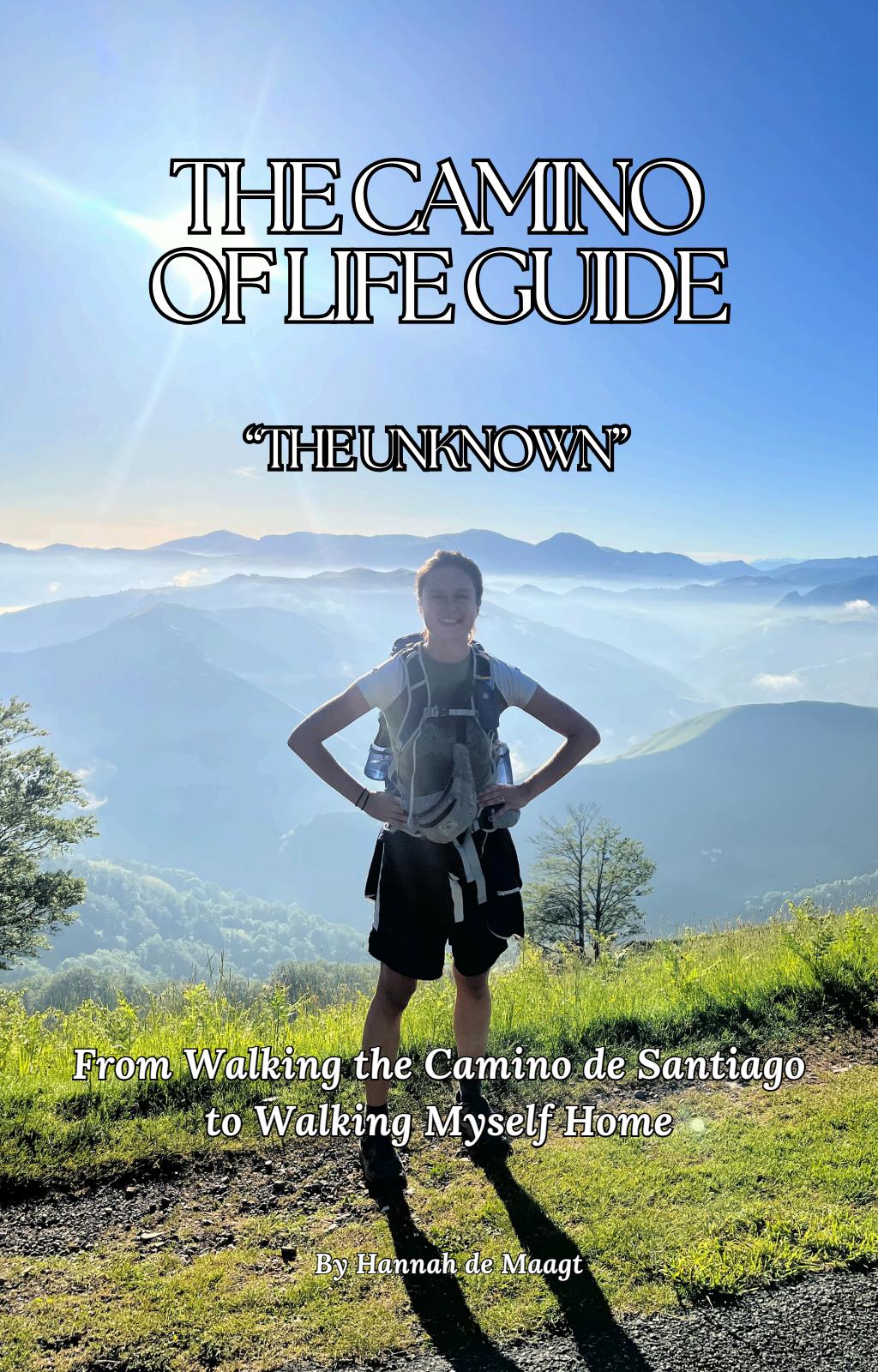


# THE CAMINO OF LIFE GUIDE

## “THE UNKNOWN”

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling, standing on a grassy hillside. She is wearing a white t-shirt, black shorts, and a hydration vest with two water bottles. Her hands are on her hips. In the background, there are rolling green mountains under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

*From Walking the Camino de Santiago  
to Walking Myself Home*

By Hannah de Maagt

# HOW TO WALK THIS BOOK

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This guide is not meant to be rushed or read in one sitting.  
Just like the Camino de Santiago, it is a path you can take step by step,  
at your own rhythm.

You might wander through the book in order, or skip to a chapter that calls you in  
this moment.

You might read one chapter and pause with the reflection questions.

The questions are not meant to be solved with your mind.  
Let them land in your body.  
Notice what gently arises.

There is no right way.  
Only your way.

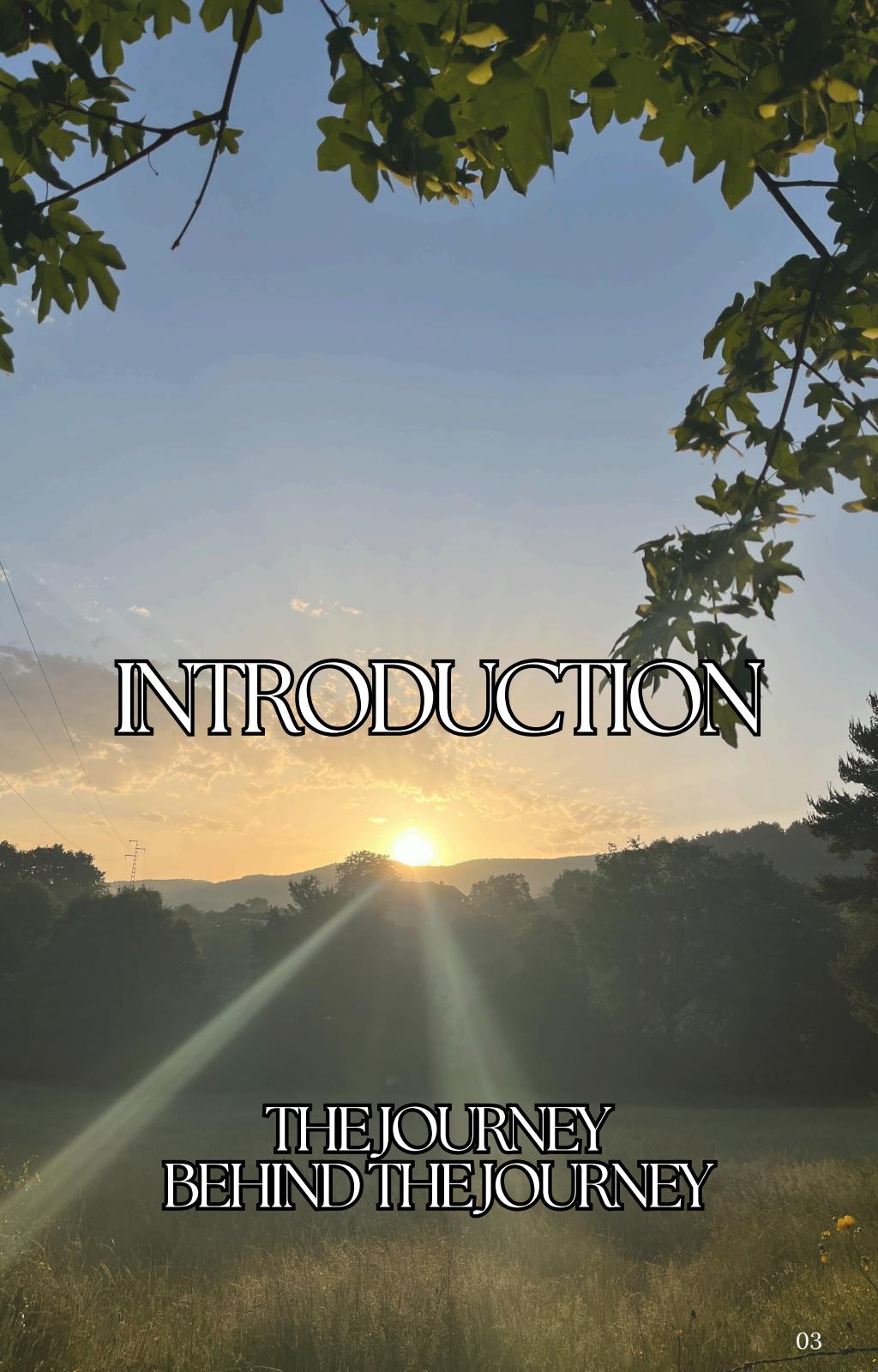
Let the table of contents guide you, like the yellow arrows on the Camino.

Buen Camino.

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE JOURNEY BEHIND THE JOURNEY

# THE JOURNEY BEHIND THE JOURNEY

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When I returned from walking the Camino de Santiago, people often asked me about the outer journey - the landscapes, the kilometers, the people I met. Of course, there was beauty in all of that. But what I didn't expect was that the real Camino would begin once I got back.

Or maybe, deep down, I did. Because my intention with this journey was clearly "to walk myself home" - which I even said out loud in my first vlog.

This time, there were no backpacks to carry, no arrows pointing the way, no physical mountains to climb. Instead, I found myself walking an entirely different road - one into the depths of my own being.

It began with stillness. Not chosen stillness, but the kind that happens when life gently, yet firmly, asks you to stop running - from the world, from yourself, from the not-knowing. And in that stillness, I began to see more clearly all the patterns, urges, fears, and stories I had been living inside.

On the outside, life looked "normal" again. I was suddenly back in the middle of a construction site in England, with a wedding to prepare for and a retreat on the horizon. But on the inside, everything was changing. The Camino had stripped away so many layers, and now there was... space. At first, it felt unsettling.

My mind wanted to fill it with making plans, with deciding what's next.

But something deeper kept whispering: "Don't rush. Let life show you."

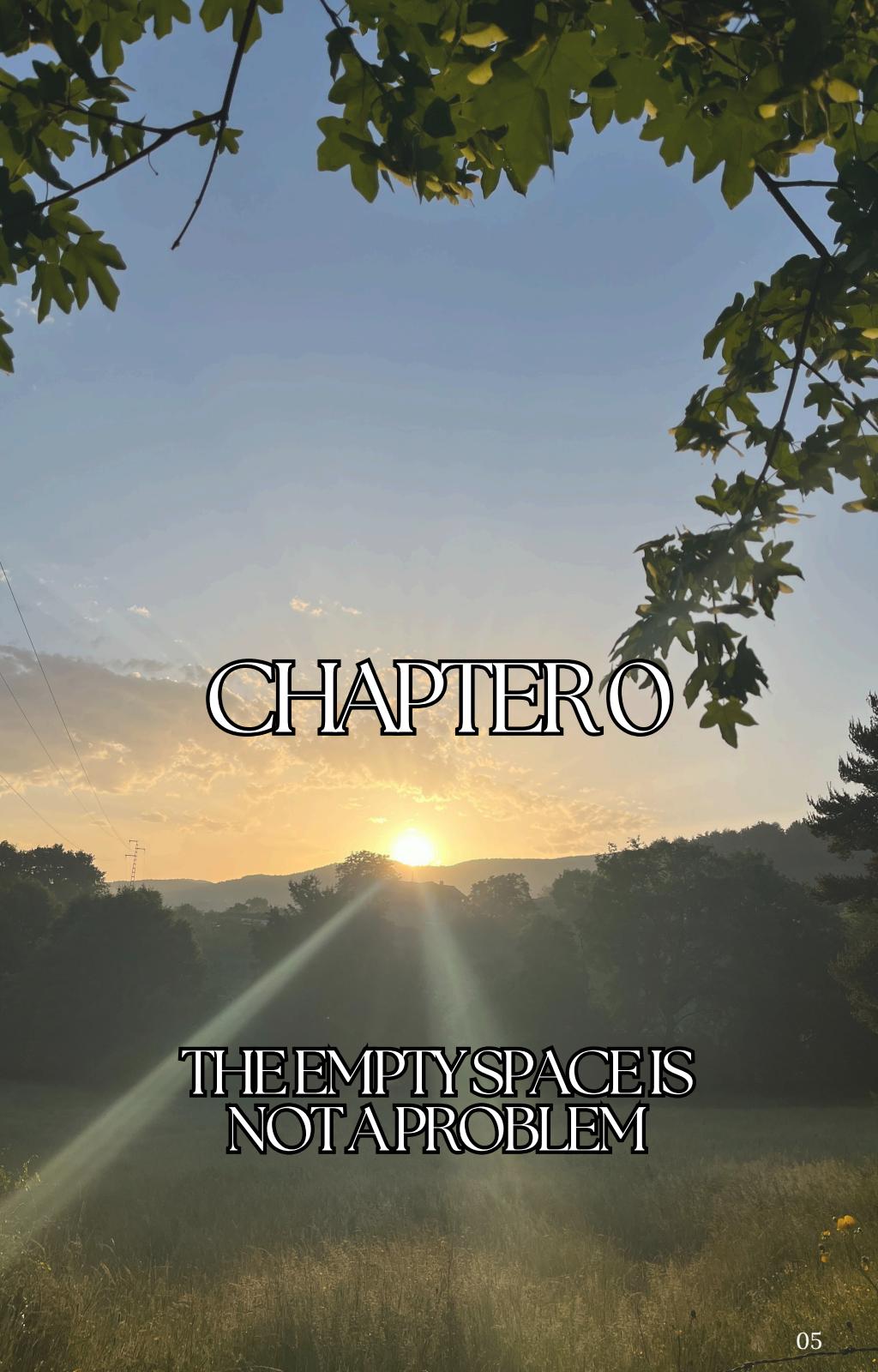
What you will read here is my living notebook from that integration phase - the raw, unpolished insights that came not from thinking, but from direct experience. They appeared in moments of staring out of the window from my cocoon chair, in conversations with my partner and in the deep discomfort of doing nothing.

While these insights ripened after the Camino, they didn't appear out of nowhere. They're the fruit of years of practice and inner work (including A Course in Miracles, which I was moving through during this time), now seen with new clarity in the quiet that I allowed in.

While these are my lived experiences, I believe they hold universal truths.

You may recognise yourself in them, or they may simply remind you of something you already know deep down: that life itself is the Camino.

And it will walk you, if you let it.



# CHAPTERO

THE EMPTY SPACE IS  
NOT A PROBLEM

# O. THE EMPTY SPACE IS NOT A PROBLEM

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When the Camino ended, I stepped into what I can only describe as a wide, quiet in-between.

The world was still there with its noise, its pace, its invitations.

But it felt far away.

For the first time in a long time, I didn't feel the impulse to jump back in.

At first, my mind didn't know what to do with this.

It began scanning for labels: Is this depression? Have I lost my spark?

Shouldn't I feel more excited?

It wanted to turn the silence into a problem to solve.

But when I stopped trying to name it, I noticed something unexpected.

The emptiness itself wasn't uncomfortable.

My resistance to it was.

