

Bran *the* **Heartwise**

**BY JULIE KIRCHNER
MA, LMFT, RPT**

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Dedication

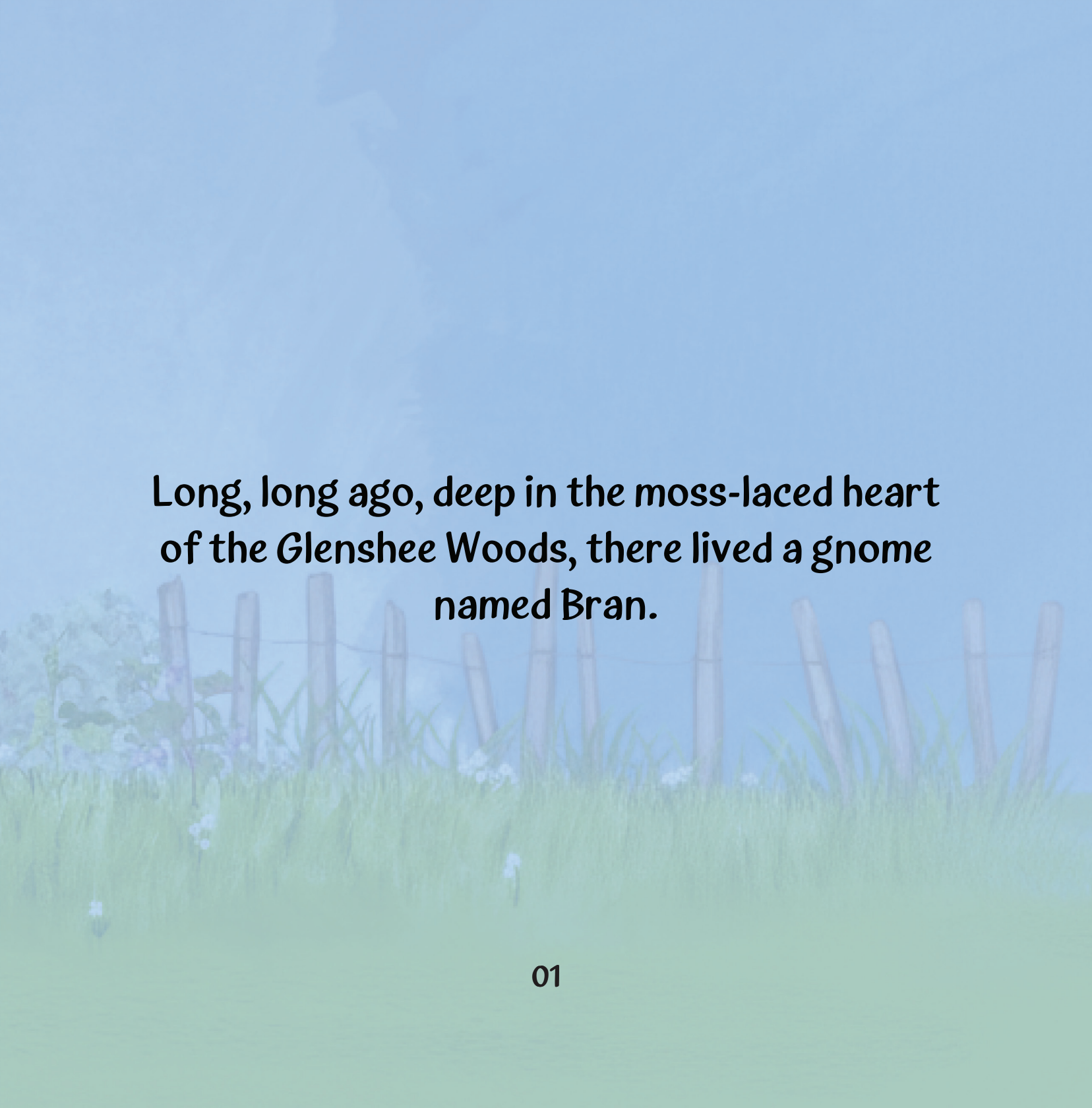
To all the children I have had the privilege of working with over the years, whose hearts and minds have shown me how deeply the world can be felt.

Your courage, wonder, and unique perspectives continue to inspire me every day.

