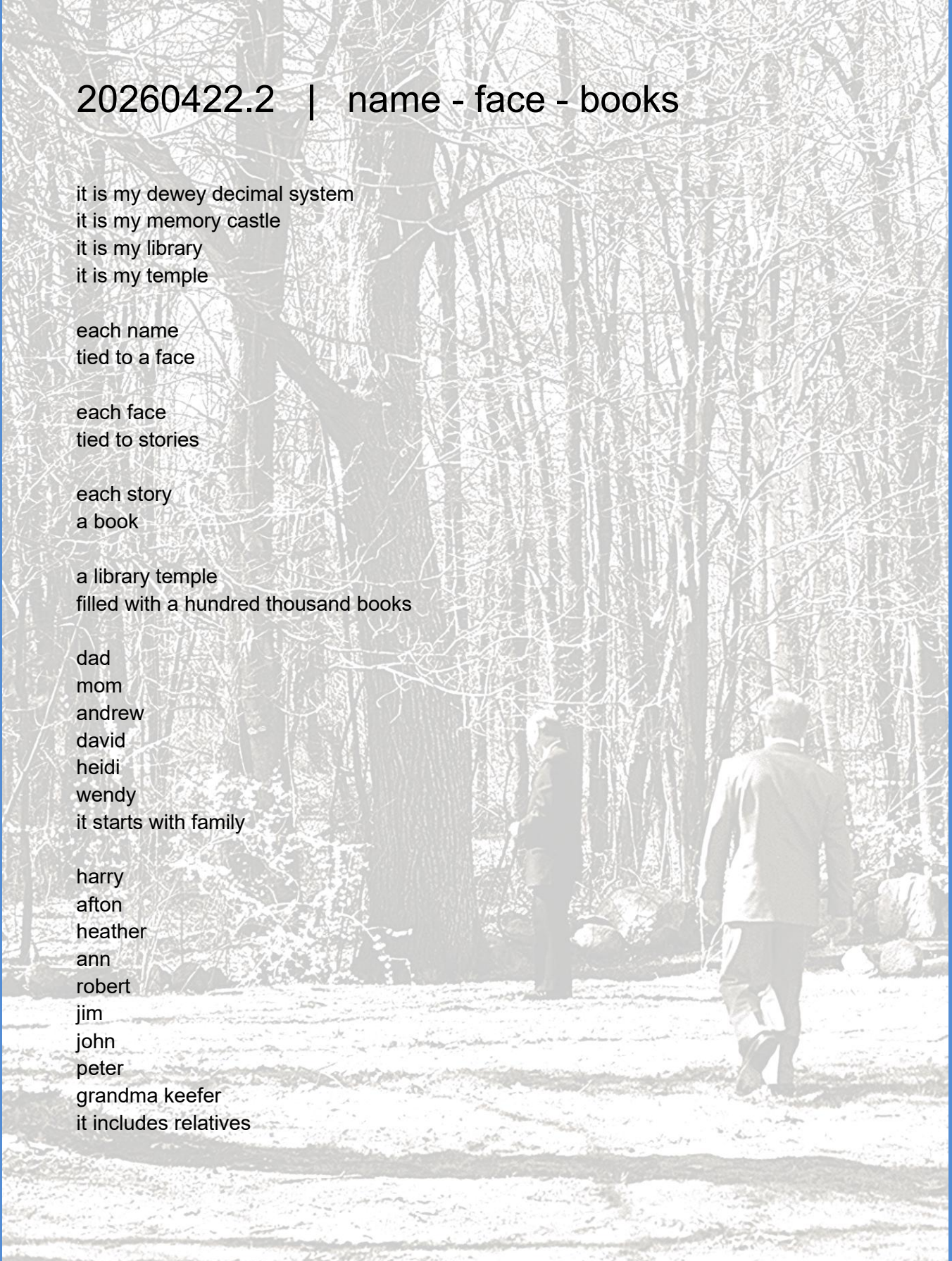
each face  
tied to stories

each story  
a book

a library temple  
filled with a hundred thousand books

dad  
mom  
andrew  
david  
heidi  
wendy  
it starts with family

harry  
afton  
heather  
ann  
robert  
jim  
john  
peter  
grandma keefer  
it includes relatives