Underneath the questions, there was a subtle layer of peace, a stillness that asked nothing of me.

No plans, no performance, no rush to make sense of what had just happened on the road.

The not-knowing didn't need to be fixed.

It could simply be lived.

It felt like standing in a wide field after walking for days through forest, a sudden openness that was both vast and tender.

I didn't have to fill it.

I only had to stand there and let the space be what it was.

I can see this now as the quiet threshold of integration.

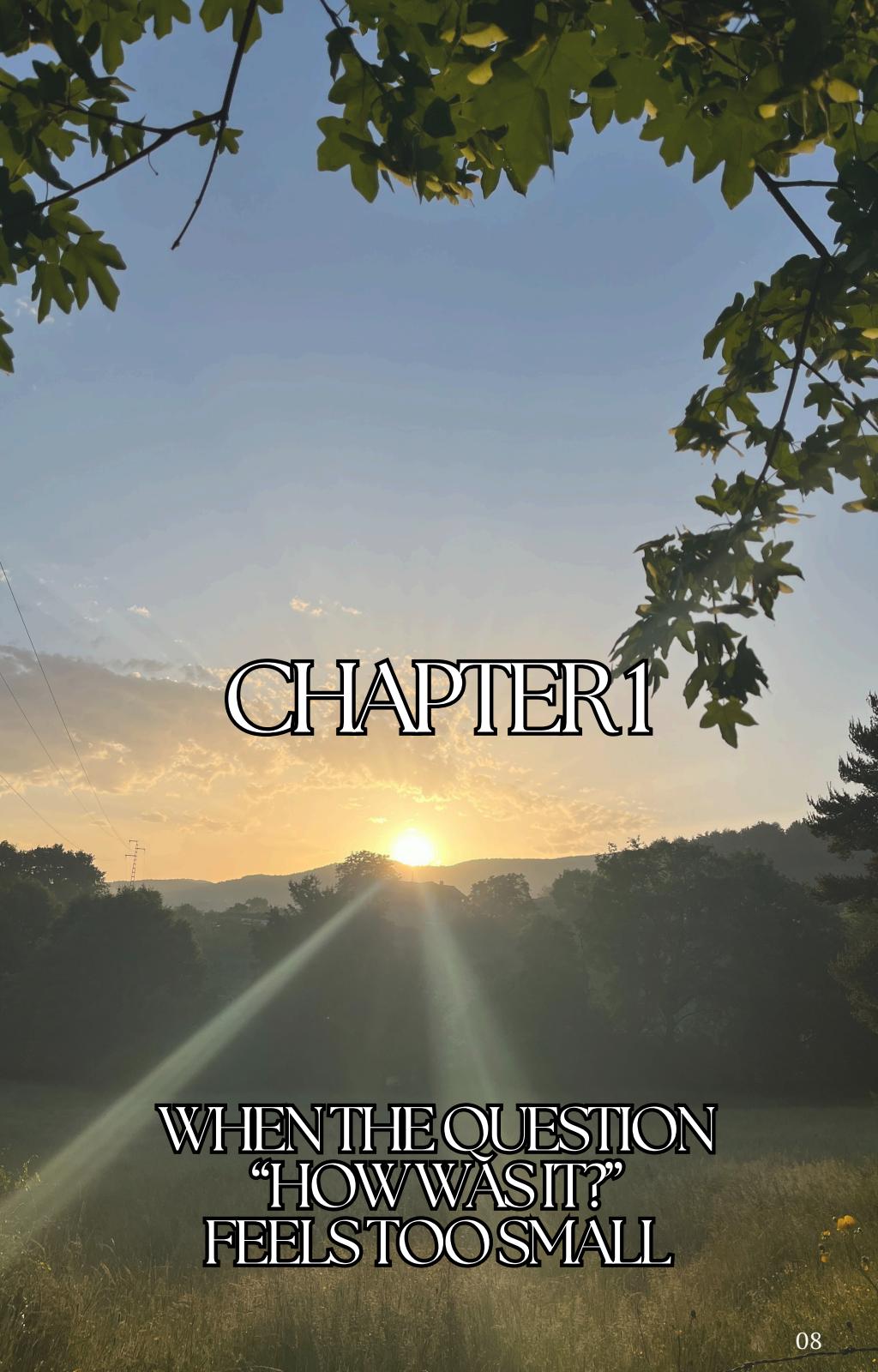
The place you arrive before anyone starts asking: "So... how was it?"

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How does my body react when I enter a quiet, open space in life?  
(For example: heaviness, relief, tension, rest.)
- What happens in me when I stop trying to label or explain it?
- Could I allow one “in-between” moment today without rushing to fill it?

Not every empty needs to be filled





# CHAPTER 1

WHEN THE QUESTION  
“HOW WAS IT?”  
FEELS TOO SMALL

# 1. WHEN “HOW WAS IT” FEELS TOO SMALL

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One of the first things people asked me after the Camino was:  
“So... how was it?”

A simple, well-meant question. But I noticed how difficult it was to answer. Not because I didn't want to share, but because the experience lived in so many layers that it couldn't be captured in a quick sentence.

It reminded me of how often we meet each other in surface-level ways. We ask and we answer, but rarely do we touch what's really alive underneath.

For a long time, I thought the problem was in the questions themselves. That maybe people (including me) should learn to ask better questions. But slowly I began to see: it's not just about the form of the question. It's about whether we dare to meet each other beyond the mask of polite answers.

I noticed the same thing with other interactions back home. Even simple, caring questions like “How was your day?” can feel difficult to answer. Not because I don't appreciate them, but because so much of what I experience doesn't fit into the sometimes expected rhythm of small talk. Sometimes I long for more than a routine exchange and at the same time, I don't want depth to become another task.

What I'm learning is this: depth is not something we can force. It doesn't come from rehearsed questions or clever words. It opens when there is presence. Sometimes that means silence together. Sometimes it means one brave, honest sentence that breaks the surface.

But even depth can't always be translated.

What I didn't know from the start, but see more clearly now, is that this was the start of the real integration: learning to honour my pace, my boundaries, and my right to keep some things just for me.

While usually I'm used to sharing a lot, straight away.

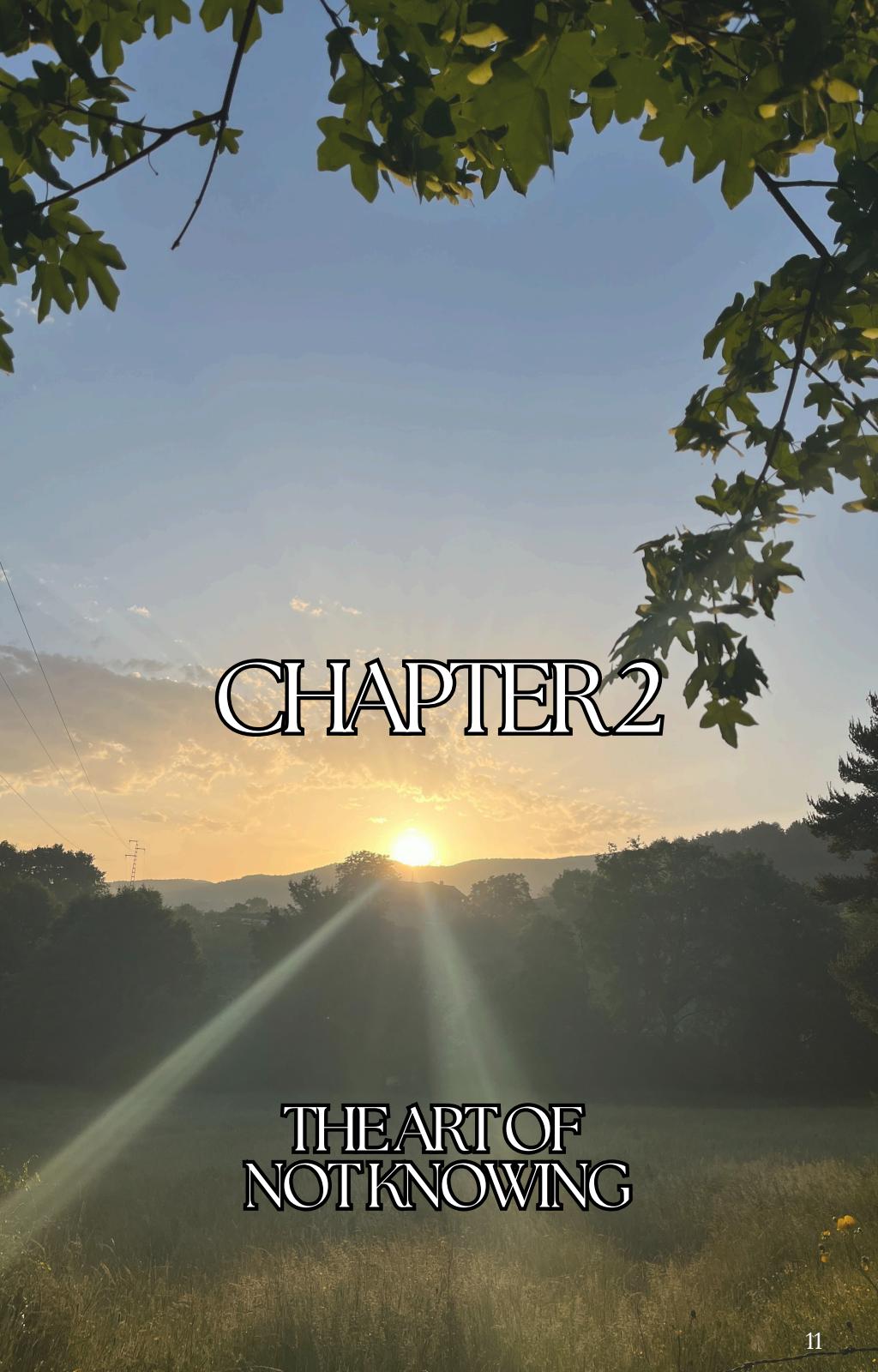
But even on the Camino I already started to realise: not everything has to be shared, and not everything has to be understood. Some journeys are meant to be lived, not explained.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where in my life do I feel pressure to explain myself when silence or presence might be enough?
- What happens in my body when I override my own pace just to answer or explain?
- What boundaries around sharing could honour my own pace of integration?



*Not everything has to be shared,  
and not everything has to be understood*

A photograph of a sunset over a forested hillside. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright, warm glow and creating lens flare. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there's a field of tall grass and some small yellow flowers. The background consists of dark, silhouetted trees and hills. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# CHAPTER 2

THE ART OF  
NOT KNOWING

## 2. THE ART OF NOT KNOWING

---

When I walked the Camino, “not knowing” was part of the deal. I didn’t know exactly where I’d sleep that night, what the next day’s weather would be, or who I might meet along the way. But there was always a clear next step: follow the yellow arrow, put one foot in front of the other.

After the Camino, it was different. There were no arrows now. No set path, no daily destination. Just a wide, open space. I remembered this from coming home after other big trips. It feels... uncomfortable.

My mind doesn’t like it. It wants to fill the blank page with plans: decide where to go next, map out my tasks, commit to new projects. Anything to replace the uncertainty with something solid. Usually I fall into this trap. But this time slowly, I began to see that this “not knowing” wasn’t a gap to fix. It was fertile ground.

The ego sees the unknown as a void. The heart knows it’s the womb of creation. When we rush to fill the space, we often plant seeds that aren’t ready or seeds that aren’t even ours. But when we wait, something more aligned has a chance to emerge.

I started experimenting. Instead of forcing answers, I would simply say to myself: “I don’t know yet, and that’s okay.” Some days, it still felt frustrating. But other days, I could feel the quiet richness underneath - the sense that life was weaving something behind the scenes.

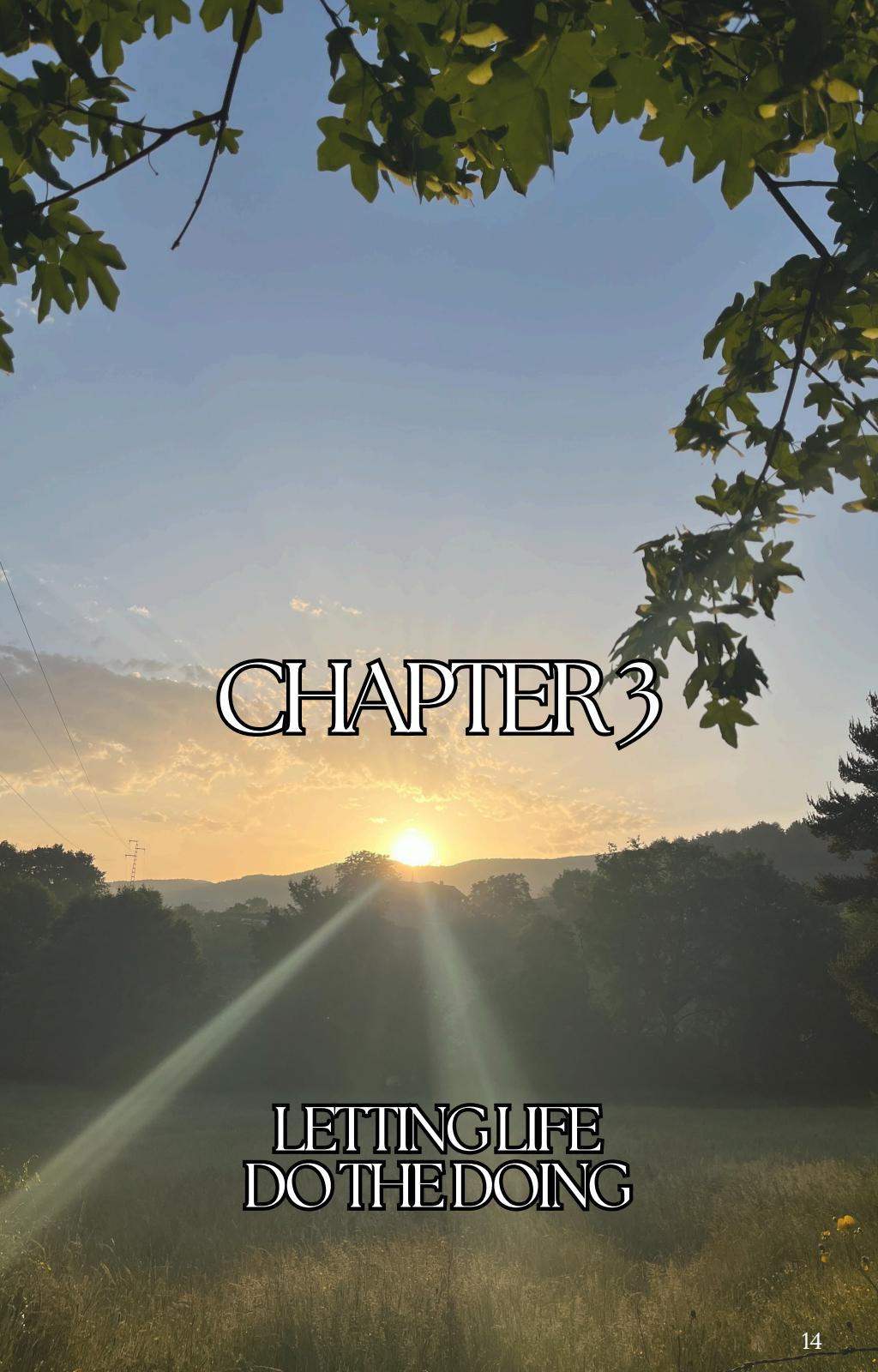
Now, I think of “not knowing” as a companion on the path. Not a void to escape, but a sacred pause before life speaks.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where in my life am I trying to “figure it out” too soon - and how does my body feel when I do that?
- What would it look like to hold the unknown with curiosity instead of fear?
- Can I give myself permission to wait before deciding - just for a little while?