Acknowledgment

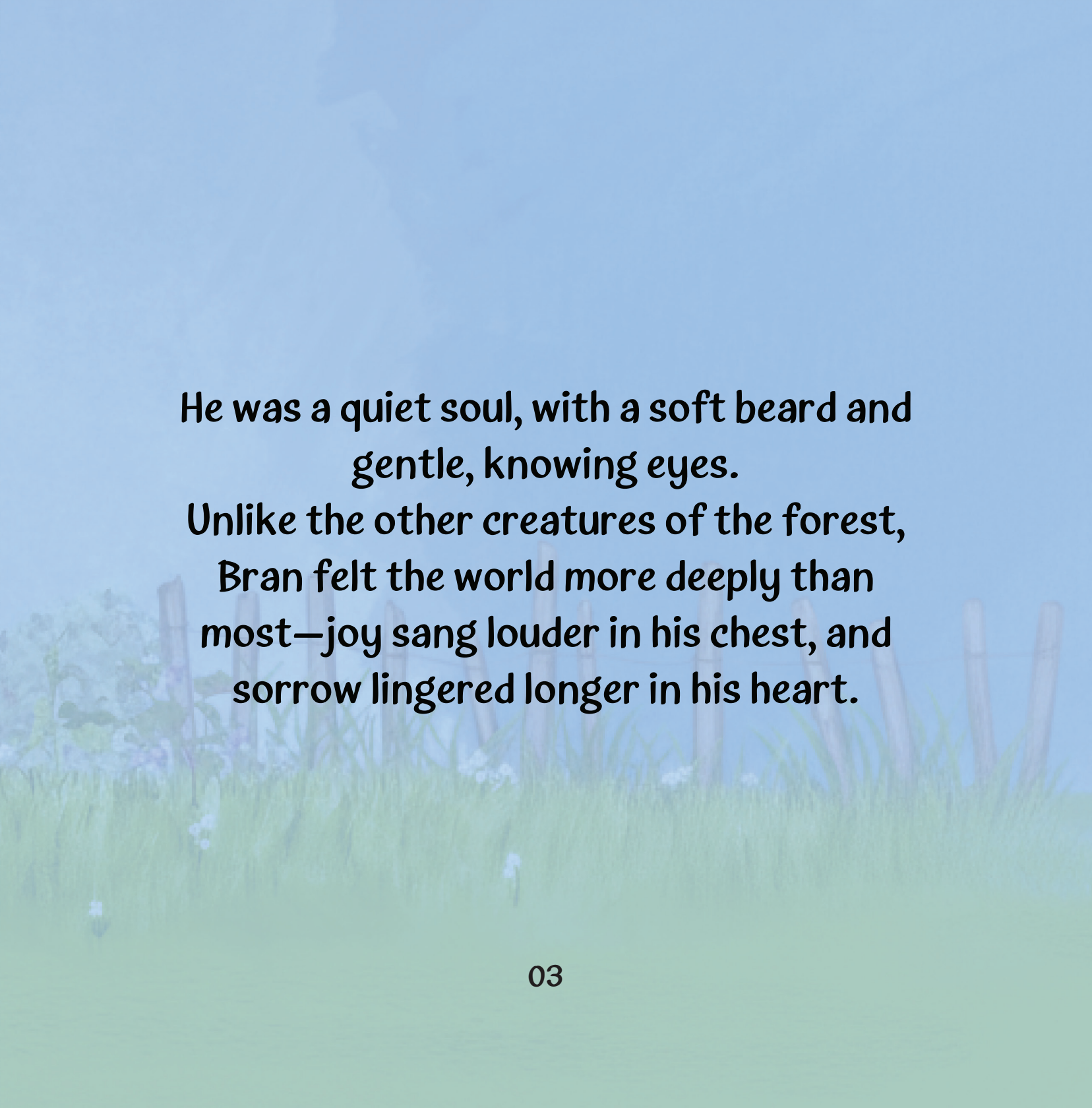
I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who helped bring this book to life.

A special thank you to my family for their unwavering love, support, and encouragement throughout this journey. Your belief in me has made all the difference.

The background of the page is a soft, blue-toned landscape. In the foreground, there is a wooden fence made of vertical posts and horizontal rails, partially obscured by tall green grass and small white flowers. In the background, a large, dark silhouette of a tree is visible against a light blue sky. The overall atmosphere is misty and serene.

