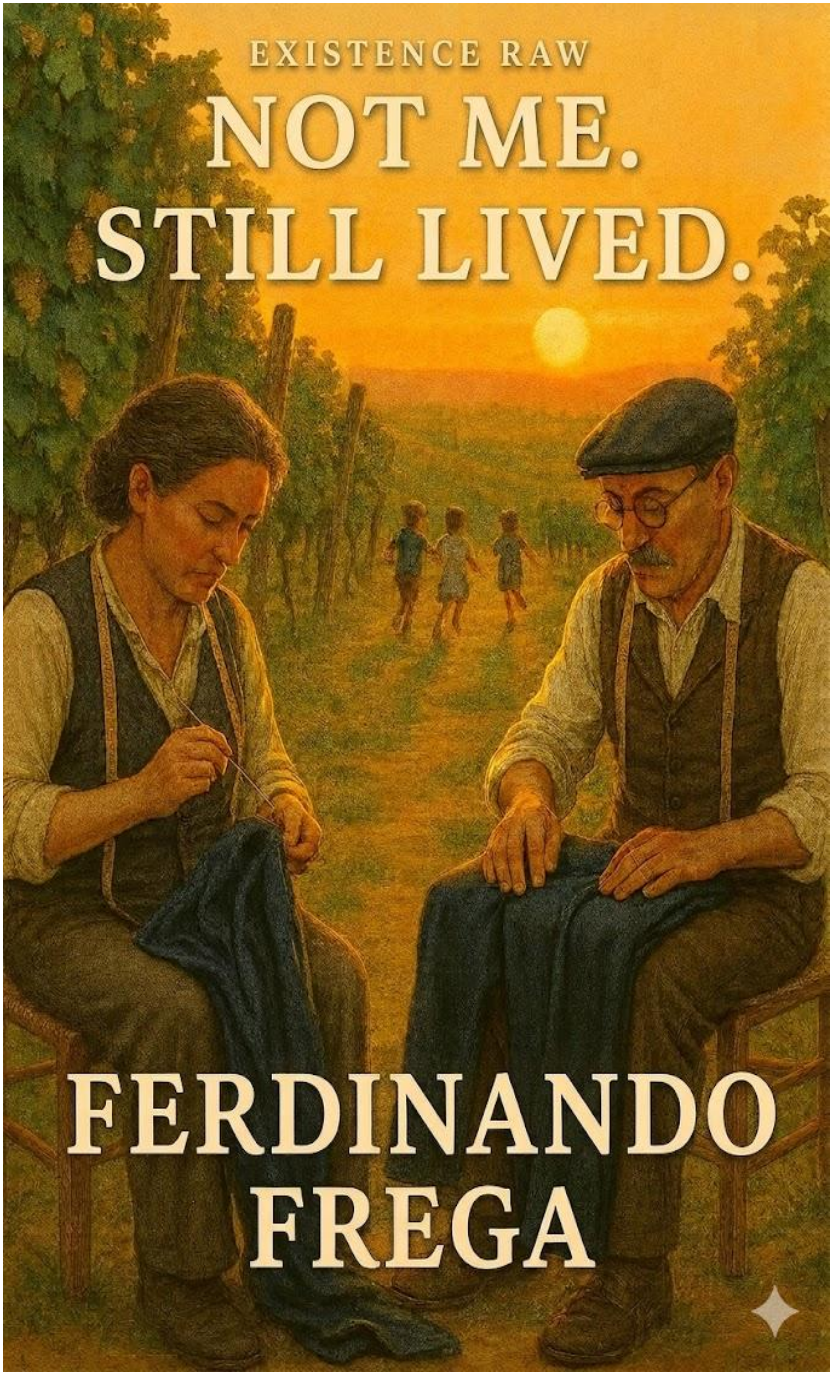

EXISTENCE RAW
NOT ME.
STILL LIVED.
FERDINANDO
FREGA

EXISTENCE RAW

NOT ME. STILL LIVED.

FERDINANDO FREGA

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LITERARY MANIFESTO

This book does not follow a linear plot, nor does it claim to tell a single story. Rather, it is a mosaic of experiences, thoughts, and fragments of life that intertwine, like the folds of a worn fabric. To give coherence to this interweaving, I have divided the texts into eight thematic chapters, each dedicated to a dimension of existence that has touched me, questioned me, made me smile, or made me reflect.

It opens with **bonds that leave a mark,** where friendship, trust, and betrayal manifest themselves in all their nuances. **The theater of love follows,** which brings together relationships experienced, missed, spiritual, or ironic, always intense, and never predictable.

In the chapter **"Time Changes Us,"** the past takes center stage: memories, regrets, and personal transformations alternate like inner seasons. With **"Solitude in Company,"** I explore those moments when you are surrounded by people, yet still alone, searching for authentic connection.

The poetry of everyday life is an invitation to look at our surroundings with new eyes: objects, gestures, cities, habits that become symbols and revelations. In **Risere per non collapsare (Laughter to Avoid Collapse)**, irony becomes a survival tool, a way to confront the absurd and grotesque.

Towards the end, **"The Strength of the Soul"** brings together stories of resilience, spirituality, and rebirth, were pain transforms into awareness. Finally, **"Letters I Didn't Send"** brings the book full circle with suspended words, intimate confessions, and thoughts that never found a voice, but now, within these pages, seek their place.

This is my narrative structure: an emotional, human, imperfect journey. Like life itself.

INTRODUCTION

There are books that tell stories. Others that accompany. This one, however, *questions.* Each page is a crease in life that cannot be ironed out. Here you will not find linearity, but vertigo. Not a story, but fragments of existence that fold in on themselves, break, and recompose themselves. Writing was an act of survival. Reading will be an act of recognition. I do not ask you to understand. I ask you to *feel.* To stay when you want to turn the page. To listen even when the silence makes noise. Because hidden in the creases of life is what we never dared to say. And this book says it.

CHAPTER STRUCTURE

Chapter I -- Ties That Leave a Mark

Wounds, memories, relationships that shape us. Here we encounter broken friendships, betrayed trusts, bonds that have left scars. Each story is an indelible mark, an encounter that changed the course of things.

Chapter II -- The Theater of Love

Encounters, illusions, passions, and disenchantments. Love reveals itself in all its forms: desire, absence, irony, spirituality. There is no romance, only tension. There is no certainty, only hunger.

Chapter III -- The Time That Changes Us

Growth, transitions, silent ascents. The past is not nostalgia but living matter. Memories, regrets, and transformations move here. Time does not heal but sculpts.