*The unknown isn't empty,  
it's the womb of creation*



# CHAPTER 3

## LETTING LIFE DO THE DOING

# 3. LETTING LIFE DO THE DOING

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One of the greatest reliefs I've ever felt was this:  
I don't have to make life happen.

On the Camino, this truth revealed itself in the smallest ways.  
The perfect mindful hostel appearing on the day I needed deep rest.  
A café showing up just as hunger set in.  
A stranger offering kindness without me asking.  
I wasn't creating these moments, they came to meet me.  
My only job was to keep walking and notice when they arrived.

Back home, my old habits tried to take the lead again.  
Even without a full calendar, my mind kept making one.  
Scripting not just my to-do's, but how my days should feel, how conversations should go, even how my spiritual growth should unfold.  
"You should answer that message now."  
"You should make a plan for tomorrow."  
"You should post something, so people don't forget you."

At first, I believed those voices. I felt the tendency to try to keep up, to manage it all, to stay "on top" of life. But I began to notice something important: even here life was still carrying me, just as it had on the trail.

One morning, I decided not to follow my plan.  
I didn't post the content I had prepared.  
I didn't reply to messages right away.  
I didn't try to "be" the version of me I thought people wanted to see.

And... nothing collapsed. In fact, life began to flow more easily. People reached out without me chasing them. Opportunities appeared without me strategising. Moments of joy and connection arrived without me looking for them. And maybe most importantly, it brought the peace I had been searching for: the one I had been trying to manufacture through doing.

It was humbling to remember that the same intelligence that makes trees grow and rivers flow is also guiding me. I don't have to push the current. I don't have to push my motivation. I just have to notice the moment when the pulse to act arrives. The one that feels light, clear, and inevitable - and say yes. Not the pulse born from fear or pressure, but the one that comes from rest and clarity.

Letting go of my agenda didn't make me passive.

It made me available for the scene life was already writing, in its own perfect timing.

The truth was, much of my "agenda" had been about fear: fear that without constant managing, things would fall apart.

Letting go showed me the opposite.

The less I control, the more aligned everything becomes.

There is a rest that almost goes deeper than sleep. A rest that comes from putting down the illusion that I have to carry the whole world on my shoulders. It's the kind of rest where your body is still awake, but your mind is no longer straining. A rest so nourishing it can refill you as much as a full night's sleep.

On the Camino, that rest came naturally. I stopped when my body needed to, without guilt. At home, I had to relearn it.

Resting from "doing" doesn't mean giving up.

It means allowing myself to act when moved and to rest when not.

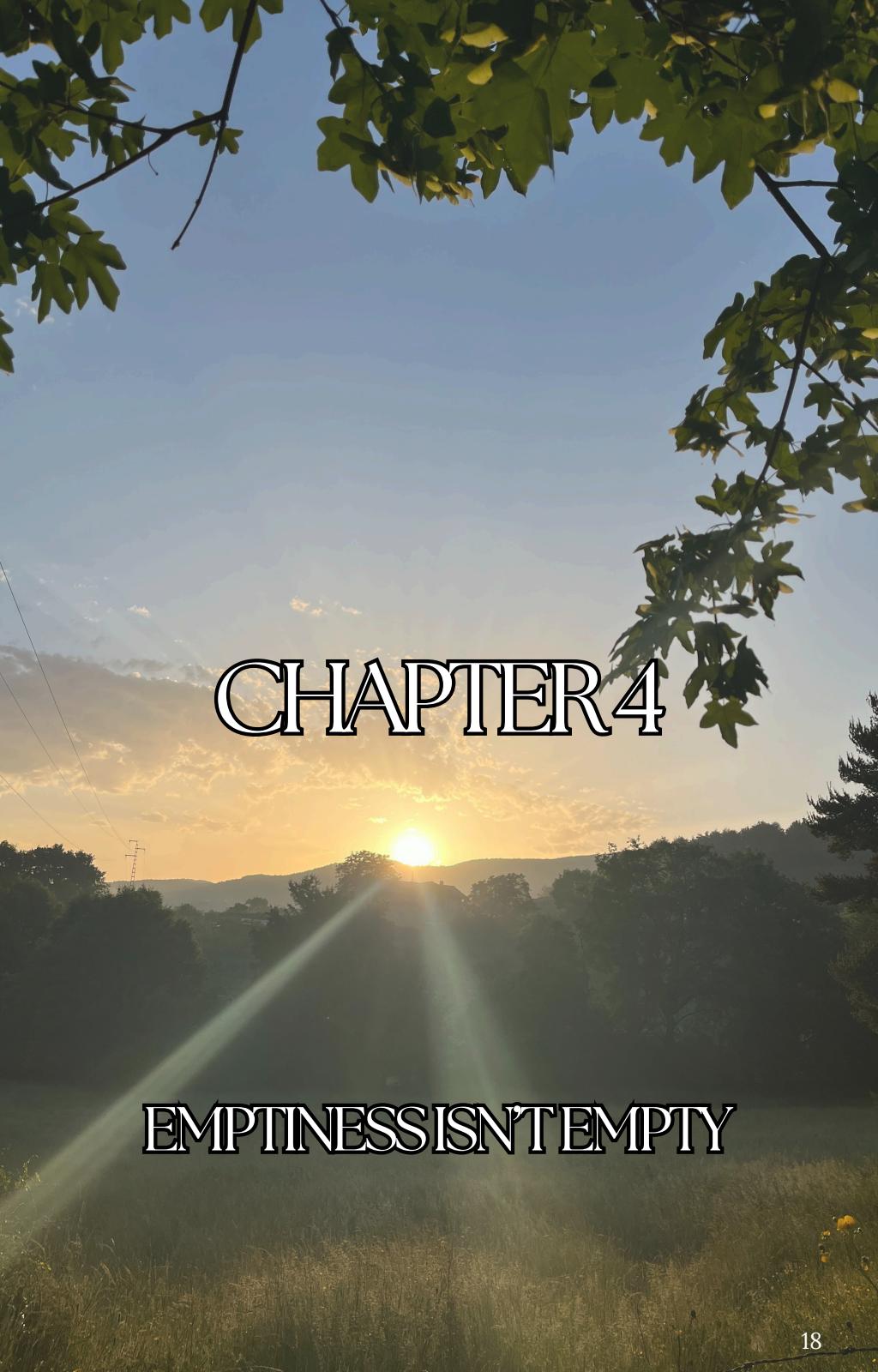
It means trusting that life continues even when I step aside for a while.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where am I still trying to make life happen instead of letting it happen through me?
- What happens in my body when I imagine stepping back from “doing” and still trusting life to move?
- Can I remember a time when the deepest rest came from letting go, not from sleeping?



*When you stop pushing the river,  
you discover it's already carrying you*

A photograph of a sunset over a forested hillside. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright orange glow and creating lens flare. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. In the foreground, there's a field of tall grass. The top of the image is framed by the branches and leaves of a tree.

# CHAPTER 4

EMPTINESS ISN'T EMPTY

# 4. EMPTINESS ISN'T EMPTY

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For a long time, I treated emptiness like a warning sign.  
If I felt it, I assumed something was wrong.  
That I'd lost my purpose, my spark, or my direction.

But after the Camino, emptiness kept visiting me.  
Some mornings I'd wake up and feel no urge to "do" anything.  
No rush to share, to connect, to produce. Just... space.  
At first, my mind panicked: "Is this depression? Am I losing myself?"  
Slowly, I began to see that emptiness wasn't the absence of life - it was the absence of noise.

Without all the mental chatter, my identity felt thinner. And yes, the ego hated that, because without the stories of "who I am," it didn't know how to define me. But in that space, something softer began to appear. A quiet sense of being. The way sunlight fills an empty room.

I started to realise: emptiness is where life plants seeds you can't yet see. It's the space where something new can grow - not because you forced it, but because you didn't fill it too quickly.

As I lived with it longer, I began to see the empty space as sacred. We live in a culture obsessed with filling every gap. If there's silence, we add noise; if there's a free hour, we add productivity.

But the most important shifts in me didn't happen while I was busy, they happened in the pauses. Not from gaining more information, but from giving my thinking mind a break: staring out of a window, sitting in a park with no agenda, walking without headphones.

When I leave the space empty, life has room to enter.  
When I fill it too quickly, I crowd out the quiet truth trying to reach me.  
So now I protect empty space like something holy.  
Because that's exactly what it is.

Now, when emptiness comes, I try not to chase it away.  
I sit with it. I breathe into it.  
And I listen for the whisper of life moving underneath.

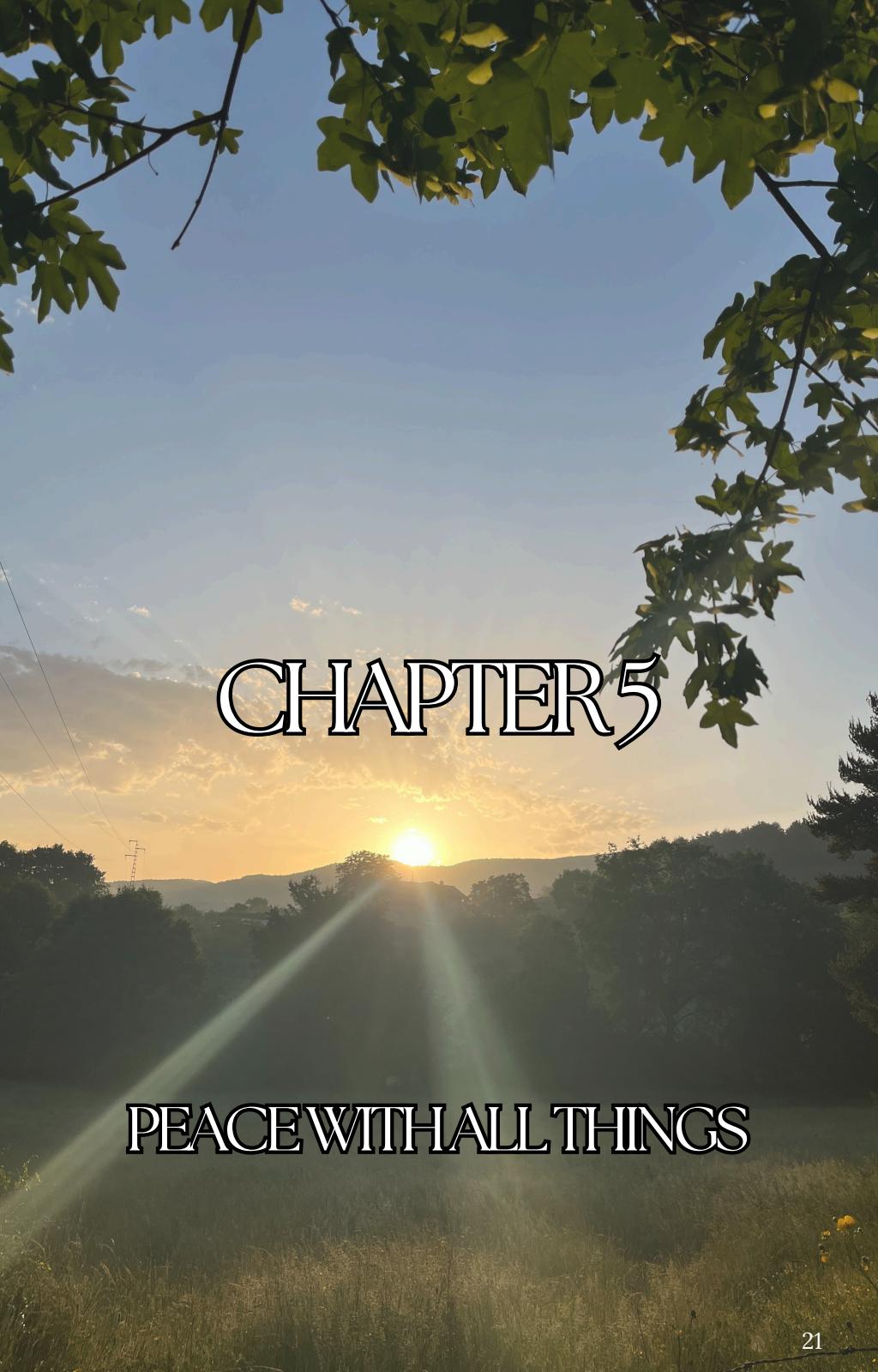
It's in that whisper that something else starts to reveal itself.  
Not just the absence of noise, but the presence of a quieter kind of strength.  
And that's where peace begins to take root.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do I usually react when I feel “empty”?
- Could I allow emptiness to be here without rushing to fill it?
- Could I treat one moment of emptiness today as sacred, and simply notice what happens inside of me?



*The pause isn't a gap to fill,  
it's an invitation to listen*

A photograph of a sunset over a forested hillside. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright orange glow and creating a lens flare that radiates across the frame. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with scattered clouds. In the foreground, there's a field of tall grass and some yellow flowers. The background consists of dark, silhouetted trees and hills. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# CHAPTER 5

PEACE WITH ALL THINGS

# 5. PEACE WITH ALL THINGS

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True peace isn't just about calm sunsets or moments when everything feels good. It's about being at peace with everything. Even the messy, uncomfortable, boring, or painful parts of life.

On the Camino, peace often came easily: the sound of footsteps on gravel, the rhythm of my breath, the beauty of a distant mountain.

But back home, peace became a deeper practice. It meant meeting tension in a conversation without hardening my heart. It meant allowing disappointment without rushing to fix it. It meant letting a restless day be restless, without making it mean something was wrong.

I realised that most of us are unconsciously running from this kind of peace. We think: I'll be at peace once this changes, once I feel better, once things go my way. But that's not ultimate peace, that's conditional comfort.

True peace is being honest about every aspect of the present moment and seeing clearly what it needs. It's the intuitive nudge in the right direction, no matter how much noise surrounds it.

On the Camino, I learned that sometimes clarity is like lightning. Sharp, undeniable, leaving no room for doubt. Like the time I said "no" to staying in someone's campervan, even as they pushed and tried to charm me into changing my mind.

Even though I felt the discomfort of having my boundaries crossed - the kind of discomfort that, in the past, might have led me into pleasing - the decision was clear and immediate.