**Long, long ago, deep in the moss-laced heart
of the *Glenshee Woods*, there lived a gnome
named Bran.**

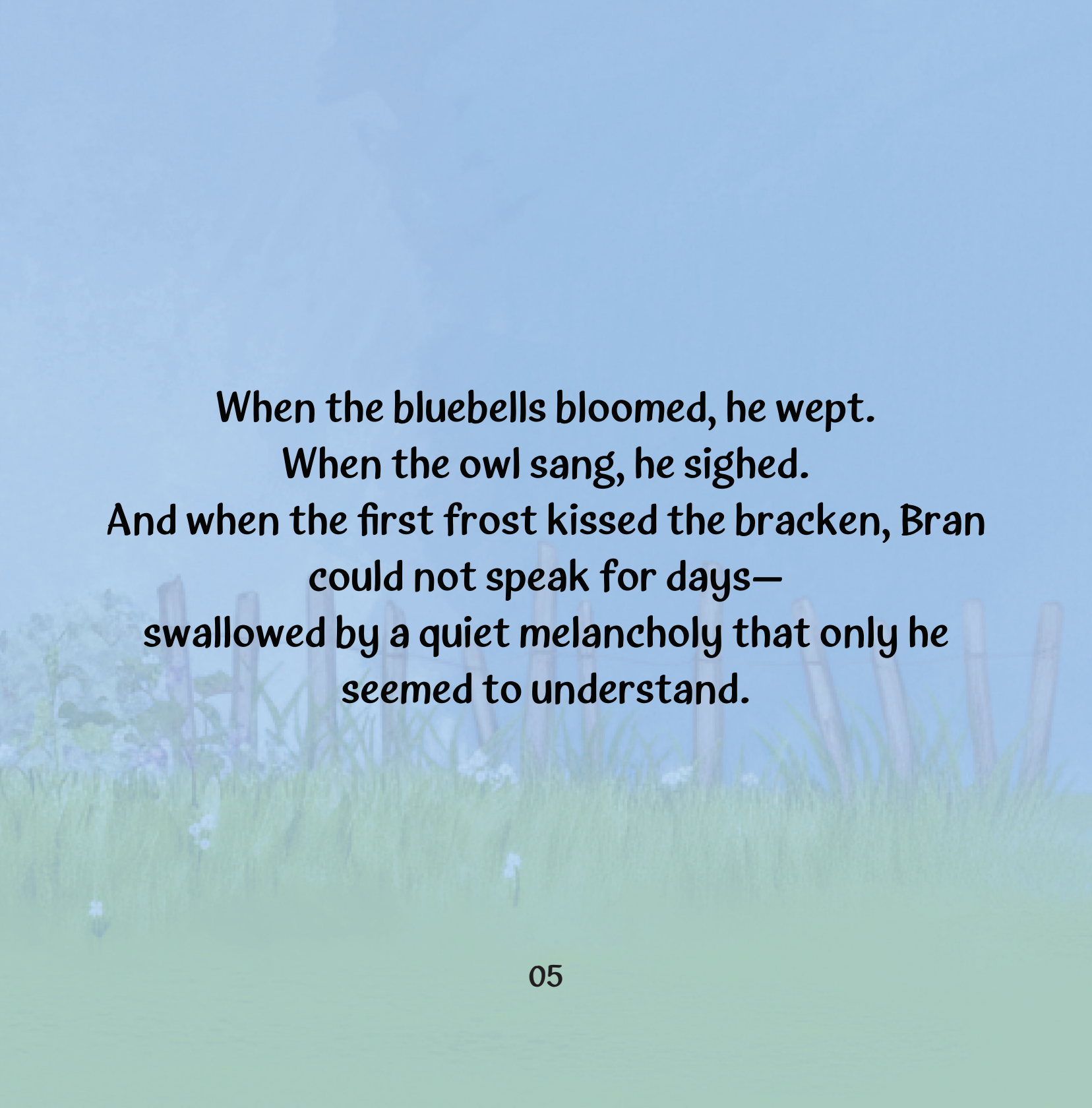




He was a quiet soul, with a soft beard and
gentle, knowing eyes.