Chapter IV -- Solitude in Company

Empty presences, dignity in absence. Being surrounded and feeling alone. These stories speak of missed connections, of gazes that do not see, of presences that are not enough.

Chapter V -- The Poetry of Everyday Life

Small gestures, vibrant cities, suspended moments. Every gesture can be a revelation. Here, everyday life becomes symbol, cities speak, objects breathe. It is beauty that does not show itself but allows itself to be sensed.

Chapter VI -- Laughing So You Don't Fall Apart

Irony, paradoxes, the comical side of pain. When the pain is too much, we laugh. These stories use paradox, the grotesque, the absurd to survive. Humor is a defense, but also a revelation.

Chapter VII -- The Strength of the Soul

Resilience, spirituality, internal battles. Here we fight within. Spirituality is not dogma, but resistance. Resilience is not strength, but fragility does not yield. Every story is an imperfect rebirth.

Chapter VIII - Letters I Have Not Sent

Intimate confessions, words never spoken. These are the voices that have found no addressee. Suspended thoughts, unspoken confessions, words now searching for their place. This is the barest chapter.

PROLOGUE TO THE STORIES

You have read the introduction. You have touched the edge. Now let us go in.

Each story that follows is a fold, a fragment, a crack. Do not seek coherence, but resonance. Not a plot, but a tremor.

These are not stories to be told. They are stories to be *felt.* To be experienced with the skin, not with the mind.

Some will speak to you. Others will reject you. Some will hurt you. Others will make you remember.

Do not ask yourself what is true. Ask yourself what *remains.*

Because in the folds of life, we do not find what we seek. We find what changes us.

Friend, Acquaintance and Enemy

During this journey we have undertaken together through the pages of this book, I have found myself reflecting on a concept that deserves final consideration: the difference between "friend" and "acquaintance." We may seem like friends, because we share a bond of words, ideas, and feelings, but the reality is that the distance between us is typical of two people who, despite sharing experiences and thoughts, remain two strangers.

This reflection arises not as a separation, but as an invitation to a new beginning, to a new form of connection. Truly getting to know one another is a process that requires time, patience, and a mutual openness that goes beyond written words or superficial moments. It is not enough to be read to become friends, it is not enough to share ideas to be truly close. True understanding arises only when we look each other in the eye, when we experience the other's life without filters, without reticence.

There is no shame in remaining acquaintances for a while, without expecting more than it is fair to give. The important thing is that, as acquaintances, we can evolve together, learn from each other, discover, and grow, until we realize that the distance separating us has become irrelevant.

It is funny and a little disturbing how similar friends and enemies can be. Take Marco and Andrea, two opposites in my life. Marco was my best friend, while Andrea was someone I would gladly have avoided. Yet, when you think about it, their behaviors were not particularly different. Marco was always ready to tease me about my musical tastes, sarcastically commenting on every new song I put on in the car. Andrea did the same thing, only with less affection and more malice. Both criticized my choices, but while with Marco we always ended up laughing together, with Andrea I felt hurt and angry.

But the most striking similarity was the way they both acted when I was successful. Marco complimented me, but there was always a hint of envy in his eyes. Andrea, on the other hand, tried to belittle my successes with scathing comments. I wondered if there really was that much difference between them. Friends and enemies are nothing more than mirrors of ourselves, reflecting

parts of ourselves that we love and loathe. The difference lies in the motivation behind those behaviors.

Eventually, I learned to take these similarities lightly. When Marco made a scathing joke, I teased him about his "similarity" to Andrea. And when Andrea tried to belittle me, I responded with a smile and a joke, imagining him as a friend I had never met. This perspective helped me reduce the importance I gave to other people's judgments and no longer allow words, whether from friends or enemies, to influence my peace of mind.

There is a friend who appears only on sunny days when everything is going well. I call him "the friend of good days." In moments of joy and serenity, he is there, ready to share laughter and adventures. But when the sky darkens and life's clouds gather, he disappears like snow in the sun. I have always wondered what this friendship really meant. Was it genuine or just superficial?

Every time we met, it felt like time stood still. Our conversations were light and carefree, and the worries of everyday life seemed far away. But then, in difficult moments, I found myself alone, without his presence to support me. I spent a lot of time reflecting on this dynamic and realized that friendship has many facets. Not all friends are meant to stay by our side in dark times. Some are like the sun, bringing light and warmth on clear days, but failing to shine on the darkest nights.

I have learned to appreciate these friends too, recognizing their value. They taught me to live in the present, to savor moments of joy without worrying about the future. They reminded me of the importance of being grateful for the small joys of everyday life. And so, I have accepted my friend of beautiful days for what he

is: a temporary ray of sunshine that illuminates my life with his light, even if only for a moment. But now I know that even shadows have their place, for without it, we could never fully appreciate the beauty of light.

The Days of My Age

Few minds stop reflecting; that is a good thing. If we were all geniuses, where would we find the fools?

Time passes inexorably: years, months, days, hours, minutes. Invented time zones to justify nighttime and sleep.

But the holidays shine, unique and special. Religious rituals intertwine with daily routines: breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner.

The poetry of Totò and La Livella should be recalled, but this is not the right time.

Age? A collection of moments nestled together, each with its own memories. A personal treasure that cannot be exchanged.

And so, comes the change in the way you approach each day. At twenty, you put on sneakers and jeans, running away without care.

At sixty, you dress cautiously; impressions matter. You must avoid being the "not yourself" of the group, without exception.

Because, oh, the judgments fly: “Look how his wife sends him around!”

But I want to reveal to my readers that there is a place in each of our lives where age is irrelevant: in bed.

It is a fact: experience is our secret sauce. We sleep luxuriously on two pillows, optional pajamas. Masters of our own kingdom,

we are selfie-ready, and we live the best of our life. Who needs old-school comforts when we can feel fabulous?

Let us embrace youth with open arms, exuberant and lively, for as long as we want.

Our wives serve as fashion consultants, a blessing with a twist. In their eyes, we are wise elders, not the charming gentlemen we imagine!

So, it is often best to venture out with children, friends, or a romantic partner. They have a true flair for style and never miss the mark.

I started writing down last week's results: it was astonishing! The list grew; it turns out I was busier than I thought.

As the years pile up, so do our stories. Distraction plays gracefully alongside every promise we make. Every experience, a note in the symphony of life, adds richness to our journey.

The Silent Ascent

After fifteen days, I found an answer: why had this happened to me? Hitting rock bottom made me more aware of the value of normality. When I returned to my loved ones, I realized I needed help. At that moment, my angel Antonio arrived, reassuring me that we would find a solution.