My body knew, my heart knew. And I listened.

But life doesn't only challenge you with storms. Sometimes it tests you with whispers. Like when back in England a stranger on the street asked for money. I felt the pull between my instinct to give, the warnings of passersby, and the quiet voice inside.

There was no danger here, only confusion.

And that's when peace feels less like a shield and more like a muscle you're still learning to use.

Urgency makes clarity obvious.

It's the subtle, morally grey moments that ask more of you.

They ask you to pause in the noise, to feel what is true for you before the world decides for you.

Peace, I'm learning, is not about always getting it "right."

It's about noticing when you're being pulled away from yourself and choosing to come back.

Sometimes that happens instantly.

Sometimes it takes a few steps down the road before you realise:

Ah, I left myself there.

And each time you return, the muscle grows stronger.

Peace isn't fragile.

It doesn't depend on circumstances.

It's what you already are, underneath the layers of resistance.

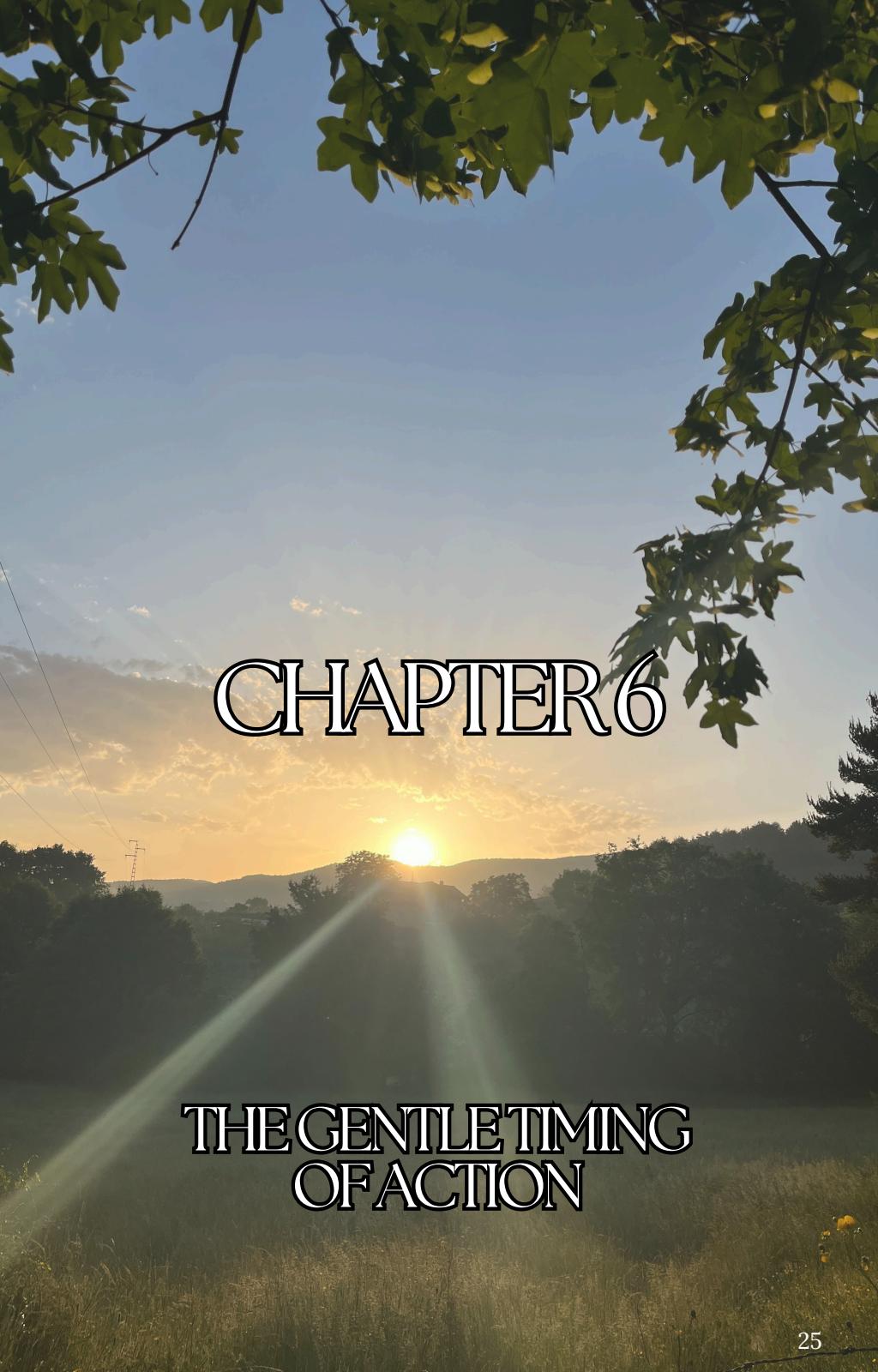
The more I practice peace with what is - exactly as it is - the less life feels like a fight, and the more it feels like coming home.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What parts of life am I still trying to change before I can be at peace?
- How can I return to myself when I notice I've drifted away - in my body, breath or attention?
- What small, everyday moments could I use to strengthen my "peace muscle"?



*Peace is not what you find when life is easy,  
it's what you are when you stop resisting*

A photograph of a sunset over a rural landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the hills and fields. In the foreground, the branches and leaves of a large tree frame the scene. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some clouds. A power line is visible on the left. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# CHAPTER 6

## THE GENTLE TIMING OF ACTION

# 6. THE GENTLE TIMING OF ACTION

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I used to think that the sooner I acted, the better.

Reply quickly, push for an answer, make something happen before it slips away. Even when I wasn't actually doing something, my mind was still busy planning: "If I take this route, I can drop off the package... and maybe pop into the charity shop... oh, and I still need to reply to that email..."

It's not that there's anything wrong with efficiency.

But I began to notice that these thoughts often carried a subtle push.

A pressure that pulled me out of the moment and into a mental timeline of the rest of the day.

I could call it "pushing energy" - the part of me that wants to organise, maximise, and control. It's future-oriented, tensed in the body, and it can turn even a peaceful walk into a mental to-do list.

"Present energy", on the other hand, comes from presence.

It's not about "using" the moment, it's about living it.

It feels open, relaxed, and alive.

The following practice became one of my biggest shifts in my Camino of Life once I returned home - tiny, simple, but deeply freeing.

## → The "Check-in First" Practice

When a to-do thought pops up:

1. Acknowledge it: "Thank you, mind. You want me to do X." (Or Harry, as I lovingly call the pushy and critical part of my mind.)

2. Feel: Does my body have the energy for this right now?

3. Choose from presence:

- Yes → If it feels light and aligned, I do it now.
- Not yet → If it doesn't, I write it down and return to the moment.

This simple check-in has kept my inner manager from taking control of my whole day.

Over time, I began practising something else too: waiting for the natural moment to act. Sometimes that meant holding off on sending a message until it felt truly alive in me. Sometimes it meant pausing a project until clarity landed, even if that took days or weeks.

When the moment is right, action feels light.

There's no forcing, no second-guessing.

It's like stepping into a river that's already flowing, instead of trying to push the water yourself.

Gentle timing doesn't mean postponing life.

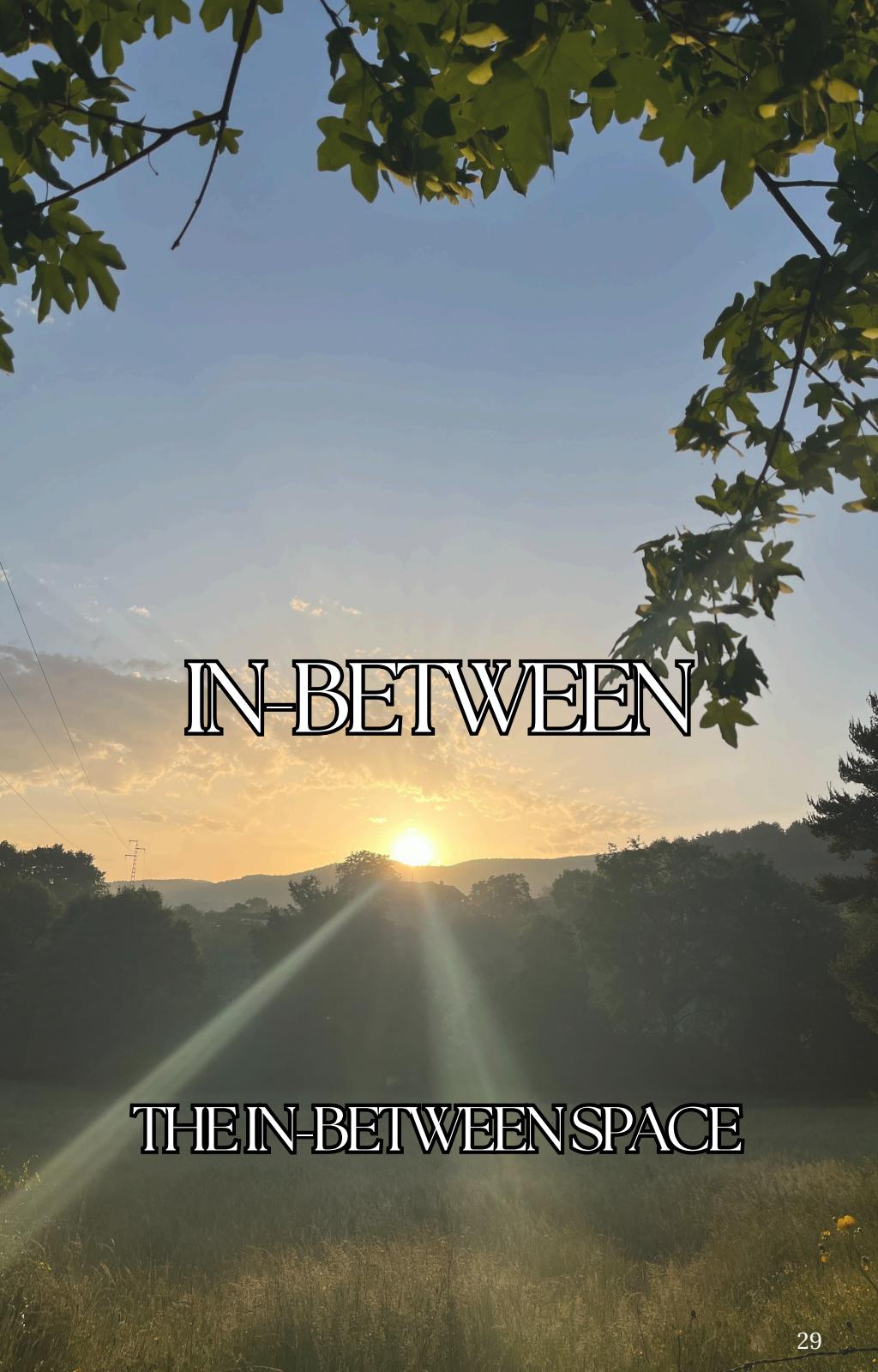
It means trusting that the right moment will come – and when it does, you'll have the energy to move with ease.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where in my life do I feel “pushing energy” in my body, instead of waiting for the right timing?
- What’s one area of my life today where I could practice “gentle timing” rather than rushing?
- Can I recall a time when waiting made the outcome smoother and more aligned?



*When the moment is right,  
action feels light*

A photograph of a sunset over a rural landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright, radial sunburst of light across the darkening sky. In the foreground, there's a field of tall grass and small yellow flowers. The middle ground shows a line of trees and a cluster of houses. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and slightly melancholic. The word "IN-BETWEEN" is overlaid in large, white, serif capital letters, and "THE IN-BETWEEN SPACE" is overlaid in a slightly smaller, white, serif capital letters.

# IN-BETWEEN

## THE IN-BETWEEN SPACE

# THE IN-BETWEEN SPACE

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Sometimes I feel like I'm standing in a hallway between two worlds.  
The door behind me has closed, but the one ahead hasn't opened yet.

It's not a comfortable place.  
The old life feels too small, but the new one hasn't fully formed.  
I can't quite go back, but I can't quite move forward either.

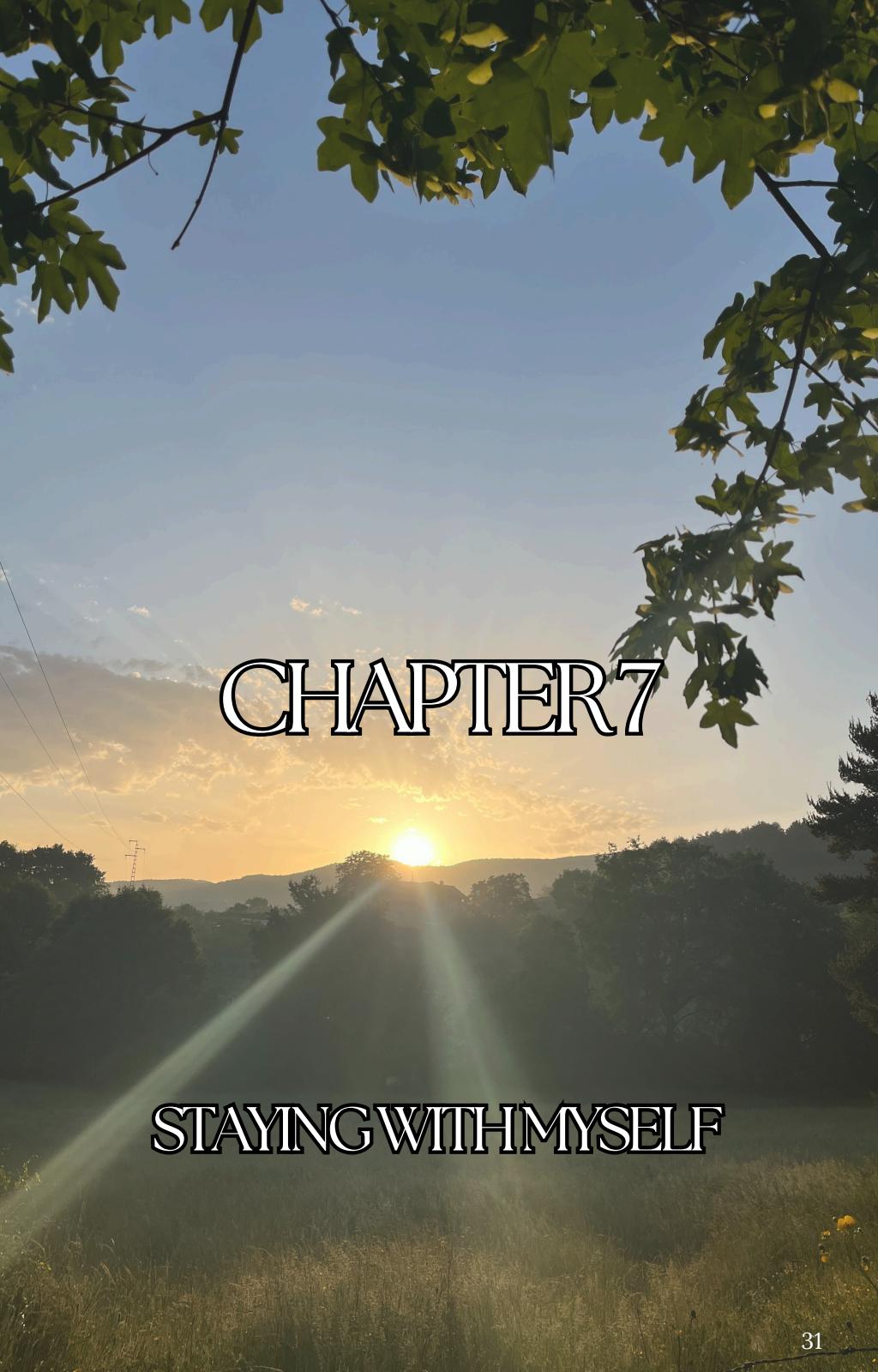
On the Camino, transitions were clearer: you left one village, walked a few hours, and arrived at the next. But here, the "next" is invisible.  
There's no arrival time, no yellow arrow pointing the way.