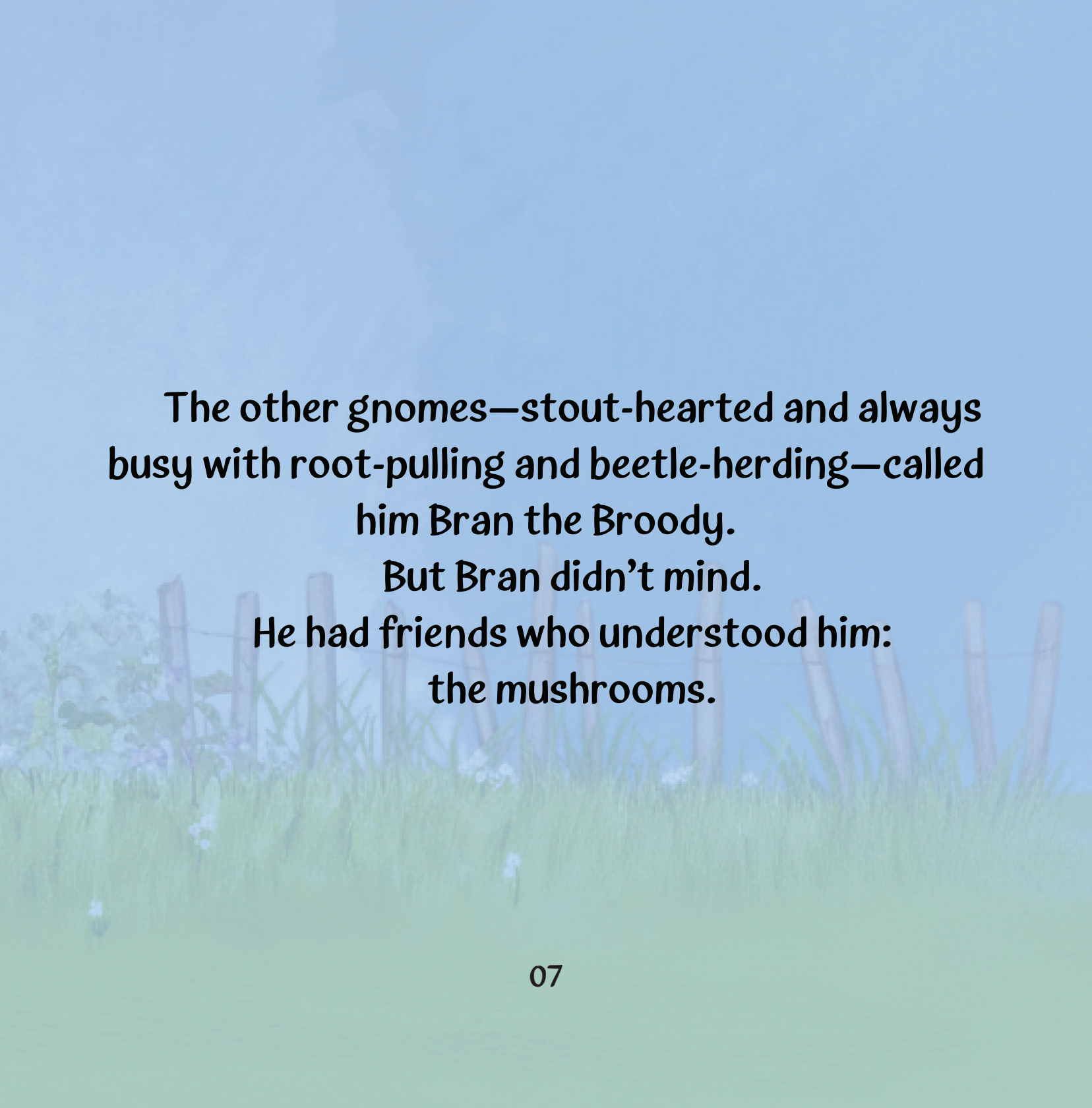
Unlike the other creatures of the forest,
Bran felt the world more deeply than
most—joy sang louder in his chest, and
sorrow lingered longer in his heart.





When the bluebells bloomed, he wept.
When the owl sang, he sighed.
And when the first frost kissed the bracken, Bran
could not speak for days—
swallowed by a quiet melancholy that only he
seemed to understand.