Antonio took me to a psychiatrist, a capable man who was willing to listen. He immediately understood my problem but postponed the diagnosis until future tests. I was in the right place. With his help, I could return to my normal life. Antonio explained my financial situation and asked if he could help me free of charge. The answer was an immediate yes.

And so, Antonio continued to do so for years. Every time I try to pay him, he always refuses. This is silent charity, the kind you hear in its silence, without the need for thanks or fanfare. It is the kind of support that profoundly changes a life without pretension.

Working with humanitarian organizations around the world has given me many experiences, but there is one lesson that has touched me deeply: seeing a child eat with gusto, forgetting all the times we leave food on our plates. In a society like ours, the surplus of a few is the need of many. Without it, we cannot live.

Every time I see someone in need, I remember that time at Caritas, the fight for dignity, and the strength I found in helping others. Charity is not just a material act, but an act that changes us internally, making us more humane and aware of what truly matters.

Refugee camp

After years of dedication to charities, I am now a precious resource. My contributions shine on the lists, ready to serve institutional purposes. One April morning, the phone rings. She speaks in Spanish. I know who she is. It is Consuelo Garcia. She is the Western Europe Area Manager for major humanitarian organizations. She is asking me a personal favor, as a token of our old friendship. I need to go to Lampedusa and organize a new refugee camp for a thousand people.

I will set up a bank transfer right away so I can buy what I need in Palermo and bring it down with two trucks that will be here shortly.

Listen, I will send you 100,000 euros. If you need anything else, we will talk about it.

Saying no to Consuelo meant closing a world of charity that I loved. I had dedicated years to this with passion.

I call Mr. Mandala in Palermo. He is the largest Sicilian entrepreneur in large-scale retail trade, with over 1,200 stores. I have known him since his Gillette days. He is making the entire company available to us for the operation.

The trucks arrive, but they are small and cannot even carry water. I send them back. Mandala offers four of its own semi-trailers at no cost.

"Three freight trains are filled with food supplies. We are completing our final load with tents, scout beds, stoves, lamps, and vital medicines from our pharmacy. Everything we need to embark on our adventure awaits us!"

Mandala contacts Grimaldi Navi Veloci to delay the departure. The ship does not set sail until we can board. This happens quickly, but he does not want me to pay my bill. He says, "When you get back to Palermo, we'll talk about it."

"At the port of Lampedusa, my refugees await their fate. Thanks to a delicate agreement with the Tunisian government, they are ready for a new beginning." They will arrive in two days. The staff on land will be active in a day and a half, sorting out everything.

The police are starting to take an interest in my organization. The Prefect and the Police Commissioner try to recruit me to their team. But, alas, their proposals fail to yield any results.

The refugees arrive in single file. Doctors conduct the initial screening and then assign them to the forty tents. No one does better: twenty-five people per tent, as if they were in a hotel.

Meals are being distributed regularly. I ask that you accommodate some of the children's requests, so as not to make them suffer. They come first.

I stayed for seven days. Then they were loaded onto buses and taken north, all eyes open, watching me. I thought my clothes were dirty, but they sensed my humanity.

The Sound of Silence

“Do not disturb.”

A simple, kind, silent inscription. Yet, it is loaded with meaning. In a hotel, you put it outside your door to sleep, but in your heart, you often wish someone would knock. Because the silence you choose is different from the one you endure.

Once, during a tough time, I isolated myself completely. Silent mode activated, even internally.
Turning off the phone was easy. Turning off my thoughts, much less so. And in that perfect silence, I began to hear a new sound: the sound of myself.
Thoughts returning like waves, memories I had never let go of voices of people I had not heard from in years... all inside me, all active.

Technology today helps us silence the world, but who teaches us to tolerate our inner voice?
Because sometimes, the only real disturbance comes from within. Not from a notification, but from a thought that will not go away. What hurts the most are the unclosed memories, the words left unsaid, the forgiveness never granted.

Yet silence also has an extraordinary power. It forces you to look at yourself. To stay. To not run away.
It is uncomfortable, I know. But in that discomfort, the truth often lies hidden.

Now I know that the true "do not disturb" is not a sign, but a conscious choice.
And I also know that sometimes... it is unexpected disturbance, the sudden voice, the out-of-hours call... that saves you.

The Soul Inside a Walk

It is the immaterial part of man. It is considered immortal. Now of death, it is considered spiritual.

This term lends itself to many moments and occasions. It is used to express something connected to the Divine.

The eyes are the mirror of the soul.

Guard your soul, wear a spiritless face. Reach the essence, read the whispers of the heart. Create a masterpiece that resonates with true feelings.

These are common expressions in everyday language.

Advertising is the soul of commerce. The global media market is based on this statement. It accounts for 30% of GDP in every nation.

Man has a spiritual dimension, linked to religion. It operates in three ways: irascible, concupiscible, and rational.

However, the Soul can wear good or bad guise. To discover its secrets, simply explore the fourth ventricle. Here, true intentions, honest or otherwise, are revealed.

Whether or not associated with the spiritual dimension, the soul manifests itself in the mysteries of birth and death. It also emerges in different states of consciousness, memory, and imagination.

Beware, everyone, the Soul can even become lost. This condition is known as Suste Disease. A cultural syndrome that makes us feel alienated from ourselves, while some parts of ourselves remain hidden or lost.

The mind is a masterpiece; to lose oneself is a ruin in life.

It had been quite some time since I had stayed home, dedicating myself to grocery shopping and taking care of my family's needs. It was a real shame not to allow myself even a moment of freedom.

A friend, a police officer, came to visit me. After four months of absence, the opportunity was perfect; I asked if he had come to arrest me. Not yet, he replied. Let us go for a walk and have a coffee.

My friend immediately noticed my quick pace. It revealed the frantic pace of someone walking to get things done, not to relax. He urged me to slow down, lest I run alongside him. We exchanged smiles and burst out laughing.

I searched for familiar glances among new people. The sun was shining, but I noticed unfamiliar faces. Someone waving at me but quickly walking away.

A group of kids gathered in front of a computer store. Their eyes shone like stars. They were ready to conquer the latest console game. The excitement in the air was palpable, like a wave ready to explode. A true childhood battle, a journey back in time.

It was a holiday, December 8th. Tradition called for twenty variations of crepes! The less fortunate ordered these delicacies at thirty euros a kilo. The lucky ones, however, delighted with homemade delicacies.

I stopped at the Bar Cordon Bleu, a haven of memories. Conquests, battles, and a few disappointments came flooding back.

Piazza San Giorgio, our refuge as rugby players. There, we enjoyed beers at the Conti restaurant. You could buy a five-drinks-a-year subscription.