Some days, the in-between feels like a gift. A rare pause to rest and gather strength.  
Other days, it feels like a fog I can't see through. Even my closest relationships can feel like they're behind a soft veil, as if I'm slightly apart from everything.

The temptation is always to rush.  
To push through the hallway just to get to the next room.

But I've learned that this space has its own work to do in me.  
It's where roots grow deeper, where old skins are shed, where unseen shifts prepare me for what's next.

The in-between space is not wasted time.  
It's a precious stretch of road, one you don't have to race through.  
Knowing that this space is already complete, just as it is.

A photograph of a sunset over a forested hillside. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright, warm glow and creating lens flare. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there's a field of tall grass. The top of the image is framed by the branches and leaves of a tree.

# CHAPTER 7

## STAYING WITH MYSELF

# 7. STAYING WITH MYSELF

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Some relationships move in tides - close, then spacious, then close again. I used to think something was wrong in the quiet moments, as if love needed constant tending to prove it was still alive.

But after the Camino, I began to feel the truth more clearly: connection isn't sustained by constant closeness, but by presence - the honest kind.

Some days I could say "I love you" to my partner with my whole body. Other days the words weren't available. Not because the love was gone, but because I wasn't fully in myself.

I decided to stop forcing it.

I let the silence stay.

And to my surprise, he understood.

He felt the love underneath even when the words were still forming.

This was the beginning of a deeper kind of staying - not staying in a place, or in a role, or even in a shared home.

But staying with myself even inside a relationship.

Before the Camino, I thought staying meant not leaving.

And although my partner and I spent years in a long-distance relationship - learning how to love across countries, time zones, and all the space between - the Camino revealed another layer:

you can live in the same house and still abandon yourself, and you can be miles apart and still remain deeply connected.

Staying is not about geography. It's about inner orientation.

And that distinction became even clearer over time.

There were moments my body whispered truths I didn't yet know how to live: this rhythm is too fast for me, this land doesn't feel like home, this field asks me to shrink.

At first, I tried to stay in the old way - physically, dutifully, loyally.

But the real staying was happening somewhere else: in the quiet decision not to betray myself again.

I was learning to remain rooted in my own centre, even when someone I loved was unsettled, uncertain, or reaching for me from a place of fear.

Some days that meant being physically close.

Other days it meant stepping back, not as withdrawal, but as devotion to clarity.

Love, I'm learning, doesn't ask me to choose between myself and the other.

It asks me to stay present enough to feel when something is true and when something is tightening inside me.

True staying is honest.

It breathes.

It doesn't pretend.

It doesn't grip.

It doesn't perform closeness to avoid discomfort.

Staying, for me now, means:

I remain with myself so that any moment I share with you comes from truth - not fear.

It means the connection is real even when the shape of the relationship shifts.

Even when space grows.

Even when the future is unknown.

The form may change.

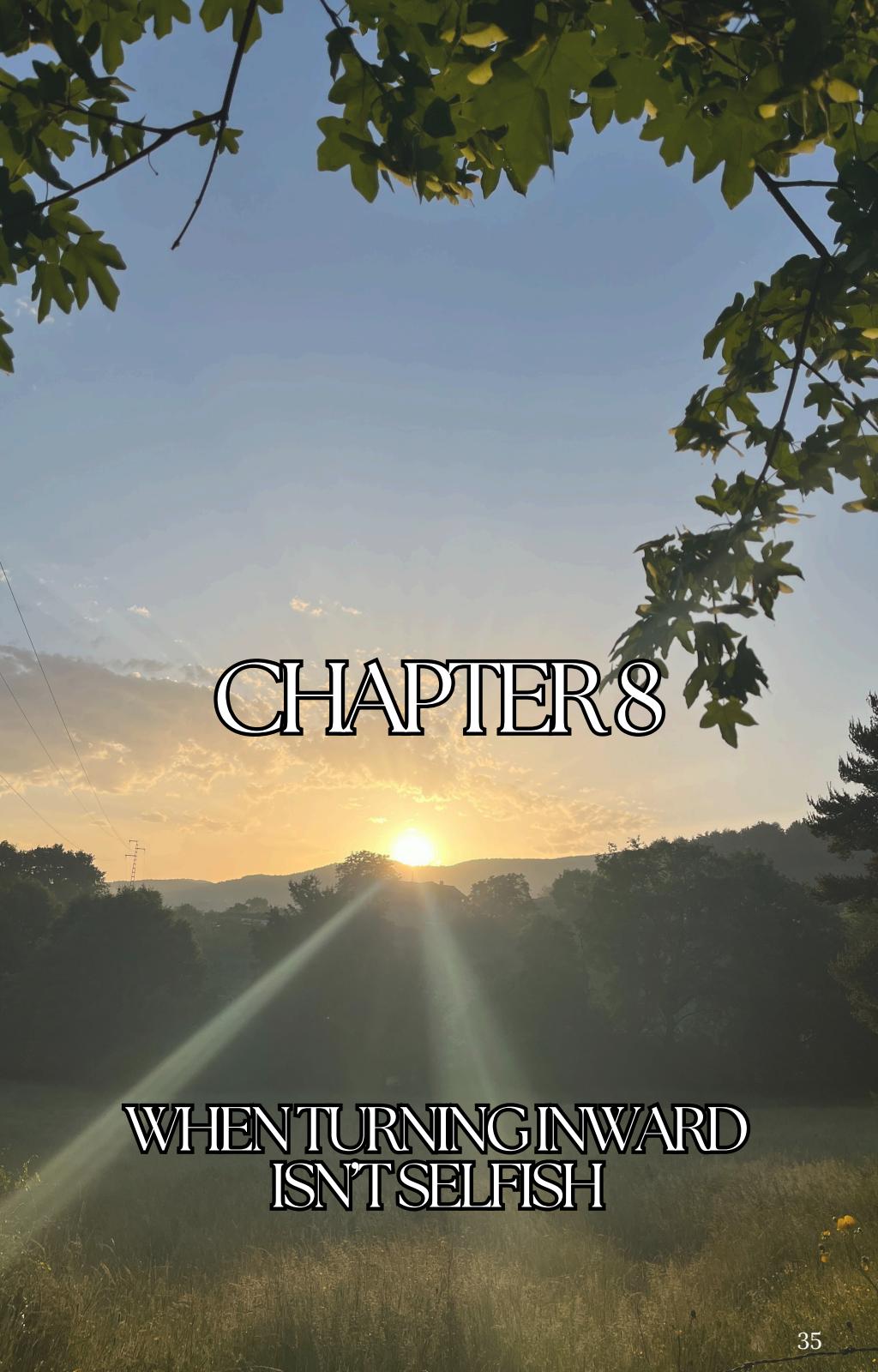
But presence - honest presence - is the only place love can actually live.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where in my relationships do I sense a need for more breathing space - in closeness, in words or in expectations?
- What subtle signals in my body tell me I'm moving away from myself? (For example: tightening in my chest, shallow breath, pressure to please, a slight inner contraction.)
- What shifts in my body when I give myself permission to move toward someone or step back - only at the pace that feels true?



*Staying is not where I place my body,  
but where I refuse to leave myself*



# CHAPTER 8

WHEN TURNING INWARD  
ISN'T SELFISH

# 8. WHEN TURNING INWARD ISN'T SELFISH

---

Coming back from the Camino didn't just mean adjusting to a different pace of life. It meant facing the moments when my energy simply pulled inward. Sometimes it happened in the middle of a conversation, sometimes in the middle of a shared meal.

It wasn't because I stopped caring.

It was because I cared enough to stay true to my inner compass.

On the Camino, there were times when I was deep in conversation with someone and then, without warning, the words would just stop.

Sometimes I'd slow my pace, sometimes I'd speed up, letting our footsteps naturally drift apart.

No explanation.

No polite filler.

Just letting the silence arrive and trusting it.

I realised I didn't owe the moment anything other than my truth.

And sometimes, that truth was quiet.

There's a common misunderstanding: that asking for space, retreating into stillness, or honouring your own energy is selfish.

I've felt that misunderstanding in the looks people give, in the tone of their voices, and in the way the question is sometimes asked: "But what about me?" or "What is wrong?"

I've even wondered it myself.

Am I withdrawing too much? Am I making everything about me?

The truth is, it depends on where it comes from.

## → Ego needs vs. Soul needs

When my need for space comes from fear - "Tell me everything is okay or I won't feel safe" - it makes me dependent on the other.

When it comes from truth - "I need silence right now, so I can stay clear and loving" - it makes me a freer partner, or friend.

### → Space as Love

When I override myself just to appear available, I slowly disappear.  
By protecting my space, I protect the quality of my presence.  
A few hours of solitude can prevent days of quiet irritation.  
In that sense, space is not absence - it's love.  
It's an investment in the connection itself.

### → Protecting Energy

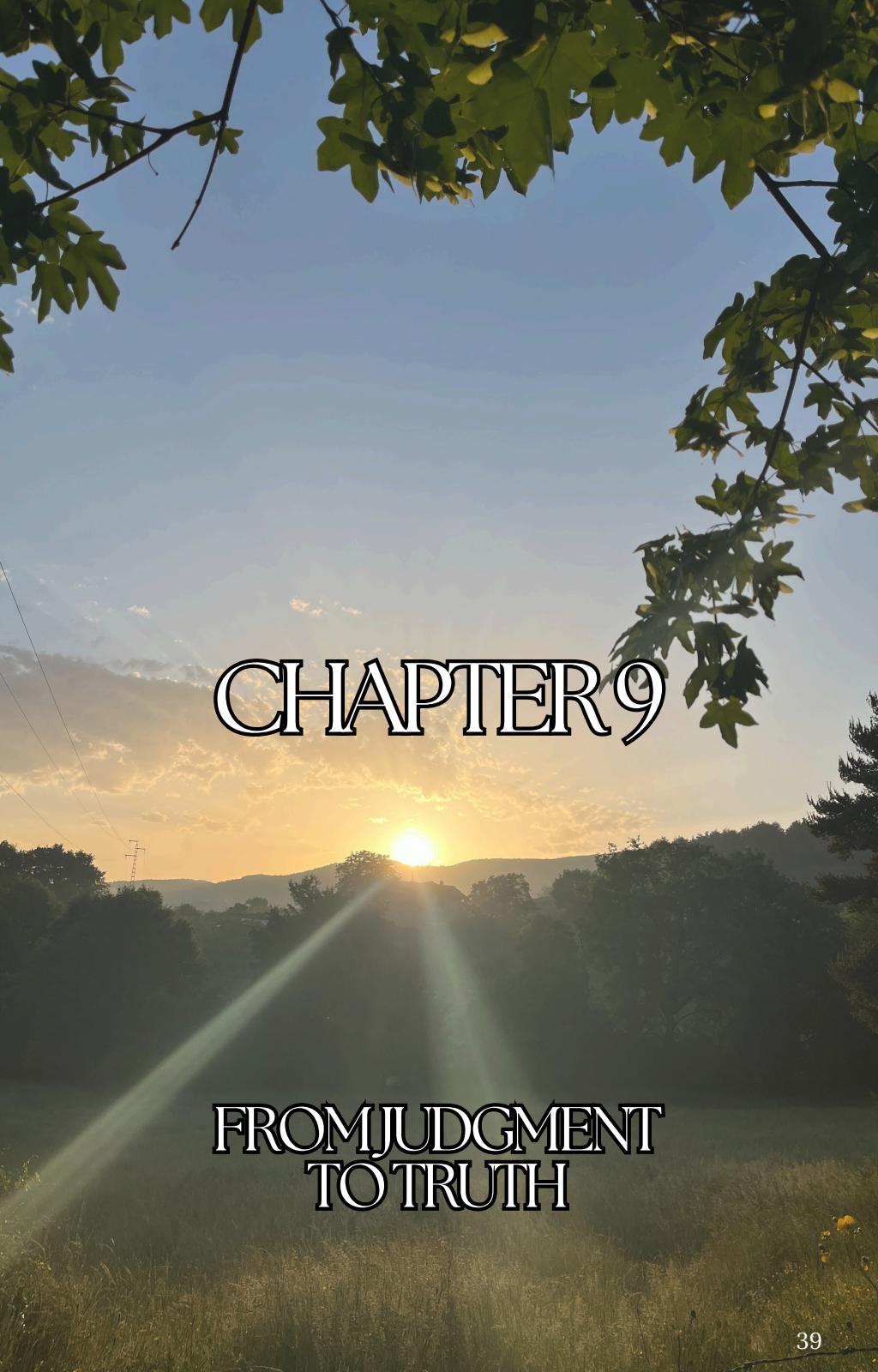
Living with someone means sharing not just a house, but a field of energy.  
I notice it in the air when stress walks through the door.  
Sometimes that means resting apart, sometimes visualising a gentle shield  
around me.  
Not to block love, but to let it flow without tangling in what isn't mine.  
In that way, taking space isn't selfish. It's the opposite: it frees the other from  
being my fixer and allows me to return whole.

The difference lies in why I turn inward.  
Not to close off from life, but to stay open to it.  
Not to avoid you, but to remain with myself so that I can be with you in truth.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When I take space, am I doing it to avoid or to stay connected to myself?
- How does giving myself space impact the quality of my relationships?
- What's one simple way I could protect my energy today while keeping my heart open?

 *Space is the bridge that allows me to meet you fully, without losing myself on the way*

A photograph of a sunset over a rural landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the sky and illuminating the tops of hills and trees. In the foreground, the branches and leaves of a large tree frame the scene. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and dramatic.

# CHAPTER 9

FROM JUDGMENT  
TO TRUTH

# 9. FROM JUDGMENT TO TRUTH

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For a long time, I thought judgment was just about the other person. If someone annoyed me, I'd focus on their behaviour, convinced they were the problem.

But somewhere along the way, I realised every strong judgment was pointing me back to myself.