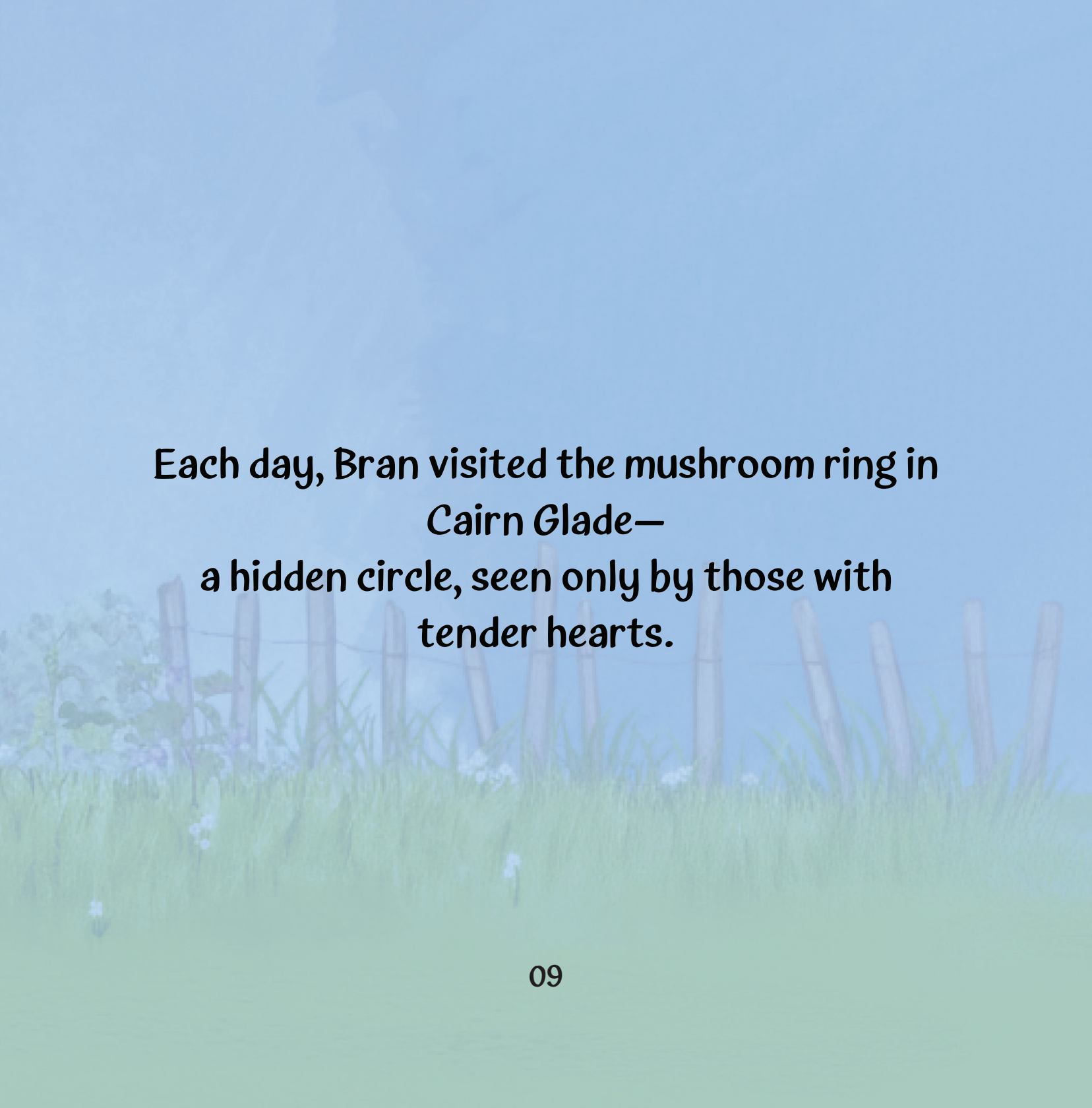


The other gnomes—stout-hearted and always busy with root-pulling and beetle-herding—called him Bran the Broody.

But Bran didn't mind.

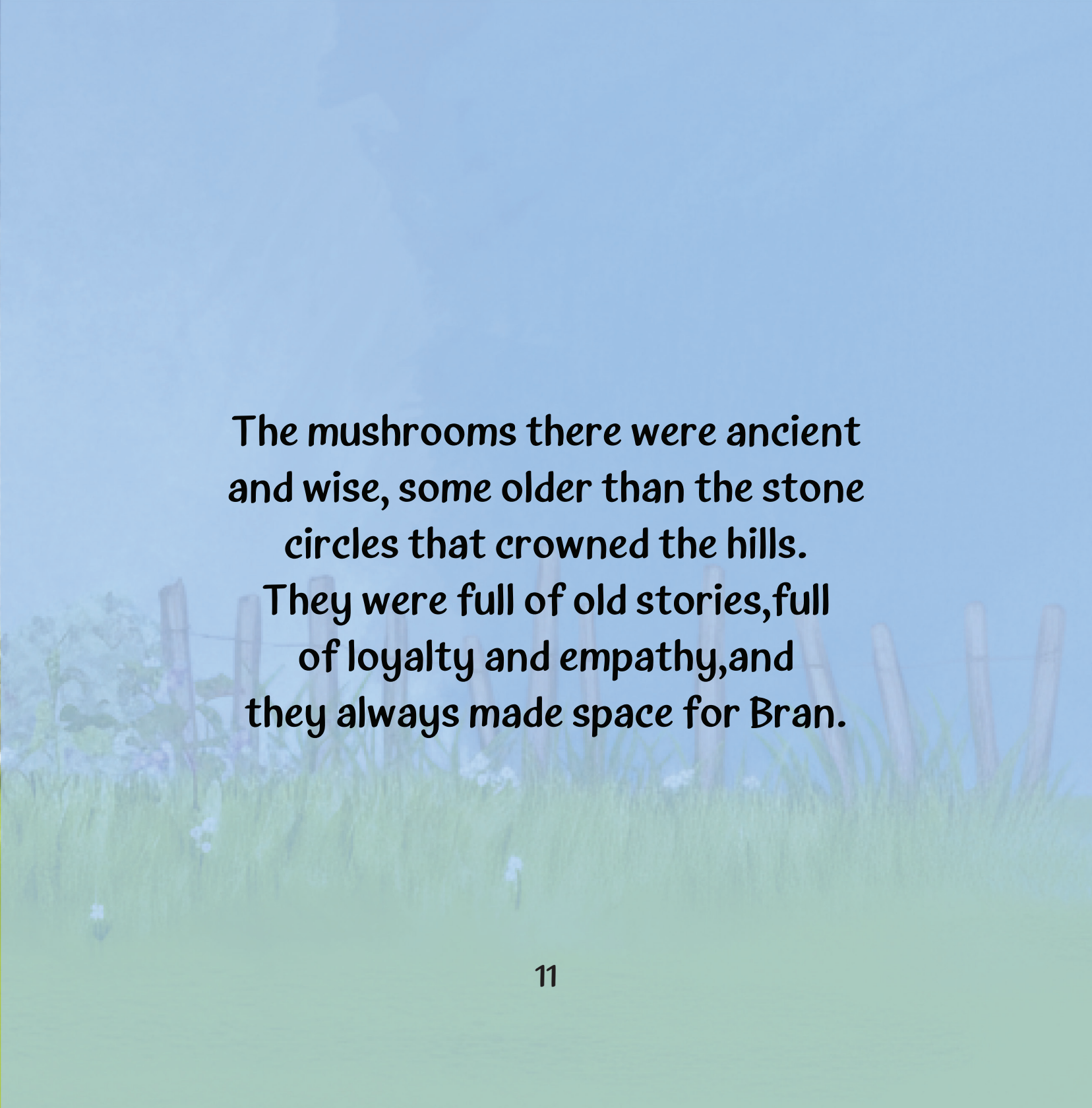
He had friends who understood him:
the mushrooms.