gavin  
kriss  
danny  
todd  
randy  
it expands to friends

it pulls in lovers

it brings in coworkers

it flags assholes

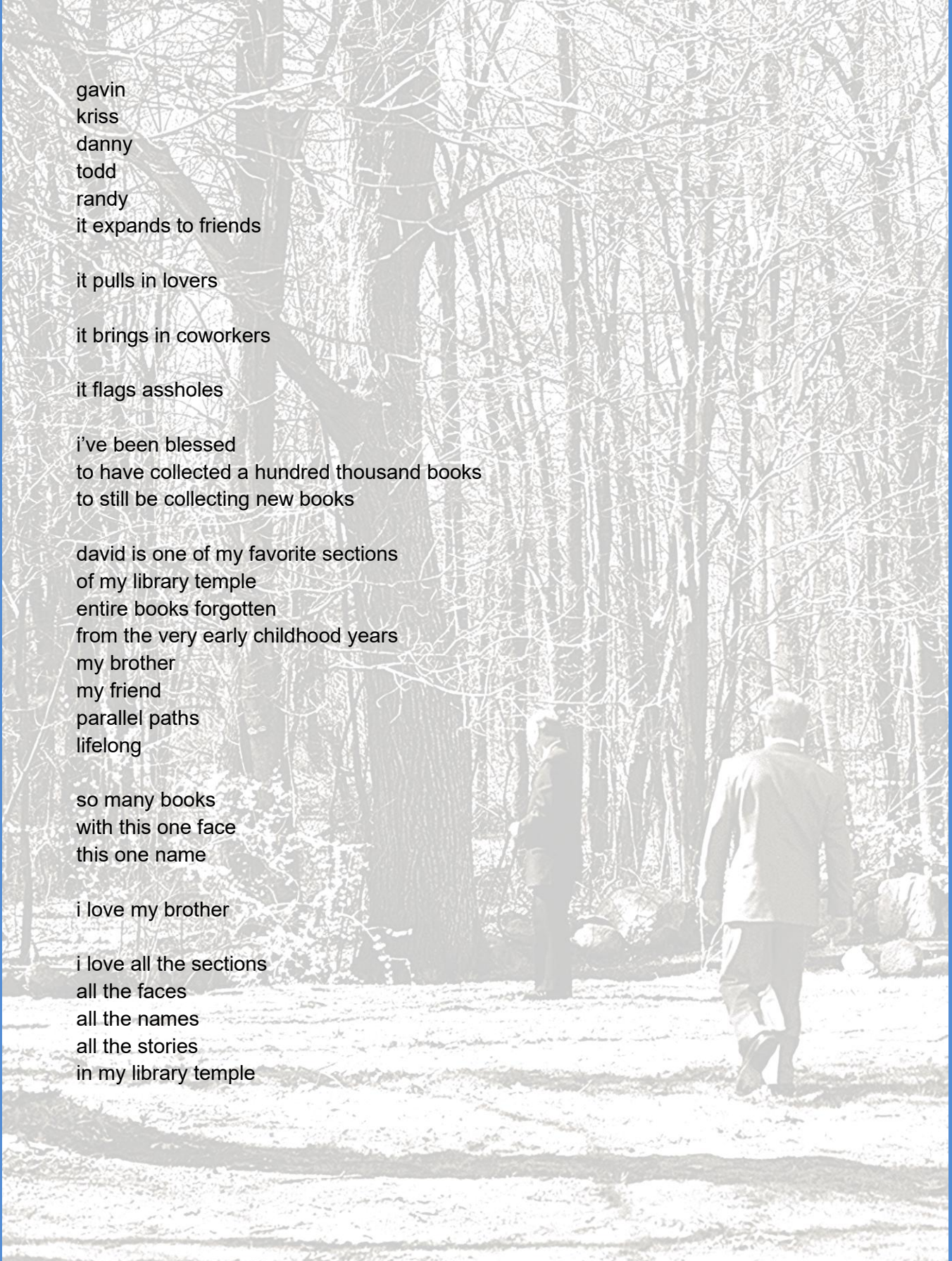
i've been blessed  
to have collected a hundred thousand books  
to still be collecting new books

david is one of my favorite sections  
of my library temple  
entire books forgotten  
from the very early childhood years  
my brother  
my friend  
parallel paths  
lifelong

so many books  
with this one face  
this one name

i love my brother

i love all the sections  
all the faces  
all the names  
all the stories  
in my library temple