And then the Comunale, with the tradition of the Carnival hat. Wives wore it to help their husbands or fathers in distress.

Piazza Camagna, the window of Upim, our supplier. We sent a teammate, Arsenio Lupin, who specialized in free "picking."

The Beautiful Days Don't Come Back

Life has a curious habit: it forgets the important things, but always gives you back the little ones. Like the bus ticket folded in your pocket. You find the teaspoon in your pencil case after three months. Or that coin that always falls off the dashboard.

People pass. Seasons change. But the kitchen rug is always crooked in the same spot. And every time you straighten it, it feels like you are restoring order to the world. At least a little.

Sometimes we become attached to objects not for their value, but because they endure. They remain there, steadfast, even when they are falling apart. In a certain sense, they become mirrors: they reveal our way of life. Our awkward and splendid way of being.

The beautiful days never come back. But when you come home and find the chipped mug you used ten years ago, you realize that something, deep down, has remained.

Kind regards

An author's simplicity does not mean a topic is not important. On the contrary, it shows that ideas can be expressed without making too much noise. My topic arose when my children left home to work elsewhere. This is a widespread problem for many parents. Even two friends, after a long time, exchange affection to show they still care. The new Prefect or Police Commissioner has arrived in town. I will stop by to welcome him. An important politician is in your city. He surely appreciates the presence of colleagues and friends. Someone dear to us has sworn in the Armed Forces. We cannot miss it. My brother's new wife got married in Alaska. We do not know her, but it pushes us to be there. Is it curiosity or duty? A friend is in the hospital with a yet undiagnosed illness. He has no family, and we go to visit him to comfort him. Our athlete from Cosenza has won five Olympic medals. He is passing through our city. How could we not meet him? The sudden death of a friend or relative compels us to be there for a final farewell. "DEAR GREETINGS" are gestures we make for better or worse. We never consider age. It is spontaneous or obligatory. People believe that education and emotions are fundamental. Only in this way can we be considered special.

Loving Customers

In companies, we distinguish between customers: the easy ones and the... difficult ones.
Life is full of them. Except that our difficult customers do not buy anything from us: they live next door, they do not like us

well, they ask too much about us. But they are there. And you cannot help but serve them.

The first, obviously, is the wife. An incredibly special client. She loves you; she spoils you, but if you choose the wrong tone of voice at breakfast, you end up in emotional distress.
You wake up and think: what does she want from me today? Cuddles? Silence? A hero or a butler? It depends on the moon's phases.

Then there is your mother. Even at 90, she talks to you as if you were an empty-headed child with untied shoes.
She wants you to change your life to please her. If she could, she would marry you again. To someone she "approves of."

Your brother, on the other hand, is the one with the eternal promise: "This is the last time I ask you a favor."
You have given him everything: clothes, money, time. But he keeps knocking, each time with the same wounded puppy look. And even when you say no, you say yes. Because, in the end, you do not want to see him fall.

Your family doctor, a friend of twenty years, asks you to rent a beach house: "Just for a weekend with a nurse colleague."
You cannot say no. But inside you think, "What if my wife finds the keys? How can I explain this to her?"

Then there is the longtime friend, the one who is unlucky in love. He only calls you to ask for relationship advice.
Every time you go out with him, it feels like a survival course. And in the end, when a woman finally falls in love... it is always with you.

The truth? You cannot manage them like customers. There are no clauses, contracts, or cancellations.
You can only love them. With patience, humor, and a healthy dose of self-control. We too have been—and will be—difficult customers for some.

Solitude in Two

There are days when you are alone and feel good. And others when you are in company and feel invisible. Loneliness is not always the absence of people. Sometimes it is the absence of presence.

It happens in relationships that drag on, in conversations that are no longer conversations. Where we speak out of habit, listen out of obligation, respond to avoid silence. It is loneliness for two: when the other is there, but it is as if they were not there.

It is no one's fault. It creeps in slowly, between "everything's fine" and "we'll talk about it later." It grows where there is no longer any curiosity. Where we look at each other without seeing each other.

Yet, even there, there is a possibility. All it takes is a genuine question, an unexpected caress, a "how are you?" that is not rhetorical. Even in the solitude of two, a decisive moment can arise. And from there, perhaps, we can start over.

The Days That Don't Take Pictures

There are days that never end on any social media. No photos, no toast, no cake. Just a shopping list, a bill to pay, a shirt to iron.

And yet, these are precisely the days that shape us. The ones where nothing happens, but we hold everything together. Where there is no spectacle, but there's presence. Where no one applauds, but we remain.

These are the days when we take care of the things that do not make a sound: the refrigerator that needs defrosting, the thought that comes back and does not hurt, the phone call you have been putting off for too long.

The days that go unphotographed are the most real. Because they do not ask to be remembered but remain. Silent. Like foundations. Like a hug that never ends up in any album but still warms you up years later.

Life on Four Wheels

The car is not just a means of transportation. It is a traveling companion, a keeper of secrets, a silent witness to our existence.

Who does not remember their first car? The one you hand-washed as if it were a relic. The first scratches felt like personal wounds, and every trip, even just to the supermarket, was an epic adventure.

My first car looked like a can of sardines, but to me it felt like a Ferrari. I did everything in it: I laughed at it, I cried in it, I slept in it, I loved it.

Once, on my way back from a party, I ran out of gas in the middle of nowhere. I lay down in the back seat and, looking out the window at the sky, I felt… free. Because sometimes freedom is not movement, but time stands still.

I have witnessed couples having intense arguments, reconciling hugs, and whispering confessions while the engine was running. Some conceived children in the backseat, others said goodbye while looking in the rearview mirrors. I have seen friends silently loading up after a funeral, and others giggling during an impromptu road trip.

And then there is that last ride, the most definitive, where our body is accompanied once again by a car, long, dark, elegant.

Even in departure, it is she who guides us to our destination.

Life, after all, is just a long car journey: every now and then you get a flat tire, you change lanes, you take the wrong turn. But if you have good traveling companions, even the most dangerous hairpin bends become memories worth sharing.

Wild Dinner

Once upon a time, I was the epitome of innocence: uninhibited and unpretentious, my voice echoed through a metaphorical funnel. Conversations? I skillfully shifted gears to my comfort zone: women, rugby, and a sprinkling of clever jokes to raise a smile.

What had started as a 9:00 PM dinner turned into a wild evening, ending at 4:00 PM, with the sisters asking, "Is this true?" Every story I shared was artfully twisted, swapping names and weaving together borrowed tales—truly, I was a master of mischief.