The background of the page is a soft, blue-toned landscape. In the foreground, there is a stone wall with several vertical posts. Behind the wall, there is a large stone archway, possibly a gate or a bridge. The scene is misty and atmospheric, with a large, faint stone archway visible in the background. The overall color palette is dominated by light blues and greens.

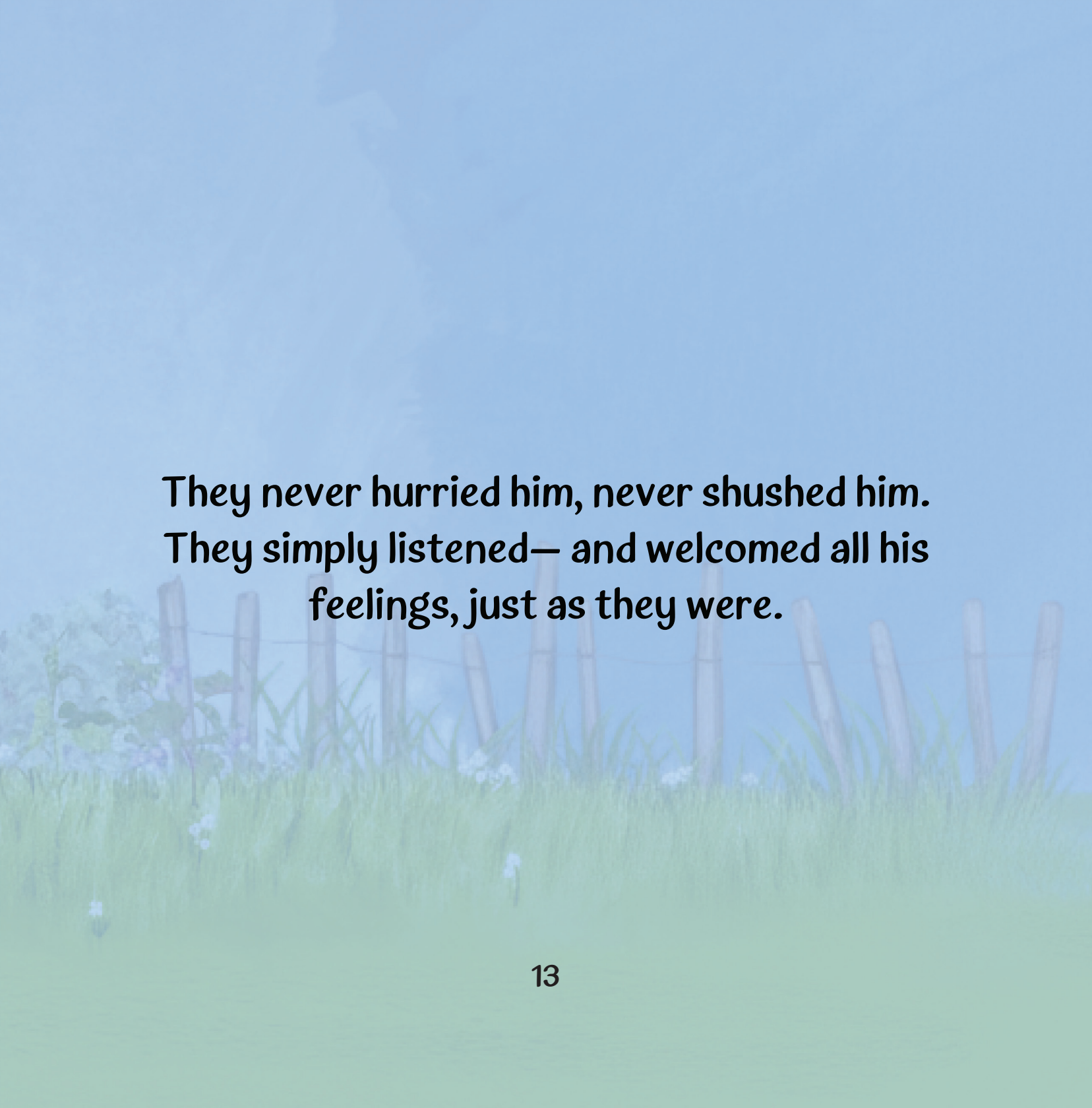
Each day, Bran visited the mushroom ring in
Cairn Glade—
a hidden circle, seen only by those with
tender hearts.