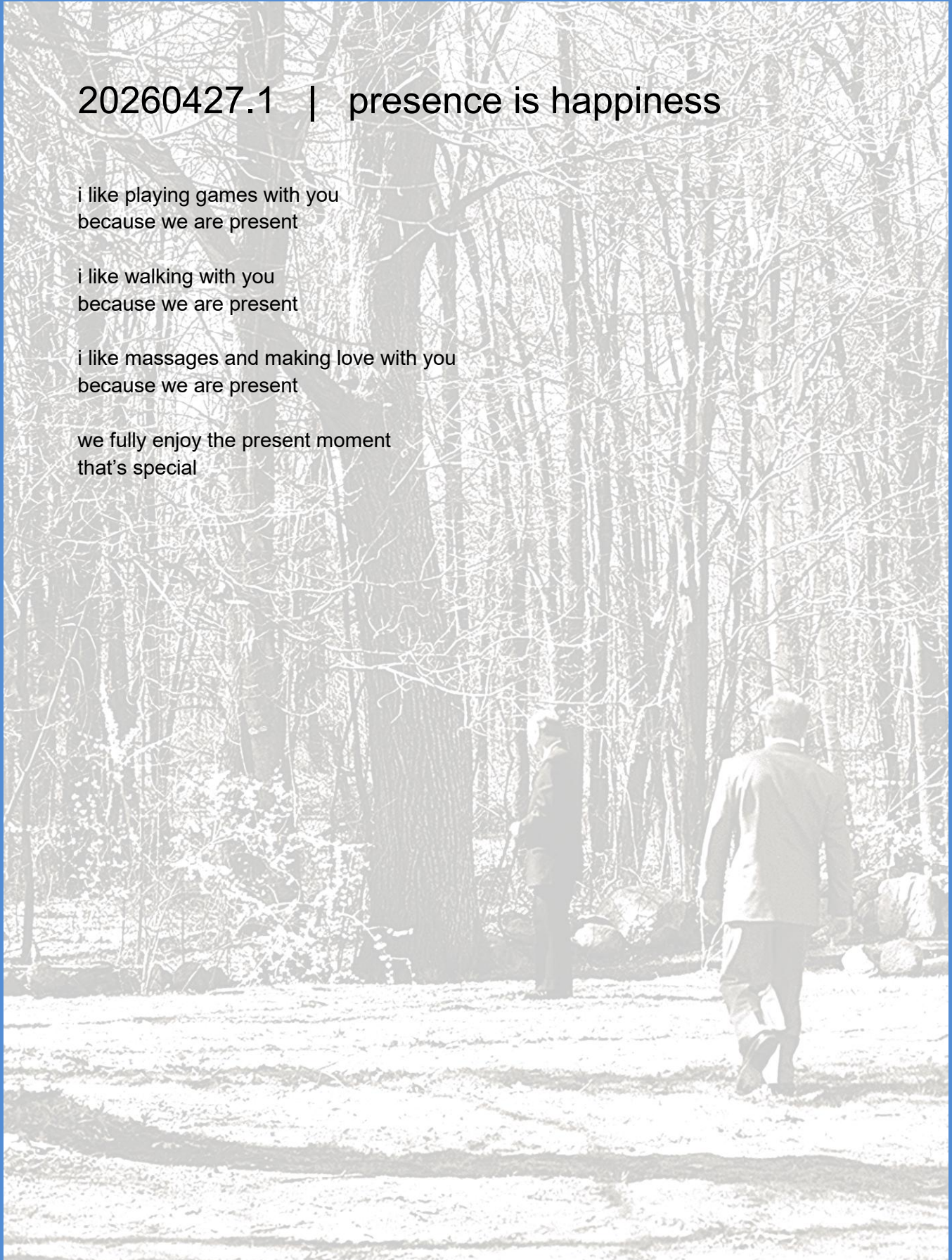
## 20260427.1 | presence is happiness

i like playing games with you  
because we are present

i like walking with you  
because we are present

i like massages and making love with you  
because we are present

we fully enjoy the present moment  
that's special



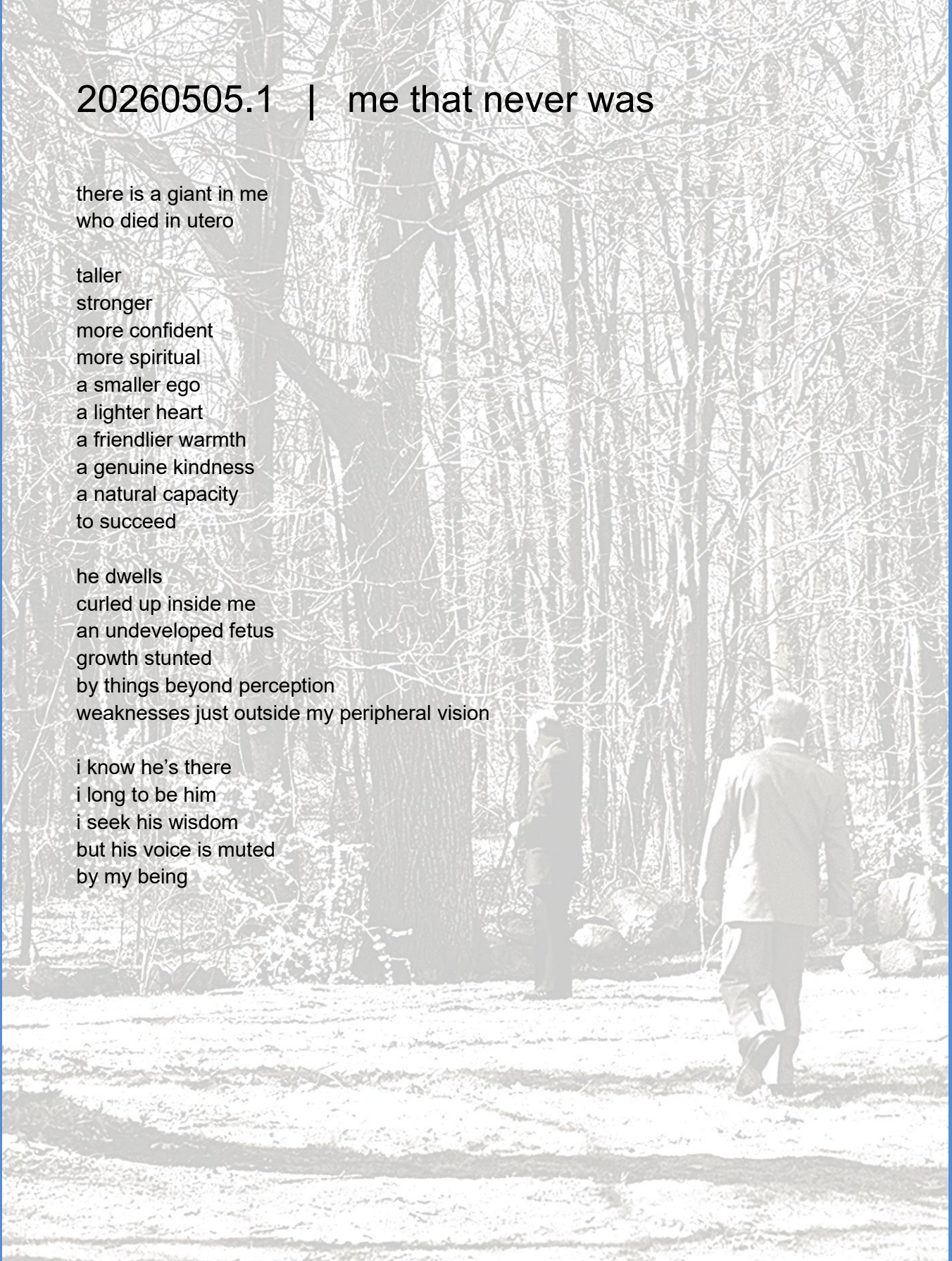
## 20260505.1 | me that never was

there is a giant in me  
who died in utero

taller  
stronger  
more confident  
more spiritual  
a smaller ego  
a lighter heart  
a friendlier warmth  
a genuine kindness  
a natural capacity  
to succeed

he dwells  
curled up inside me  
an undeveloped fetus  
growth stunted  
by things beyond perception  
weaknesses just outside my peripheral vision

i know he's there  
i long to be him  
i seek his wisdom  
but his voice is muted  
by my being