Most of the time, it was a sign that I had been crossing my own boundaries. That I hadn't taken the space I needed.

That I hadn't checked in with what I truly wanted.

That I hadn't spoken my truth.

When I abandon myself like that, the energy has to go somewhere.

It often spills out as frustration at the people closest to me: my partner, my family, my friends.

It can happen in a flash. One small thing my partner does, and my mind is off - spinning stories, listing all the shoulds and shouldn'ts.

Judgment is quick. Presence takes patience.

But when I pause before reacting, something softens.

The sharpness fades just enough for me to see what's really there: often much smaller and gentler than the story I was building.

Before the Camino, I had already begun experimenting with this.

I noticed that if I stayed with irritation just a little longer, without running into judgment or blame, sometimes I could sense something underneath:

an unmet need, an ache for space, a desire for honesty.

Sometimes I managed to open to it. Sometimes I didn't.

But the practice had begun.

During the Camino, it deepened.

In a conversation with my brother, I suddenly felt what I would normally cover up with irritation or self-silencing: a tender pain, a need that wanted to be spoken.

This time I didn't collapse into pleasing, nor explode into blame.

I stayed. And from that space, words came.

Not sharp, but honest.

Not to wound him, but to honour myself.

That moment showed me what judgment had been hiding all along:  
the deeper truth of my own unmet needs.

By choosing to stay with the discomfort, I discovered a new kind of strength.  
One rooted in love for my own boundaries and pain, rather than in defense  
against someone else.

Presence over judgment isn't about pretending everything's fine.  
It's about pausing long enough to ask:

What's really happening here? Where have I left myself?

Sometimes the answer is simple: I need to step back, breathe, and give myself  
what I've been waiting for others to give me - respect, space, care.  
When I do, I can see the other person with softer eyes.  
Not because they've changed, but because I've come back to me.

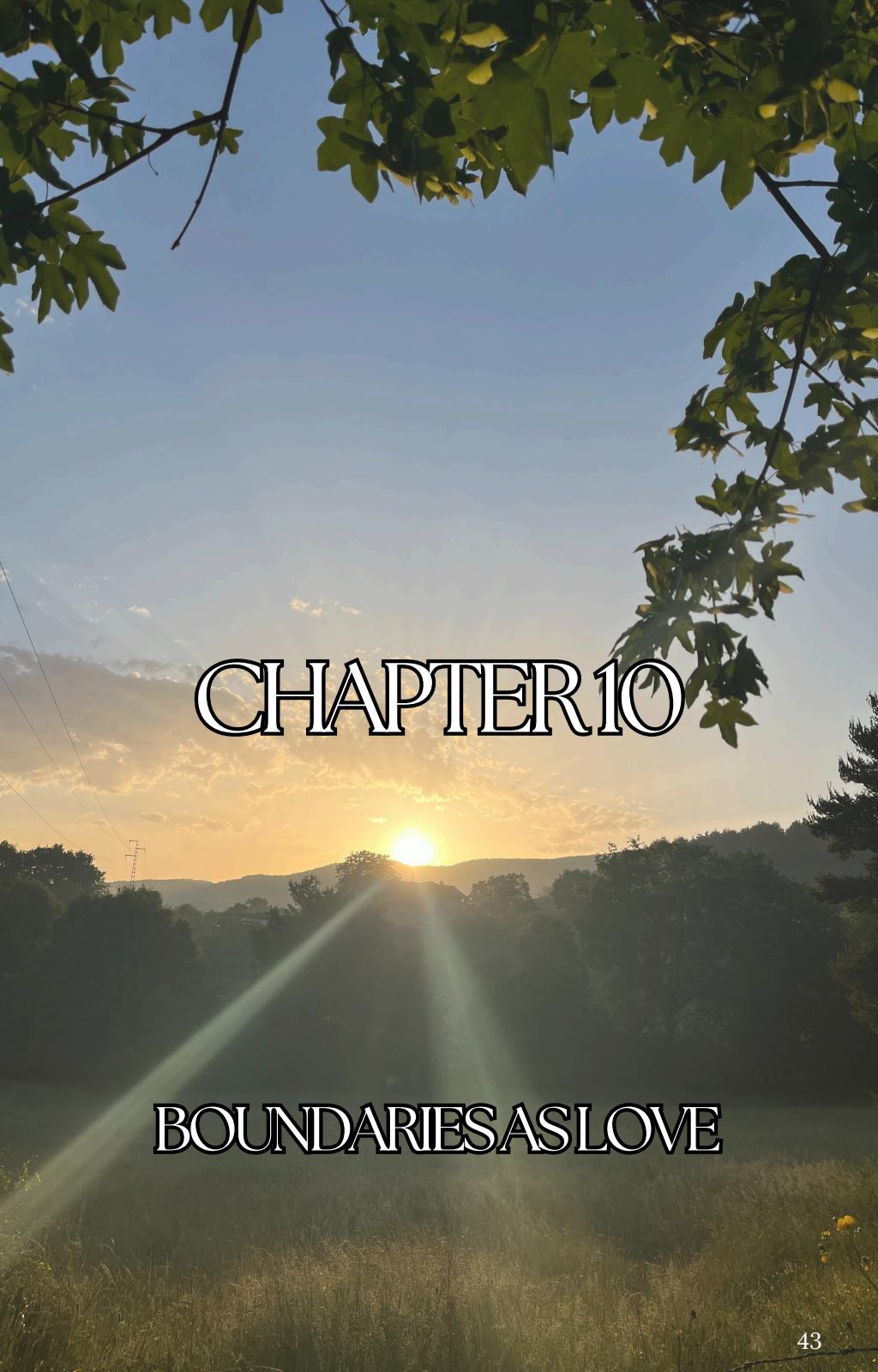
And that return - to honesty, to self-responsibility, to tenderness with my own  
ache - is where the real freedom lies.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Who or what has been triggering me lately and what boundary of mine might be underneath it?
- Where have I been expecting others to give me something I could give myself?
- What changes when I witness my thoughts without believing them?



*Every judgment is a call to return to myself*



# CHAPTER 10

## BOUNDARIES AS LOVE

# 10. BOUNDARIES AS LOVE

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When I first heard the word boundaries, I pictured a wall.  
Something hard, meant to keep people out.  
But slowly I began to see: a true boundary is not a wall. It's a bridge.  
It protects connection as much as it protects me.

The road taught me this.  
On the Camino, I listened closely to my body every day.  
If I needed a rest day, I took it.  
If I wanted to walk alone, I did.  
Those were small boundaries - not rejection of others, but an act of care for myself. And when I honoured them, I noticed:  
the quality of my presence with others was richer, lighter, more real.

Back home, it became clearer:

- When I sleep in another room because I'm overwhelmed by noises or the energy of my partner, it isn't distance. It's care - for my rest and for us.
- When I say no to an invitation because I need quiet, it isn't avoidance. It's choosing to come back whole instead of drained.

I used to think setting boundaries was selfish.  
That if I said no to people, I was letting them down or even abandoning them.  
But I'm learning that boundaries are not rejection - they are love.

When I say no to constant messages, to small talk, to being available all the time, I am really saying yes to my own grounding - to the space that allows me to meet life in presence.  
And from that place, what I do share - a song, a message, a moment - comes clean and true.

It's not always easy. People can take it personally, feel hurt, or push back.  
But the truth is: love without boundaries is not love.  
It's exhaustion.  
Real love has edges, so it can flow freely.

A boundary is not about pushing people away.  
It's about letting them meet the truest version of me.  
Without it, I give only fragments of myself - diluted, forced, tired.

The key is where it comes from.

A fearful “No” tries to control.

A loving “No” protects what is true, so love can actually flow.

That difference can be felt by me, and by the other person too.

Boundaries are not a sign that love is failing.

They are what allow love to breathe without burning out.

They are not punishment, but protection - for connection, for presence, for truth.

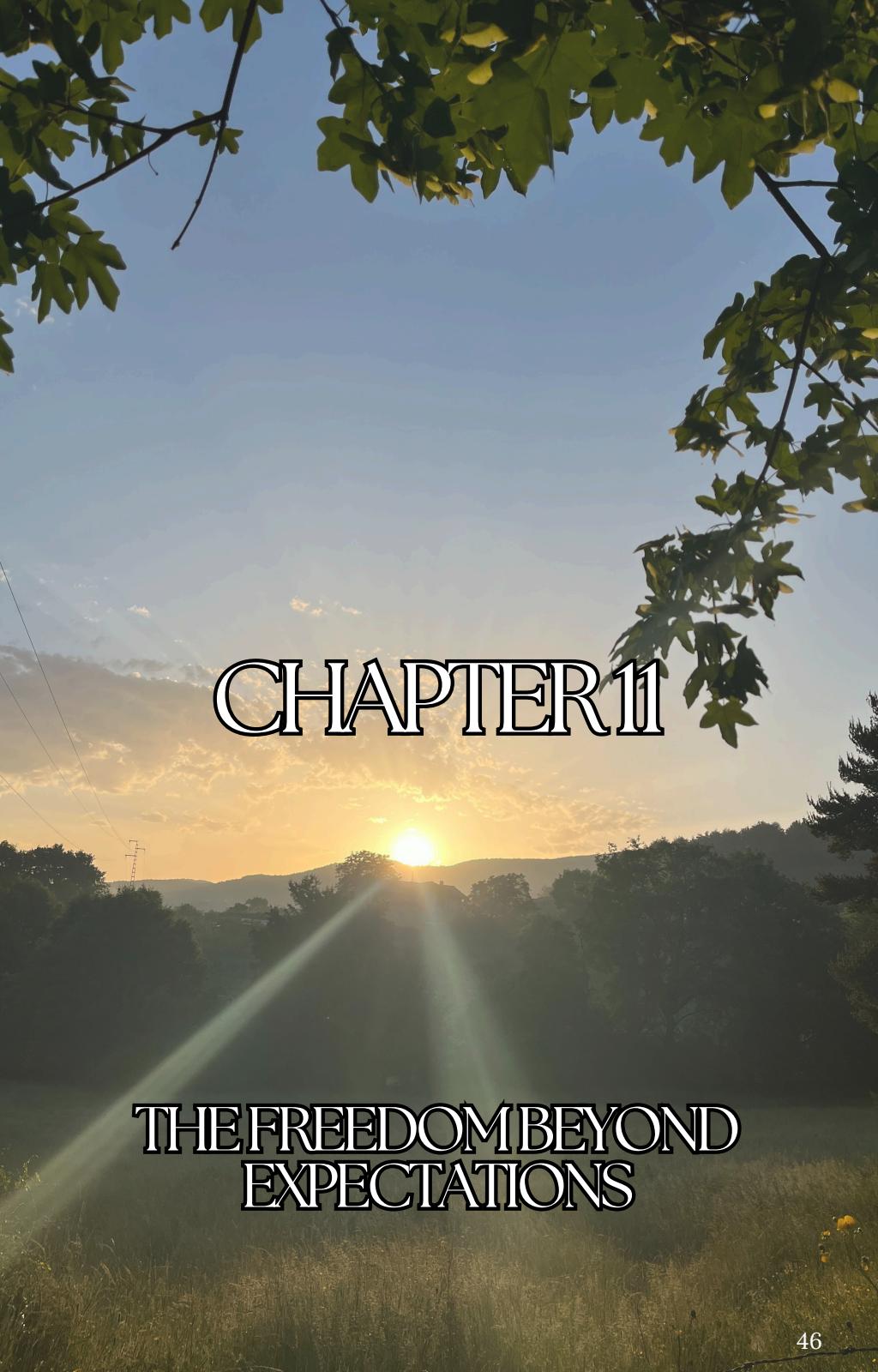
A loving boundary says: I want to meet you fully - and this is what I need to be able to do that.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where is my body asking for more space or protection in connection?
- What does a loving “no” look like for me right now?
- How might my relationships deepen when I honour my own edges with care?



A loving boundary is not distance,  
it's the doorway back to presence



# CHAPTER 11

## THE FREEDOM BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

# 11. THE FREEDOM BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

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There's a part of me that wants to explain myself.  
To make sure no one misunderstands me, or my silence.  
To fix any discomfort they might feel about me.

For years, I carried the weight of wanting to be the "good friend," the "reliable one," the "easy partner."  
That meant quick replies, saying yes to invitations, and smoothing over any moment of tension - even if it meant abandoning myself in the process.

I used to think that being understood meant being safe.  
That if someone truly heard what I meant, I could finally relax.  
So I explained.  
And explained again.  
Until my words grew thin and tired from trying to prove my truth.

But I'm learning that not every truth needs to be spoken immediately.  
And not every truth needs to be understood to be honoured.  
The child in me believed harmony depended on perfect explanations.  
The woman in me knows now: love stays when I stay true to myself - even if no one fully understands what I feel.

Sometimes, the most loving thing I can do is say nothing.  
Not from avoidance, but from trust.  
Trust that others can walk their own path without my constant input.  
Trust that silence can hold more healing than words.  
Trust that I don't have to rescue anyone from their feelings.

This isn't always easy.  
I can feel the urge to type the message, to justify, to smooth things over.  
I can feel the guilt rise when I imagine someone waiting on me.

But each time I pause, I realise something: if my peace depends on pleasing everyone, then I lose myself in the process.  
That's not love - it's self-abandonment.

Slowly, I am learning that silence can also be a form of trust.  
That I don't need to convince anyone in order to exist.  
That sometimes, withholding is the space where authenticity finally has room to breathe.

Sometimes letting go of expectations means disappointing someone in the short term, so I can remain true to myself in the long term.

Sometimes it means letting the silence stretch, trusting that my absence in the moment doesn't erase the connection we have.