The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of a rural landscape. In the upper portion, a stone circle is visible on a hillside, partially shrouded in mist. The lower portion shows a wooden fence with vertical posts and a wire, set against a field of tall green grass and small white flowers. The overall color palette is muted, with a light blue sky and a pale green ground.

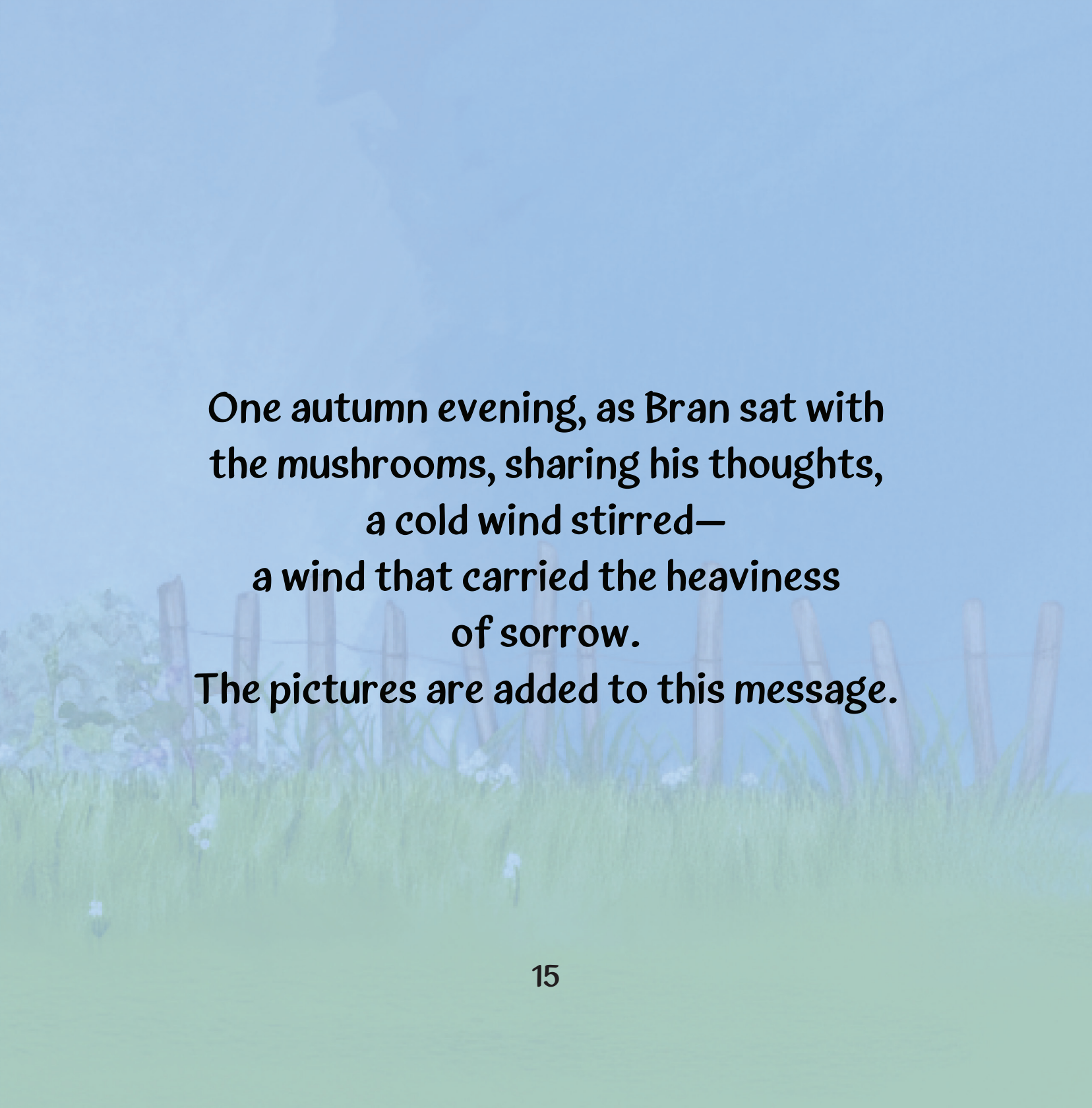
**The mushrooms there were ancient
and wise, some older than the stone
circles that crowned the hills.
They were full of old stories, full
of loyalty and empathy, and
they always made space for Bran.**