Debora boldly invited me to meet her parents. Her eyes shone with excitement. I, on the other hand, acted shy, insisting that we needed to check our chemistry, a whimsical phrase that helped me overcome many awkward boundaries at the time.

The investigation continued, but I lost faith. Meanwhile, Marta was relentless, always looking for me at the barracks. One day she called to ask me a favor: "Come help me carry four jugs of water."

I found the door ajar; once inside, she directed me to the kitchen. Entering her living room, I was greeted by her in full battle gear, and suddenly, I found myself fighting against her war.

"We can linger as long as we want; my husband is away for a week," she declared, as if I were her confidante. Anxiety boiled inside me: if the whispers reached the wrong ears, I could end up behind bars in Gaeta. Yet, her cries of "more, more, more" hinted at her insatiable desire for affection.

At the end of the day, I borrowed 50,000 lire from her without a shred of hesitation. And so, this escapade continued for three months until she announced her pregnancy. "Congratulations!" I exclaimed, but terror loomed.

"That child is yours," she insisted. But I stammered, "Darling, I'm sterile... what now?" Her response was a whirlwind of possibilities. "Could it belong to the sergeant or the lieutenant? Or you could just say it's your husband's."

"How clever!" he chuckled. For thirty years I had longed to free myself from the shackles of the past. But like a boomerang, I found myself back in Naples. With a heart full of determination, I set out to uncover my family's hidden history. Their joy at my visit was palpable, and I met their daughter, who looked nothing like me, claiming she was not mine.

My father took me away from a police career and brought me to Gillette instead. And with that, my life changed, just like the colonel's.

I am innocent.

An invitation to Venice with two classmates takes us to a convention. The discussion focuses on modern economics. Giovanni is a mathematics professor, while Michele works at Salamon Brothers Bank. It is the perfect opportunity to spend a few days together.

No one had to report; we were simply guests. Colleagues who had invited us. For me, the freedom to listen lasted two hours. Then, we convinced everyone to head to the buffet.

The waiters warned us that it was not yet time to enter. Michele joked that I was deaf and mute. Unexpectedly, silence fell.

In the Hall, Gaetano, a schoolmate, joins us. He was known as "the Innocent" for his lack of education. His father was a cowherd, and if we had asked him about cows, he would have told us everything.

“What are you doing here?” he asked. “Guests at the conference,” we replied. “Oh, I’m the sponsor!” Innocent, Michele snaps, “but what do you do for a living?”

“I have five car dealerships and two stakes in regional banks.” Surprised, we asked him how he managed to do all this.

“Easy,” he replies. “I buy at 100, sell at 200, with a 2% markup.”

We looked at each other, surprised by the Innocent. No one smiled, and in the end, we took a taxi to leave. We even forgot about lunch.

The Innocent lives by his own logic. Nothing disturbs him; he perceives no conflict. He often finds areas of weakness and strength, treating everything with equal indifference.

We learned a lesson from the last-in-class student who became the best in life. Just because he knew how to earn 2%, while we did not have the courage to tell him he was working 100%.

What I Don't Understand

A peaceful Saturday had passed. In the late afternoon, I longed for your gaze, your voice. We were only a meter apart, yet we seemed light years away.

You started talking to me, almost shouting, and I could feel all the hatred and pain you carried inside. You were convinced that everything that had happened to you was my fault, and that you would have to bear all the consequences for the rest of your life. I kept thinking about you as we prepared dinner. You never missed a chance to attack me, and I thought about writing to you, but you did not want to read my letters.

My hand immediately stopped, allowing my imagination to wander as I imagined how I wanted to see you, and I knew that with a little effort and sacrifice, I could achieve it.

I am your father, but not the father of your sins. Each of us carries our own burden, and we must be responsible for managing, through our actions, who we are and what future awaits us. I continued to absorb everything, like blotting paper, not knowing how much water I could hold.

I went to my room to sleep, but I tossed and turned in bed, dreaming of banishing demons and waiting for the angels of heaven to begin the resurrection. And even more, of restoring more life to you, who were suffering. I would have paid any price to give you back what you never had naturally.

Luckily, you did not know what it was.

No Attention to Savings

People are enormously important, and it is crucial to protect this great container that houses us, where we do everything: we smile, we cry, we are happy, sad, alive, dead. This is our primary intention, the very foundation of our being, where each of us measures ourselves, maintaining mutual respect, good manners, good behavior, and respect for rules and laws, because we are all part of our own world.

We have always performed the act of spending, a practice tied to the idea of barter throughout history, and to money in contemporary and current times. We often make the mistake of thinking of money as a good thing, something that rewards us, but it is simply the result of one or more actions that provide us with a solid tool.

We all think we have achieved our first goal in life: having lots of money, being invincible, becoming impossible in our manifestations. However, money remains merely a tool that allows us to possess one or more goods, but it is a luxury and devoid of emotion.

As an author who pioneered this new style of writing, far from conventional wisdom, I've had the opportunity to reflect and think that there's something else truly important we can use, something that fortunately buys everything irreversibly, and that we're not aware of the strength, the power it gives us, the solutions it offers, the mental and emotional conditioning it produces, the physical and psychological well-being available to everyone: gentlemen, it's the splendid WORD.

At the beginning of the world, in the absence of evolution, we expressed ourselves with sounds, noises, and gestures, and then wrote on the walls of caves. Finally, she arrives, the word, which,

in an absolute way, like a beautiful woman, gifts us the combination of many sounds transformed into phonemes, easily comprehensible if properly mentally processed.

Therefore, it is useless to look outside of our own ego to evaluate our ability to spend to acquire what has always been ours and available.

The Ancients said that a conversation began immediately, and only when one word led to another did, we realize it became pleasant and endless, as happens today in our daily lives, when, turning to our partner, we say: "I LOVE YOU." Even if it were not true, we would have wasted a splendid illusion.

Kidnapping and Robbery

We were sitting at the table for lunch, a perfectly normal Sunday in November, when my wife asked me to maintain a strict silence while listening to the television news. It was the only moment I could remain connected to the world and everything that was happening.

My favorite dish was rigatoni with mushrooms, cream, and Parmigiano Reggiano, a winning and dangerous combination. Only later, by chance, did I check the bag of mushrooms in the freezer and was amazed to find they were only three months out of date. I did not tell anyone; there was no need to alarm them; they could have only later reported two deaths from poisoning.

The news on television was a suspected kidnapping of a young married couple from Naples, found by police seven days later. Without any concern or reason, they claimed they needed a moment of privacy and were charged with causing alarm.