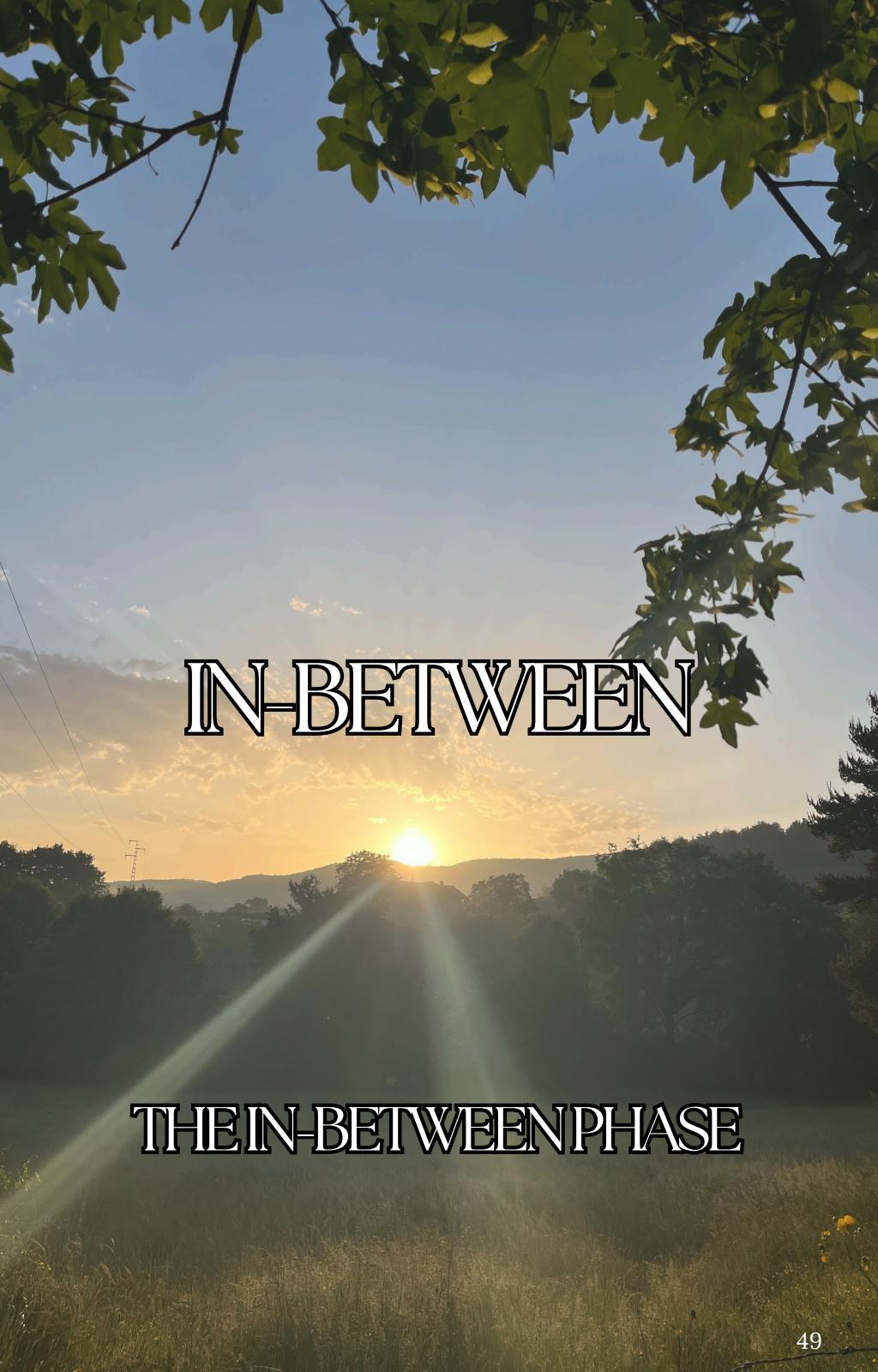
Withholding isn't the absence of love.  
It's the ground on which truth can stand.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where does my silence feel more honest than explaining myself?
- What happens in my body when I stop managing how others feel about me?
- Which connections become clearer or lighter when I no longer force understanding or closeness?



*Sometimes silence says more  
than explanation ever could*



IN-BETWEEN

THE IN-BETWEEN PHASE

# THE IN-BETWEEN PHASE

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There's a particular kind of waiting that feels like standing at the edge of a cliff. You know a leap is coming, but the air hasn't shifted yet.

I call it the *in-between phase*: a space I've found myself in many times since the Camino.

It's not the same as "The In-between Space", which felt like floating in an open hallway with no direction.

This phase carries a different energy.

Less like resting in spaciousness, and more like standing at the threshold of change.

It's the moment before the wind changes, when everything is still, yet charged with possibility.

Sometimes I notice my body already preparing as if my arms want to open, ready to let myself fall when the moment comes.

Not forcing, not jumping too soon, but softening into the trust that gravity itself will carry me.

I notice it even in the ordinary moments - on a boat, in the car, at an airport.

Moments of not yet here, but no longer there.

The sound of voices in the background, the smell of coffee, the weight of the journey.

Travelling is already an activity in itself, it's not necessary to add anything.

Change is already on its way.

Sometimes I wonder if life itself is one big in-between - a constant becoming, where we are always arriving and never fully arrived.

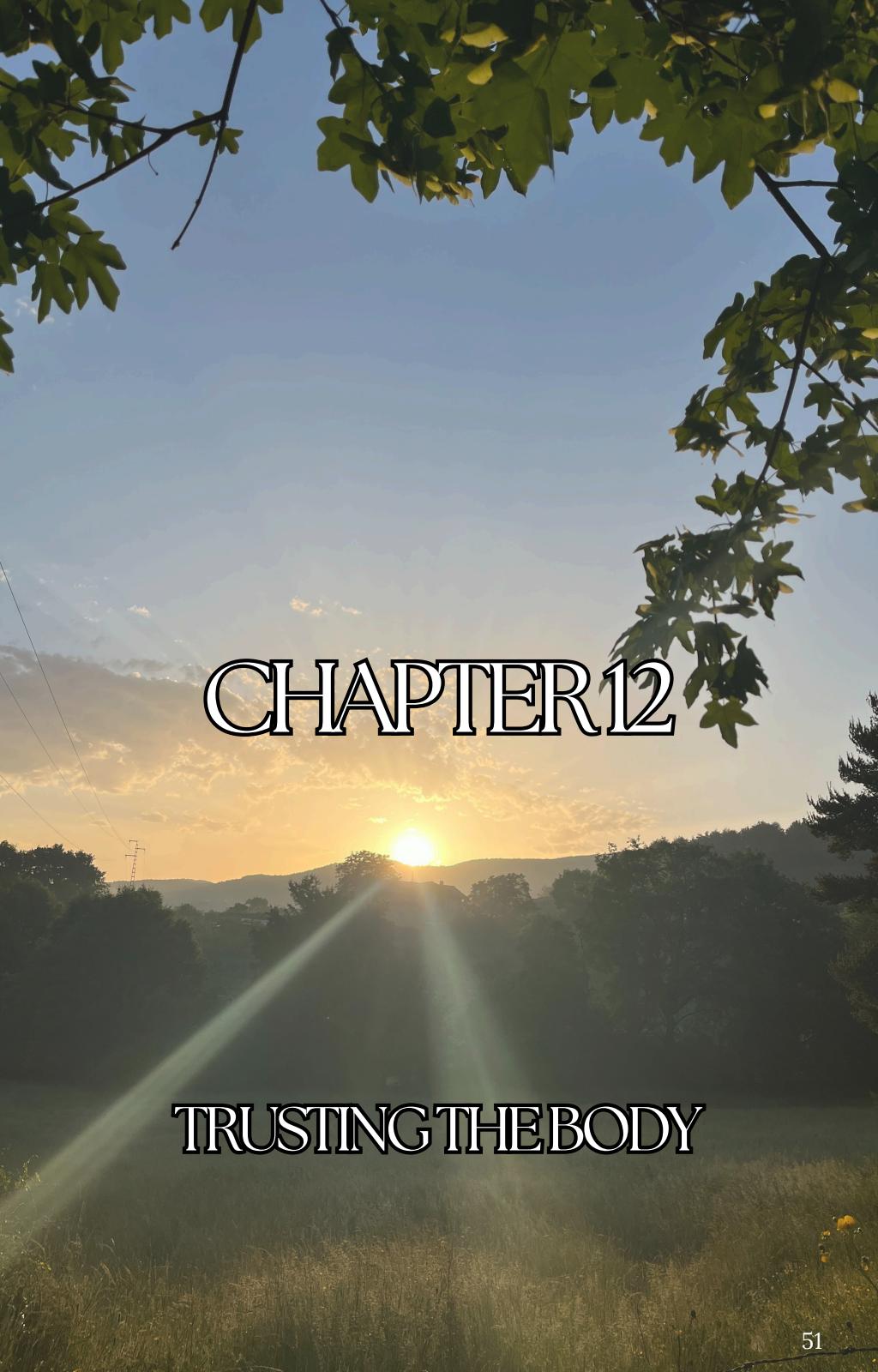
It's tempting to fill the time with productivity and to rush the unfolding.

But I've started to see this phase as a kind of invisible preparation, a rewiring of sorts.

The work here is quiet: trusting that something is forming beneath the surface, even if I can't see it yet. Like sitting on a train, knowing it will arrive at its station without me having to push the tracks forward.

Life will call me forward when it's ready.

Until then, my only job is to keep my feet on the ground, my arms open, and my heart willing to be moved.

A photograph of a sunset over a forested hillside. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright, golden glow and creating lens flare. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there's a field of tall grass. The top of the image is framed by the branches and leaves of a tree.

# CHAPTER 12

## TRUSTING THE BODY

# 12. TRUSTING THE BODY

---

For a long time, I believed clarity had to come from my mind.  
My mind wanted steps, reasons, explanations, a plan.  
But slowly, I've learned that the real compass lives deeper - in the body.

The body doesn't speak in arguments.  
It speaks in sensations. Tightness in the chest, a knot in the stomach, a sudden heaviness, a quiet contraction.  
These are not problems to fix, but signals to honour.  
When I cross my own boundaries, my body tells me first.

There's usually a moment of resistance, a "no" that whispers before my mind tries to push me through.  
When I give myself permission to listen, I realise: the body is never against me.  
It's always on my side.

The same is true with emotions.  
An emotion is simply energy moving through. But when I resist it, cover it with stories, or analyse it too soon, I make it heavier than it is.  
Staying with the raw feeling - letting the tears come, noticing the tightness, even holding myself like I would a child - is what allows it to soften and pass.

Often, what I find underneath is not something new, but something old:  
a younger part of me that was never fully heard, seen, or held.  
When I meet her now, not with judgment but with space, I realise this is the real work of love.

Not fixing, but witnessing.  
Not rushing, but allowing.

Trusting the body is not always easy.  
It asks me to pause when the mind wants to push.  
It asks me to rest when the world says "keep going."  
It asks me to feel when the ego says "move on."

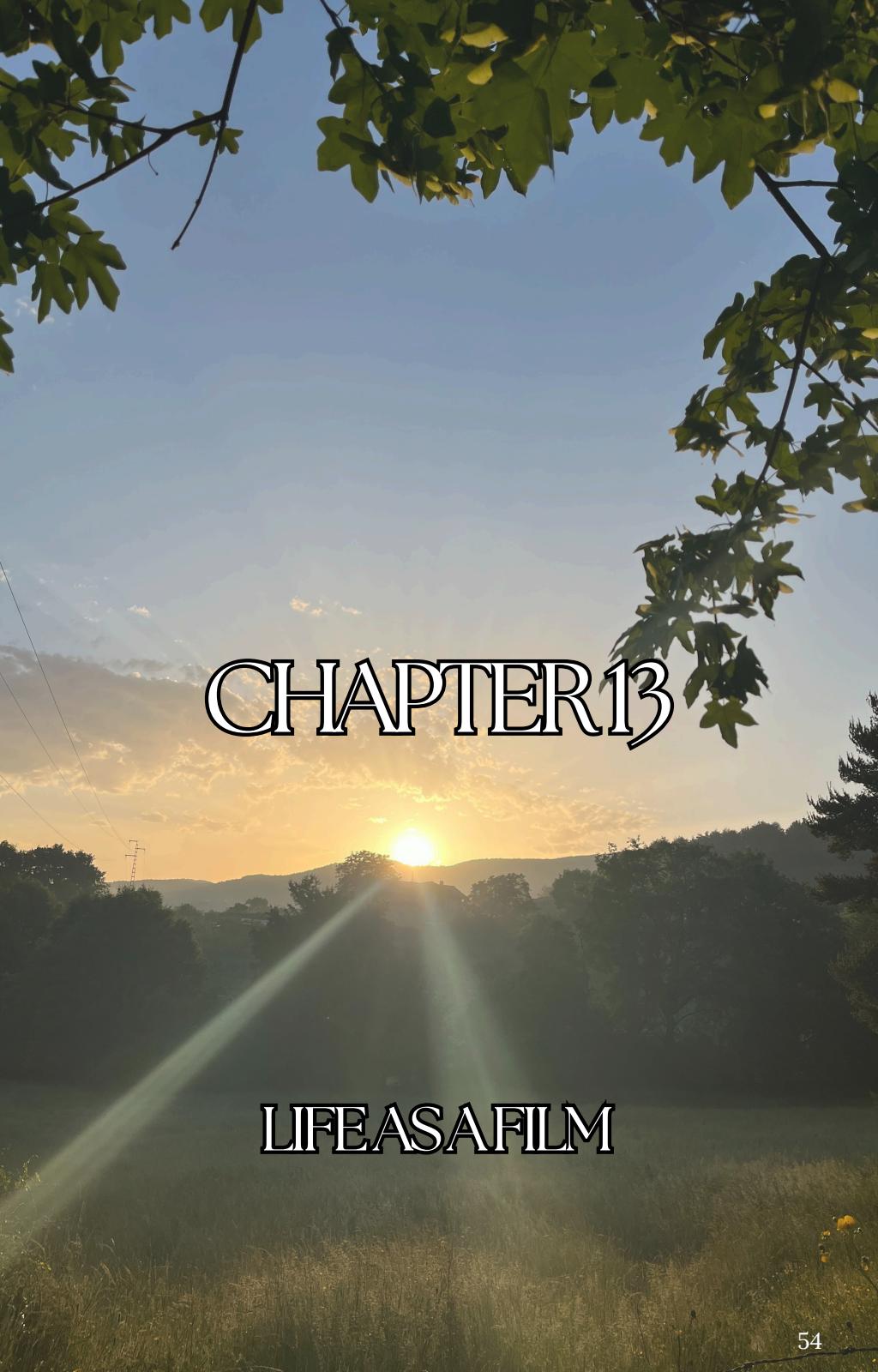
But every time I listen, I discover the same thing:  
The body is not the obstacle.  
It is the doorway back to truth.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When was the last time my body said “no”, even when my mind tried to push through?
- Where do I notice my emotions in my body right now and can I allow them without a story?
- If I held myself like a child needing comfort, what would I give myself in this moment?



*Your body always tells the truth,  
the question is whether you dare*

A photograph of a sunset over a rural landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the hills and fields. In the foreground, the branches and leaves of a large tree frame the scene. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with some clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

# CHAPTER 13

## LIFE AS A FILM

# 13. LIFE AS A FILM

---

Sometimes it feels as if I am living inside a film.

I play the role of the main character, moving through scenes that unfold one by one. Other people appear as supporting roles, landscapes change as backdrops, and every day brings a new act.

But there is more. I've started to see that I am not only the character inside the story. I am also the screen on which the story appears.

The still background that never changes, no matter what happens in the scene.

When I forget this, I get lost in my character. I zoom in too much.

I believe I am only the one who struggles, who worries, who wants to know the ending. In those moments, the film feels overwhelming, because I mistake the storyline for the whole truth.

But when I remember, perspective shifts.

I see the movement of life happening on the screen of awareness, not to the screen itself. The story keeps unfolding, but I don't have to fight for control.

It's a bit like living in a film where I'm the actor, but the script is written one scene at a time.

When I stop trying to force my own lines, I can hear the subtle stage directions: "Pause here." "Turn left." "Wait a little longer." "Say yes now."