## 20260505.2 | shakespeare

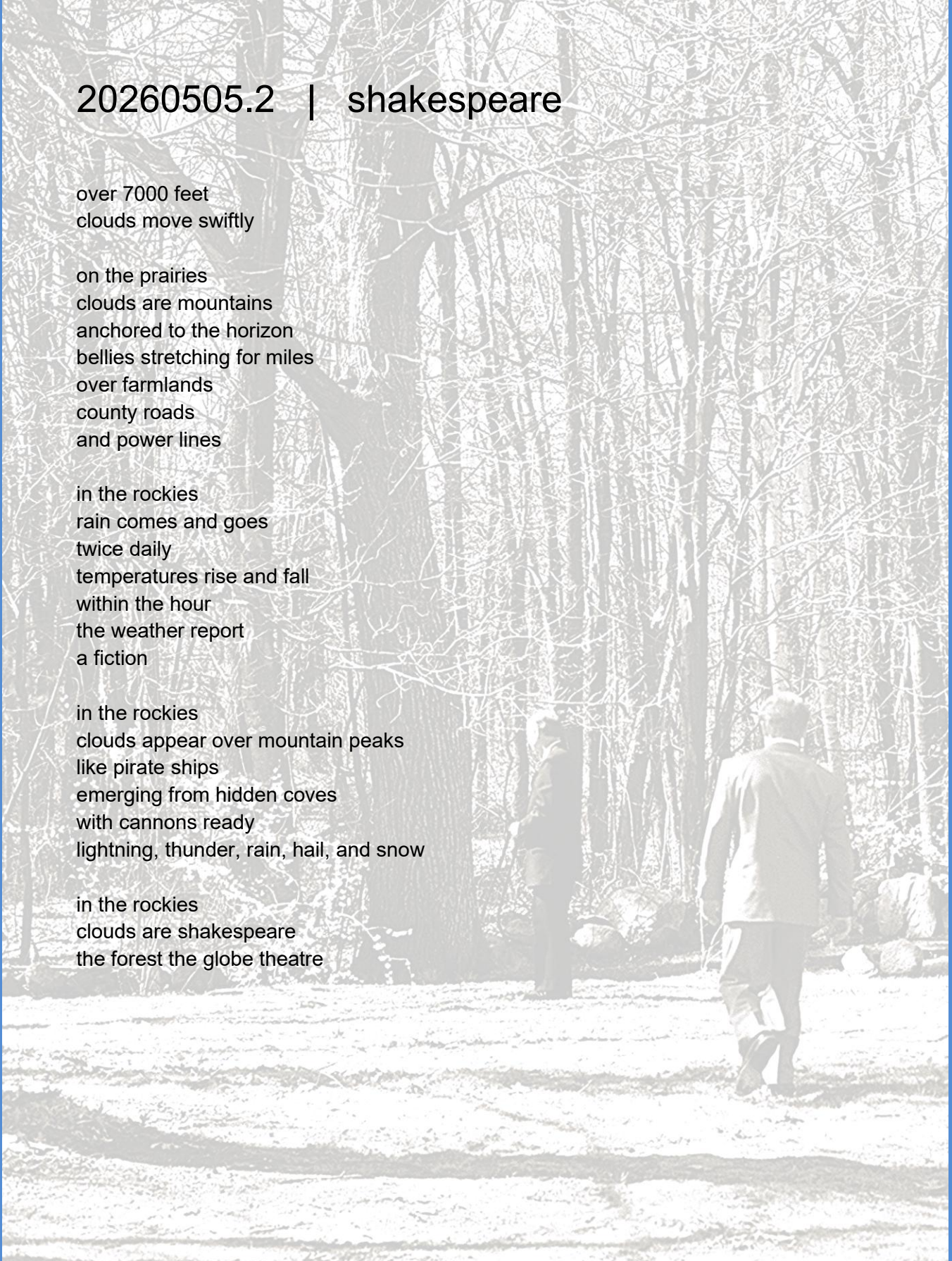
over 7000 feet  
clouds move swiftly

on the prairies  
clouds are mountains  
anchored to the horizon  
bellies stretching for miles  
over farmlands  
county roads  
and power lines

in the rockies  
rain comes and goes  
twice daily  
temperatures rise and fall  
within the hour  
the weather report  
a fiction

in the rockies  
clouds appear over mountain peaks  
like pirate ships  
emerging from hidden coves  
with cannons ready  
lightning, thunder, rain, hail, and snow

in the rockies  
clouds are shakespeare  
the forest the globe theatre



end

# A Human Life

a book of poems

by  
pc keefer

book four  
end