I thought of the known kidnappings, of the most important event in history: **the Rape of the Sabine Women.** It tells that Romulus,

after founding Rome, turned to neighboring populations to forge alliances and obtain beautiful women with whom to procreate. When his neighbors refused, he responded with deception: organizing a great spectacle to attract the region's inhabitants and kidnap them.

Another Sunday news story involved a robbery of an armored van, conducted by fifteen people using sophisticated equipment. My wife was shocked that such things were still happening in 2024, but she had not considered some details:

- **All Doing Nothing, Without a Profession.**
- **The Christmas holidays motivated criminal activity for the sole purpose of possessing money.**
- **This was systematic behavior in the run-up to every important celebration.**

I remained silent for a minute, long enough to hear myself being told that I was diabolical, as if I had found a rationale, where no one would have had a counterargument to propose, because in the face of a single truth, a hundred lies are worthless.

Listening to My Music

A song is often linked to a memory, an unforgettable moment, or someone we cannot forget. It is an exaltation of the soul, a swing between emotion and emotion that affects our well-being, recognizing magical moments, whether happy or sad.

Knowledge of foreign languages is uncommon, considering that maritime or mountainous nations lack neighboring people with whom to exchange and learn everything. Often, the sound is the real protagonist, while the words remain incomprehensible, making us believe we have understood, but we are lying to ourselves.

As a young man, I listened to "My Way," thinking it meant "My Path." Only as an adult did I discover the correct translation was "My Way" and that the full lyrics were truly heart-warming. This shows us how some songs have fantastic lyrics, far beyond the simple sound, imbued with meaning and sentiment, worthy of the finest 19th-century poets.

The moment of listening is wonderful; the well-being we derive from it is immeasurable, both mentally and emotionally, producing unique endorphins that bring us pleasure and well-being. Modern medicine uses music with pregnant women; the fetus senses the moment's well-being. Even in patients with mental illnesses and other conditions, the return of benefits and improvement in general conditions has been proven.

And how can we forget love? A song can convey "I love you" or "Please forgive me"; the magic of the sound of words, and the lyrics, remain exclusive to those who know the languages, but it matters little. Another important aspect is who produces the music: singers and orchestras, engaged in unison in a unique action, like the movement of a clock, whose perfection is unquestionable.

The best music is the one I listen to every moment of my day, of all kinds, transporting me from romance to passion, to impetuosity, to protest.

But it is just my music.

POWER: INVISIBLE PRESENCE

Power is not just domination. It is a gaze that weighs, a word that directs, a silence that imposes. It lives not only in palaces, but in everyday gestures: who speaks last, who decides what remains, who establishes what is right.

Power can be as subtle as advice, or as brutal as abandonment. It can disguise itself as love, care, or friendship. But beneath the surface, it often hides control.

Every relationship is a dance of power: one who gives, one who takes, one who withdraws. And even pain can be power, when it becomes leverage, when it becomes a voice.

True power does not scream. It insinuates itself. It bends between the folds of life.

Of Silence

In the silence of the night, we discover our essence, amid the whispers of the wind, a profound stillness. Silence is a gift, a sacred refuge.

Listening to silence is a lost art, a pause between words, a space to breathe. In silence we find the answer we seek.

It is in silence that the heart speaks loudest, that the soul finds peace and clarity. Silence is the language of the ineffable.

In a world filled with noise and chaos, silence offers us a moment of respite. It is where we can truly listen to ourselves.

Silence brings us closer to our inner being, allowing us to reflect and grow. Embracing silence is an act of self-love.

In the silence of nature, we find a profound connection, a peace that regenerates and strengthens us. Silence is the melody of the universe.

And when the world stops, even for a moment, we feel the true essence of life. Silence is our most faithful companion.

From the Words

Words have extraordinary power. They can inspire, comfort, motivate, and change the course of life. Every word we choose to speak or write has an impact, small or large, on the people who listen or read us.

Using words wisely and compassionately is a responsibility. Words can build bridges or create barriers; they can unite or divide. It is important to recognize the power of words and use them to spread positivity and understanding.

Words can also be a powerful tool for self-expression and healing. Writing or talking about your experiences and emotions can help you process them and find a sense of peace and clarity.

From the Gratitude

Gratitude is a powerful force that can transform the way we see the world and live our lives. Being grateful for the small and large things helps us focus on the positive aspects of our existence and build an attitude of appreciation.

Gratitude is not about acknowledging what we have, but also how we approach challenges and difficulties. Even in the most tough times, there is always something to be grateful for, and focusing on these things can give us the strength to move forward.

Practicing gratitude daily can improve our mental and emotional well-being, creating a virtuous cycle of positivity and fulfillment. It is a skill that can be cultivated and can enrich every aspect of our lives.

Gratitude is a powerful emotion; it helps us see the bright side of life. Being grateful makes us happier.

Gratitude teaches us to appreciate what we have, to value trivial things. It is a source of daily joy.

Being grateful brings us closer to others, creating bonds of love and respect. Gratitude is the heart of relationships.

Every day is an opportunity to practice gratitude, to say "thank you" for what we have. Gratitude transforms our perspective.

Gratitude gives us strength, helps us overcome difficulties with a smile. It is a light that illuminates our path.

Being grateful makes us more aware, allowing us to live fully in the present. Gratitude is the key to happiness.

And when we are grateful, we attract better things into our lives. Gratitude is a blessing.

From the Relations

Human relationships are the heart of our existence. It is our connections with others that give meaning to our lives, which enrich us, and that sustain us in times of difficulty. The strength of relationships is measured by the ability to listen, by mutual understanding, by unconditional support.

True relationships require commitment and dedication. They are not just based on happy moments, but also on the ability to face challenges together, to grow, and to learn from one another. It is in challenges that the true strength of a bond is revealed.

Cultivating meaningful relationships means being present, dedicating time and attention, showing empathy and respect. It also means being vulnerable, opening to others with sincerity and trust.

Authentic relationships enrich us, make us feel loved and understood, and give us the strength to face life's challenges.

They are our refuge, our support, our source of joy and personal growth.

Freedom

Freedom is one of the fundamental values of our existence. Freedom of thought, expression, movement, and choice are essential elements for our well-being and personal fulfillment.

Being free means having the power to decide your own life, to follow your passions, and to live in harmony with your values. However, freedom also brings responsibility: the responsibility to respect the freedom of others and to act ethically.

True freedom is not just the absence of constraints, but also the presence of opportunity. It is the ability to live a full and meaningful life, to realize one is potential, and to contribute to the well-being of the community.

Freedom is one of the most precious things, a condition that allows us to live fully. Being free means having control over your own life.

Freedom gives us the ability to choose, to follow our passions and desires. It is a force that drives us forward.