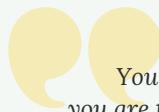
I don't need to know the whole plot in advance, the next scene always arrives at the perfect time.

My only task is to stay present in the one I'm in.

The deeper truth is: I am not just the actor. I am also the silent projector, the light that makes the whole film possible. The story may change a thousand times, but the light is always the same.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where in my life do I confuse myself with the “character” in the film, forgetting the wider screen I am?
- What happens when I treat my current situation as just one unfolding scene, instead of the whole story?
- Can I notice the “stage directions” of life, the subtle cues that guide me without a full script?



*You are not the story on the screen,  
you are the light that makes the story visible*

# CHAPTER 14

LETTING GO

# 14. LETTING GO

---

Over the years, I've found guidance in teachers who all point toward the same essence I keep discovering in myself.

A Course in Miracles showed me that peace comes from choosing love over fear.

Michael A. Singer reminded me that the deepest freedom lies in surrender.

Mooji, Eckhart Tolle, and Gangaji helped me recognise the quiet awareness beneath every story.

After the Camino, I discovered Adyashanti.

The way he speaks about letting go felt like someone naming what my body already knew.

He says letting go tends to arrive in three ways:

1. Life becomes too painful not to let go.
2. A situation demands that we stop pushing and surrender into what is.
3. Or, most beautifully, letting go arises from love - from trusting life so deeply that release becomes natural.

I've seen all three in my own journey.

On the Camino, there was a moment with a man who ignored my boundaries. I said I wanted to return to the hostel. He kept insisting I stay - in a way that ignored my no and felt quietly manipulative.

Fear rose - the fear of disappointing him, the fear of losing control, the fear of repeating old patterns of pleasing to stay safe.

Letting go, in that moment, wasn't passive.

It was both: releasing the belief that he could control me, and releasing the reflex to make myself small to avoid discomfort.

It was the second kind of letting go - life demanding that I stop negotiating and stand firm in my truth.

But letting go isn't only born in big crossroads.

Letting go also shows up in the most ordinary places.

For years I planned everything ahead of time - bags packed days early, backup plans for my backup plans, trying to stay one step ahead of life so nothing could surprise me.

It gave me the illusion of safety.  
Now I let things unfold more naturally.

Sometimes I pack last-minute.  
Sometimes I trust that I don't need to prepare every scenario before it happens.  
It sounds small, but it's the same shift: trusting the movement of life more than my fear of losing control.

And perhaps the deepest letting go has been around money.  
For years I clung to the belief that safety came from earning enough, saving enough, planning for a future I couldn't see.  
I kept taking small jobs that drained me, afraid that my own creations would never support me.

Letting go here didn't mean being careless.  
It meant seeing how deeply fear was shaping my choices.  
It meant trusting that life could provide in ways my mind couldn't plan.  
On the Camino I carried only a small backpack - nothing extra, nothing "just in case." And somehow I always had what I needed.

I'm learning to live that way now too.  
Not hoarding for a far-away someday - still honouring what I have, but not organising my whole life around the fear of not having enough.  
Not shaping my life around a pension I may never reach.  
But letting my real work grow in its own timing, and trusting that what is meant for me will meet me at the right moment.

It reaches into my work as well.  
Sometimes plans fall away, timelines dissolve, or structures shift — like when a retreat location closes, or when a project pauses before I expected it.  
The old me would panic, scramble to fix, secure, produce.  
Letting go now means recognising that what falls away is not a loss, but space.  
Space for the next true movement.  
Space for the offering that wants to come - not the one I force into existence.

From fear on the Camino, to the tasks in daily life, to the shifting shape of my work - it is always the same lesson:

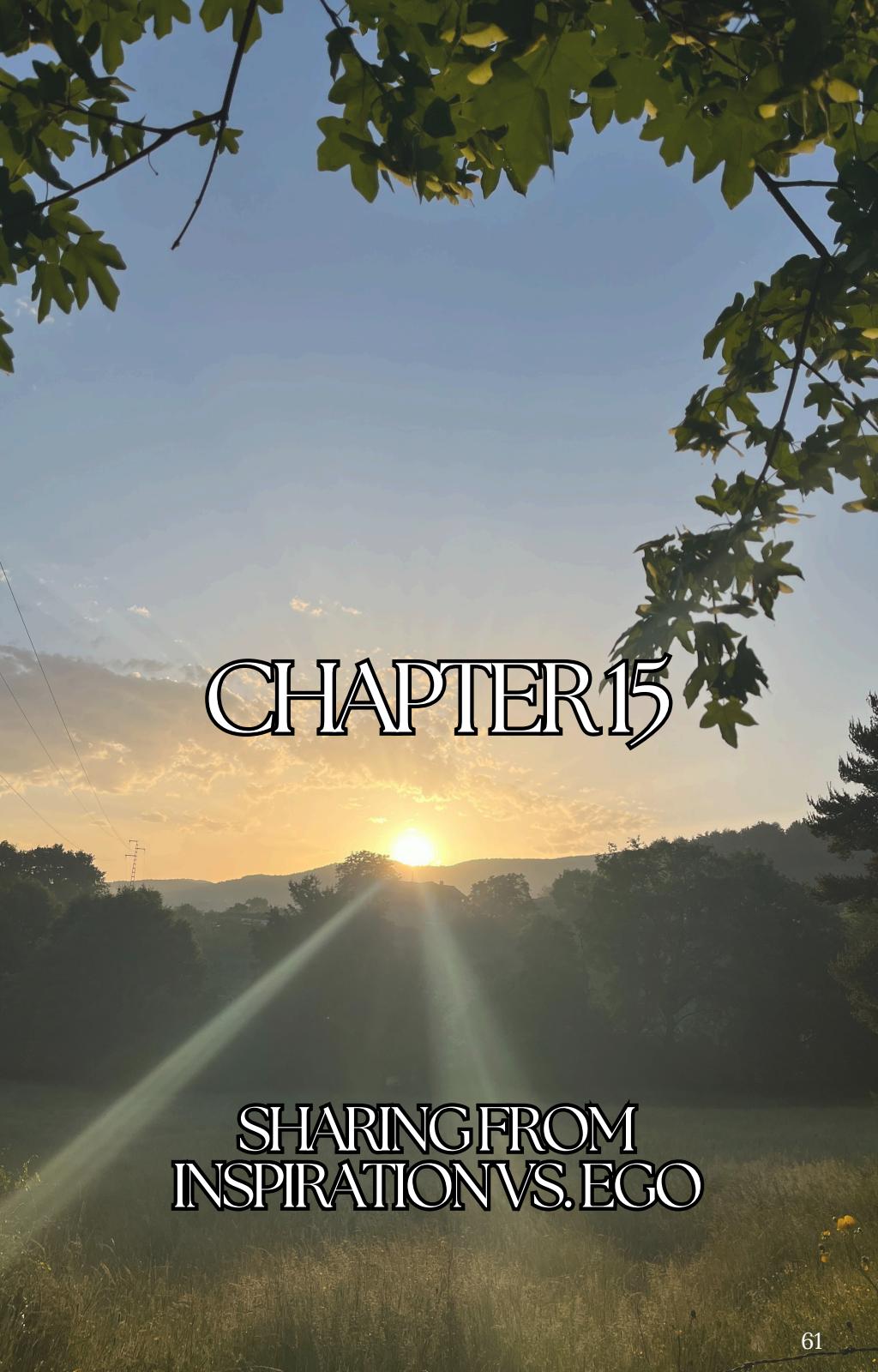
Letting go isn't doing nothing.  
It's releasing the push, the grip, the control... so life can finally lead - and I can walk with it, step by step.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Where in my life am I still holding on out of fear, instead of trust?
- What would it look like to pause my effort to control, even for one breath?
- Can I remember a moment when letting go revealed a deeper strength or truth?



*Letting go is not the end of life,  
it's the beginning of being carried*

A photograph of a sunset over a forested hillside. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright orange glow and creating lens flare. The sky is a mix of blue and orange. In the foreground, there are green trees and bushes. The text 'CHAPTER 15' is overlaid on the image.

# CHAPTER 15

**SHARING FROM  
INSPIRATION VS. EGO**

# 15. SHARING FROM INSPIRATION VS. EGO

---

There are moments when something rises in me that wants to be shared: a story, a thought, an image. It comes like a wave, and when I say yes to it, it feels light and unforced.

That's what I call sharing from inspiration.  
It's not about who will read it, or how it will be received.  
It's a simple release, like breathing out.

But sometimes, the urge to share comes with a quieter hook:  
"Will they like this?" "Will I look wise?" "Will I regret it later?"  
That's ego-sharing.

The tricky thing is, it's not always a clean divide.  
I can start from inspiration and still feel the ego creeping in afterwards -  
checking, refreshing, replaying the moment.  
Other times, I feel the fear of the ego right alongside the truth of the share, like  
they're walking next to each other.

It's not a straight line from ego to truth or truth to ego, it's more like a dance.  
A ping-pong between the part of me that simply wants to express, and the part  
that's looking for safety, approval, or control.

I've learned that the practice isn't about erasing the ego completely.  
It's about noticing when it shows up, meeting it without judgment, and gently  
returning to the deeper place the share came from.

Neither inspiration nor ego is "wrong."  
Even the ego's interference can be a mirror, showing me where my old wounds  
still live, or where I'm still learning to trust my own voice.

The real freedom comes when I can hold both at once: the messy human part  
that wants to be liked, and the timeless part that simply wants to speak.

Even in writing this book, I notice how both inspiration and ego live side by side.  
One moment I trust the flow of what wants to come through me, and the next I  
hear the voice of fear: "Is this good enough?" "Will people understand?"

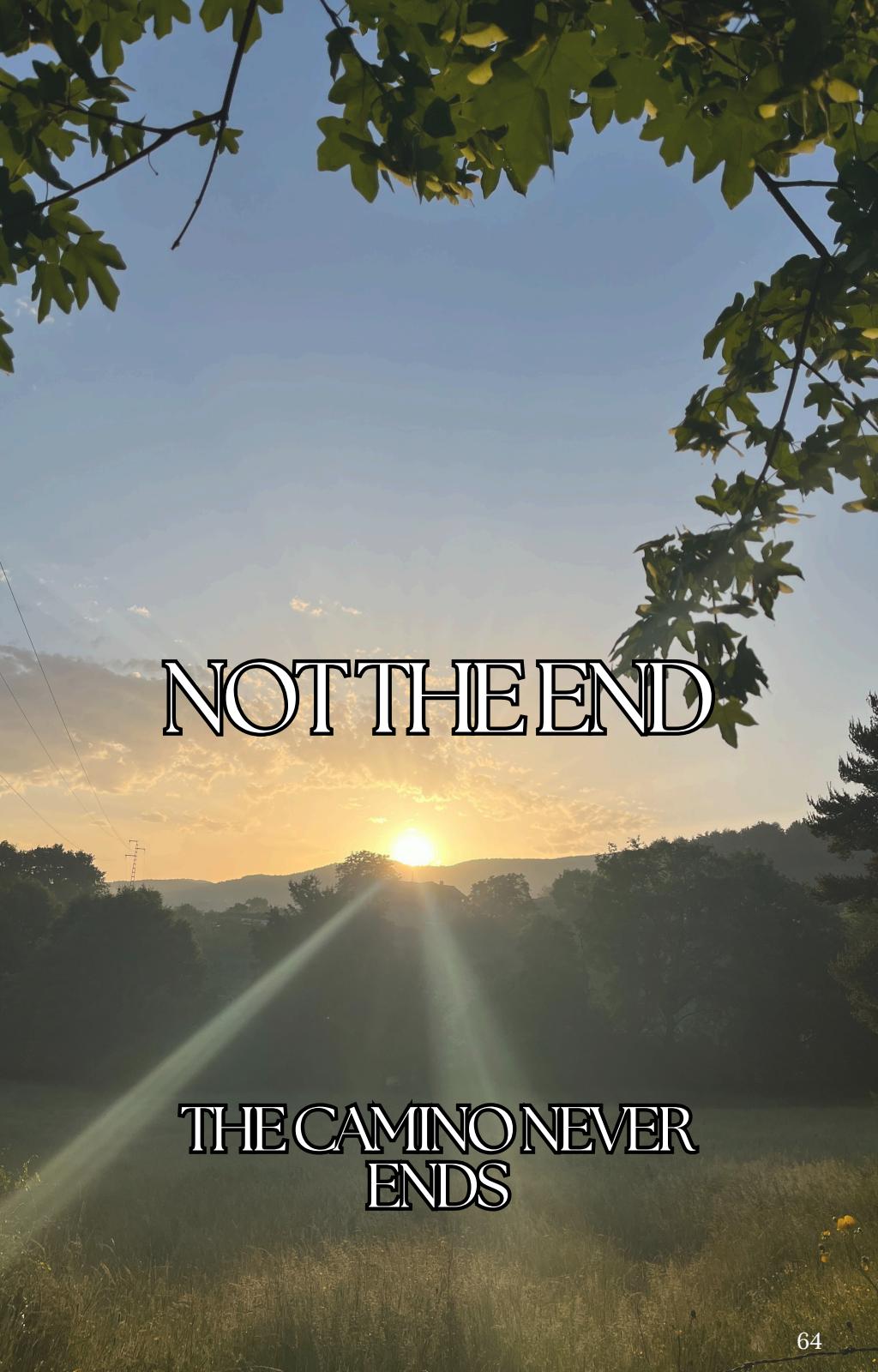
Maybe that's exactly the embodiment of these insights - letting what is true now be expressed, while remembering I don't have to believe the doubts that arise alongside it.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When I feel the urge to share something, can I pause and sense where it's coming from: inspiration, ego, or both?
- What changes in me when I allow ego's doubts to be present, but choose not to follow them?
- Can I recall a moment when sharing from pure inspiration felt light, effortless, and free? What made it different?



*True expression is not the absence of fear - it's the willingness to speak anyway, from the deeper place within*



NOT THE END

THE CAMINO NEVER  
ENDS

# THE CAMINO NEVER ENDS

---

*This book is not a conclusion.*

*It's a snapshot of one stretch of the road.*

*A season of deep integration after the Camino de Santiago, where the outer journey gave way to an inner one.*

*The words you've read were not written from a place of having "arrived."*

*They were gathered along the path, in moments of clarity, discomfort, laughter, and stillness.*

*They are the stones I've placed along my own way - not as markers of where to stop, but as invitations to keep going.*

*The Camino didn't end when I reached Santiago.*

*It didn't end when I came home.*

*It continues in my kitchen, in my conversations, in my pauses, and in my questions.*

*And so I keep walking - with empty hands, open eyes, and a heart willing to be surprised.*

*Because the Camino of life is not a destination.*

*It's the way we meet each moment... again and again and again.*

*To be continued...*

*Buen Camino.*

# THANKYOU FORWALKINGWITHME



*If these words touched something in you,  
I'd love to stay connected*

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