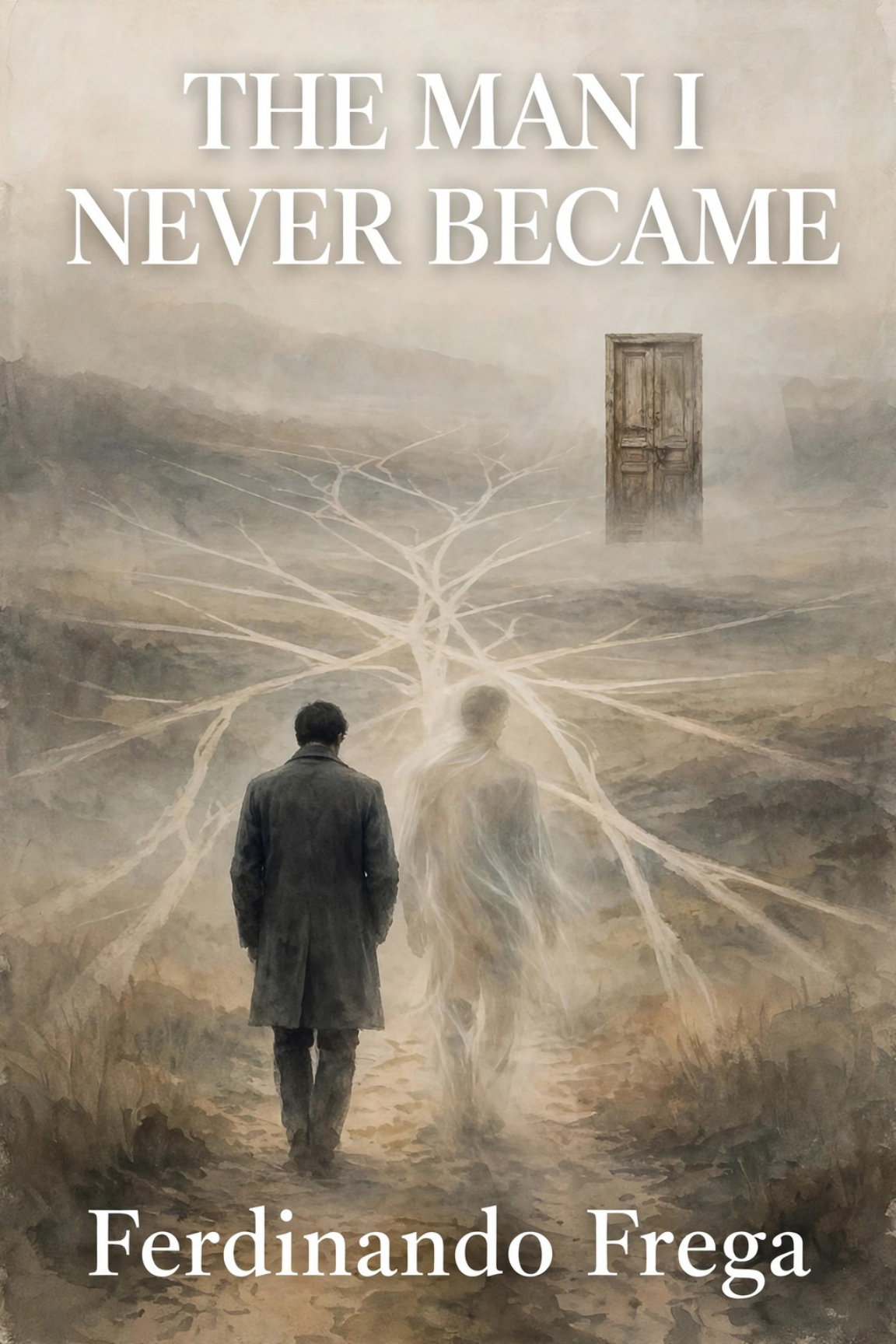
THE MAN I NEVER BECAME



Ferdinando Frega

THE MAN I NEVER BECAME

At twenty I thought that life was a road.

At sixty-one I discovered there were many.

You walk one of them.

The others do not disappear.

They remain behind a door you never opened.

For years I had imagined that choosing meant eliminating.

Then I looked more closely.

I had only been looking at the plain and the downhill. Of the climb, not a trace.

It would have been easy to live going downhill.

But what was missing was the sacrifice and the sweat of those who fight against fatigue to climb.

I am still observing today.

And I am not sure I have understood.

Maybe I am not intelligent enough, second to last among the stupid, like at school.

Ha, ha, ha.

Every choice keeps a small population of ghosts.

The city where I did not live.

The woman I did not marry, without understanding that it is never we men who decide.

The job I did not accept.

The plane I did not catch.

The phone call I did not make.

Life goes on.

But abandoned possibilities do not die.

They become questions.

Every now and then they come back.

They do not ask to be lived.

They only ask to be remembered.

Many believe that regret is born of mistakes.

Not always.

Sometimes it is born of possibilities,

the ones we cannot even be sure would have been better.

And yet they keep walking beside us.

Silent.

Like a man we could have been

and who was never born.

Ferdinando