Every act of freedom is a sign of self-determination, an affirmation of our will. Freedom is a fundamental right.

Being free also means taking on responsibilities, respecting the freedom of others. Freedom is a delicate balance.

Cultivating freedom requires commitment, but the reward is priceless. Freedom allows us to be ourselves.

Freedom brings us closer to others and creates a more just and harmonious society. It is a value that unites us.

And freedom makes us happy; it allows us to live a full and meaningful life. Freedom is our true essence.

Of Solitude

Loneliness is a condition that must be addressed with determination. It is not enough to simply multiply your initiatives to break out of isolation; you need to change your mindset and adopt new behaviors to avoid feeling alone and sad. Loneliness often stems from a need for affection or companionship, or from the desire to engage in social interaction.

In recent years, new forms of communication have given us a greater ability to socialize, but those who use social media the most are also often the ones who feel most alone. Physical contact is essential for establishing a true connection with others. Some people have learned to live with themselves, while others find it frustrating to see people only through a screen.

Loneliness is a survival mechanism that pushes us to connect with others. If this does not happen, it creates a perceived social isolation, a feeling of not having the social connections we desire. Feeling lonely is different from being alone; it is often accompanied by a feeling of abandonment and sadness.

You can be surrounded by many people and still feel alone, due to the lack of real connection. Great figures in history have chosen voluntary isolation, affirming that only in solitude can one be truly oneself and free. Ancient sayings such as "better alone than in bad company" and "in solitude you will remember yourself" reflect this idea.

Solitude, far from being a sign of madness, can offer the opportunity to create new connections and discover yourself. Only in solitude will you continue to remember yourself.

Of Reflection

Reflection is a sacred moment, an inner journey, an opportunity for understanding and growth. Reflection is the key to wisdom.

Through reflection, we learn from our mistakes, appreciate our successes, and plan. Reflection makes us stronger.

Every thoughtful thought is a step forward, an opportunity to improve and progress. Reflection is the cornerstone of change.

Reflection allows us to find our balance, listen to our hearts, and follow our path. It is a time of awareness and growth.

Reflection is an act of self-love, a gift of time and attention. Reflection is the path to a fuller and more meaningful life.

In the silence of reflection, we find answers, solutions to our dilemmas, and mental clarity. Reflection is a beacon that illuminates our path.

And every time we take the time to reflect, we discover new depths within ourselves, a wisdom that guides us through life.

Of friendship

Friendship is a priceless treasure, a bond that enriches our lives. Being friends means sharing joys and sorrows.

A loyal friend is always there, in times of happiness and times of difficulty. Friendship is a haven.

Friends reflect our hearts; they know us better than anyone else. With them, we can be ourselves without fear.

Every laugh shared, every adventure experienced, is a milestone on the path to friendship. Friends make life more colorful.

Friendship requires commitment and dedication, but its value is immense. Being a good friend is a precious gift.

Through friends, we learn life lessons, grow, and enrich ourselves. Friendship is a school of life.

And friends are our chosen family, traveling companions who make every step easier. Friendship is our greatest wealth.

Of Time

Time is a precious resource, the most precious we have. Every second, minute, and hour is a gift we cannot get back once it is passed. Awareness of the passing of time teaches us to value every moment, not to waste it on trivial pursuits.

Managing your time is an art that requires discipline and wisdom. It means prioritizing what is enormously important: the people we love, the passions that make us feel alive, and the goals we want to achieve.

Sometimes, it is necessary to stop and reflect on how we are using our time. Are we investing our time in ways that enrich our lives and the lives of others? Are we dedicating enough time to ourselves, to our physical and mental well-being?

The value of time is measured in quality, not quantity. It is important to live every moment with intention and gratitude, because it is in these small moments that the true essence of our lives lies.

From Resilience

Resilience is the ability to face adversity, adapt to change, and recover from difficulties. It is an essential quality that allows us to navigate life's storms with strength and determination.

Being resilient does not mean experiencing pain or difficulty but having the ability to get up and continue despite it. It means seeing challenges as opportunities for growth and learning from every experience, whether positive or negative.

Resilience is built over time, through experiences and lessons learned. It is a source of inner strength that allows us to face any obstacle and emerge stronger and more determined.

Resilience is the ability to endure, to face adversity without giving up. It is a powerful inner strength.

Being resilient means seeing difficulties as opportunities for growth and learning. Resilience makes us invincible.

Resilience does not eliminate pain, but it gives us the strength to overcome it and move forward. It is a quality that transforms us.

Every difficult experience makes us more resilient, preparing us for future challenges. Resilience is our shield.

Resilience is built day by day, through life's trials. It is a path of continuous growth.

Being resilient means believing in yourself, in your ability to overcome any obstacle. Resilience is our most faithful ally.

And resilience allows us to emerge stronger and more determined than before. Resilience is our superpower.

Of the Family

Family is our first love, our haven. It gives us roots and wings.

In our families, we learn fundamental values: love, trust, respect. It is our school for life.

Family is our support, in times of joy and sorrow. It is our point of reference.

Every family member is a gift, contributing to our growth. Family is a treasure to be cherished.

Family traditions unite us and create unforgettable memories. They are our heritage.

Family teaches us the importance of sacrifice, commitment, and dedication. It is our greatest teacher.

And family is unconditional love, a strength that accompanies us throughout our lives. Family is our greatest wealth.

The Inspiration of the Night

There is something magical about the night hours when the world calms down and thoughts can flow freely. Nighttime is the ideal time for reflection, to organize ideas, and to let inspiration carry you away.

Sitting at my table, with only the dim light of a lamp for company, the words come to life with surprising ease. The solitude of the night is not an enemy, but a precious ally that allows me to explore the depths of my mind without distractions.

I think about the people I have met, the experiences I have had, and how every detail can become part of a larger story. Every moment of introspection is an opportunity to discover something new about myself and the world around me.

The words flow, fluid and powerful, bringing with them emotions and images that would otherwise remain hidden. Writing at night is like dancing with your thoughts, letting yourself be guided by the rhythm of your mind and heart.

In these silent hours, I can find a deeper connection with myself, and every written word is a step toward greater understanding.

The night is my refuge, my creative laboratory, where I can experiment and bring my boldest ideas to life.

And so, with every line I write, I feel like I am building something meaningful, something that will bring a small light even to the darkest of days.

LAST THOUGHTS

The Thought I Never Had

It was not a thought. It was a shadow that had followed me for years, without ever speaking to me. Every time I tried to name it, it changed shape. It was not fear, it was not desire, it was not guilt. It was something I had never had the courage to think about. And yet, it was there, between the folds. It watched me as I wrote, as I loved, as I pretended to be whole. One day, I stopped avoiding it. I did not understand it. But I welcomed it. And since then, I have no longer needed to think. Only to *feel.*

Imaginary Dialogue – Me and the Other Me

—Are you sure you want to publish it? —No. —Then why are you doing it? —Because if I do not, it will remain mine alone. —And isn't that better? —No. —Why? —Because I am not enough to myself. —And what if no one understands it? —That's not a problem. —And what if they misunderstand it? —It is inevitable. —And what if they forget it? —That's the risk. —Then why are you doing it? —Because of all the possibilities, there is only one hope: that someone reading it will feel *seen.* And that is enough for me.

The Hole

There was a hole in my memory. It was not big, but it was deep. Every time I passed by it, I felt cold. One day, I decided to enter

it. There were no images, no words. Only distant sounds, like voices I had never heard. I tried to climb back up, but the hole held me. It showed me all the things I had forgotten to remember. They were not traumas. They were *absences*. And I understood that pain does not come from what happens, but from what we never had the courage to experience.

The Ideal Reader

I do not want to be understood. I want to hear. The ideal reader does not seek coherence. He seeks resonance. He does not underline beautiful sentences. He lingers on the hurtful ones. The ideal reader is not the one who praises me. He is the one who writes to me: "You disturbed me." Because if I disturbed you, I touched you. And if I touched you, then this book has done its job. Not to please. But to *linger*.

Three Sharp Shots

The truth is not what you say. It is what you fail to say. Every relationship is a wound waiting to become a scar. Writing is the most elegant way to scream.

Mirror

Write below: A word that hurt you. A phrase that made you think. A silence that kept you company.

Not for me. For you. Because, if you have read the whole thing, now it is your turn to speak. And in the folds of your voice, there is something that has been waiting years to be said.

Emotional Map

Where did you feel seen? Where did you feel lost? Which story made you tremble? Which left you indifferent? What did you understand about yourself that you did not know?

It is not a test. It is a map. Trace your path. And then, if you want, forget it. Because maps are only useful for those afraid of getting lost. And now, you can get lost too.

Reverse Thanksgiving

I do not thank those who helped me. I thank those who hurt me. Because that is where I found the words. I thank those who did not understand. Because that is where I found courage. I thank those who read. But those who *felt.* Because reading is a mental act. Feeling is a human act. And this book was written for humans. Not for readers.

The Book That Will Come

There is another book waiting. I do not know if I will write it. But if I do, it will be more stripped down. Crueler. True. It will just be a sentence. Or silence. Or a blank page. But it will still be a fold. And you, if you want, can enter it. With fewer defenses. With more skin.

Epilogue – The Final Fold

This book does not end. It stops. Like a conversation left unfinished. Like a caress that never arrived. As a truth you did not have the courage to speak.

If something hurts you, it is because it touched you. If something left you indifferent, it is because it was not meant for you.

But if even just one sentence made you tremble, then *BETWEEN THE FOLDS OF LIFE* has fulfilled its destiny: not to be read. To be *heard.*

And now, the book closes. But do not close the fold.

POST-SCRIPTUM – PROVOCATION

If you have come this far, you are not saved. You have read, you have understood, you have defended yourself. But this book was not meant to explain anything to you. It wanted *to strip you bare.* It wanted you to ask: "How many folds have I ignored in my life?" And now that you have seen mine, do you have the courage to look at yours?

Aphorisms

Aphorisms are not short thoughts. They are *clean-cut quotes.* They are truths that need no context. They are what is left when everything else has been stripped away. These ten are not meant to please. They want *to last.*

Love does not save. But it knows where to strike.

Love is not redemption. It is surgical precision. It knows where we are vulnerable and gets to it.

Loneliness is not absence. It is an excess of unshared presence.

You are alone not when someone is missing, but when no one can see what is there.

Kindness is revolutionary only if it does not serve to please.

The kind gesture that does not seek approval is the only one that profoundly changes things.

Pain Doesn't Teach. But It Reveals.

There is no lesson in suffering. There is only truth that could not have emerged any other way.

Whoever really listens to you changes your face.

Authentic listening is transformative. It makes you see who you are, even if you do not want to.

Nostalgia is a lie that smells of truth.

We mourn what was never as we remember it. But we need it to move forward.

The Most Powerful Word Is the One You Didn't Say.

What's left unsaid weighs more than what is said. That is where true emotional power lies.

Happiness is an interruption, not a state.

You are not happy. You *stop* the pain for a moment. And that is enough.

The truth is not useful. It is necessary.

It is useless and often hurts. But without it, everything else is just construction.

Those who stay are not those who love you. They are those who are not afraid to see you fall.

True love is not presence. It is *resistance* to your vulnerability.

Last Shot

You read. You crossed. You trembled.

Now the book stops. Not because it is finished, but because it is said everything it could say. The rest... are you.

In the folds of life, you are there too. With your fractures, your silences, your missed gestures. With the words you never said, with the truths you hid even from yourself.

This book did not ask you to understand. It asked you to *feel*. And if something hurts you, do not apologize. It is a sign that you have lived.

Now there is a blank page. It is not empty. It is *ready.*

Ready for your voice. For your story. For your style.

Because the real blow is not the one you receive. It is the one *you decide to give.* With courage. With truth. With skin.

Write. Not to be read. But to *stay.*

There is no end. Only interruption. Just a blank page waiting for your voice. Because in the folds of life, you are there too. And now, you have the courage to write yours.

Epilogue – The Crease That Remains

This book does not end. It stops. Like a conversation left unfinished. Like a caress that never arrived. As a truth you did not have the courage to speak.

If something bothered you, it is because it touched you. If something left you indifferent, it is because it was not meant for you.

AFTERWORD

Conclusions

"Between the Folds of Life" is my way of saying that every detail has a meaning, even the insignificant ones. I did not want to write absolute truths, but rather open doors. Doors to memories, questions, emotions that we no longer dared to touch. Those who have read these lines now know something more about mending themselves. Because stories, if they are sincere, always end up

reflecting on those who listen to them. To those who have reached the end, I hope they continue to live with wonder, irony, and dignity. To not be afraid of the folds: they are precisely what make the fabric of our existence unique.

Reflections

Writing was like emptying a drawer full of forgotten things. Some made me smile, others pierced me. But all of them, in some way, belong to me. Life is not made up of big events, but of details we often ignore. And it is precisely those that tell us who we are. If there is one lesson I take with me, it is this: you do not need to understand everything. You just need to feel. And if even just one page made you stop, think, remember... then it was worth it.