**They never hurried him, never shushed him.
They simply listened— and welcomed all his
feelings, just as they were.**

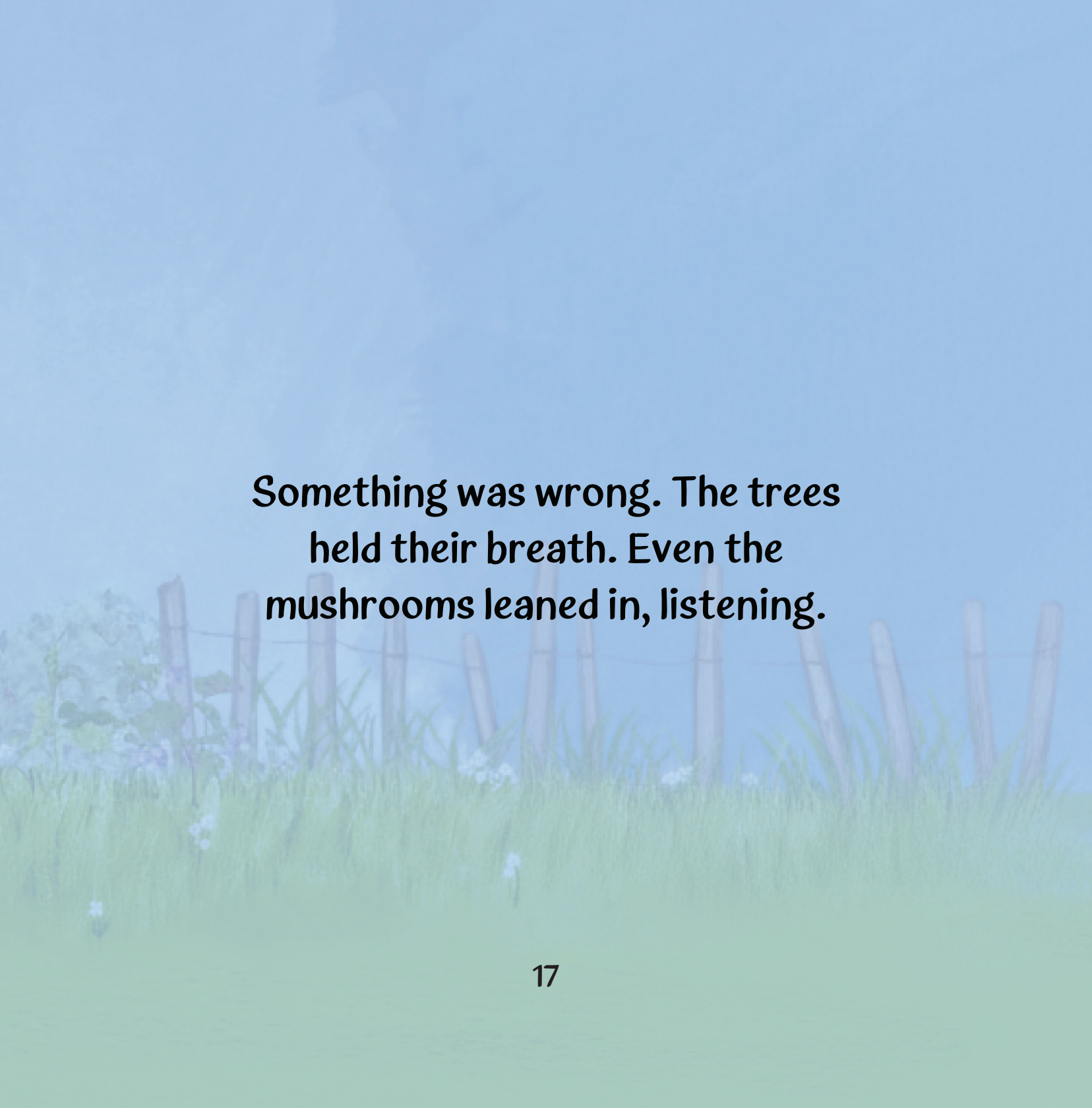




One autumn evening, as Bran sat with
the mushrooms, sharing his thoughts,
a cold wind stirred—
a wind that carried the heaviness
of sorrow.

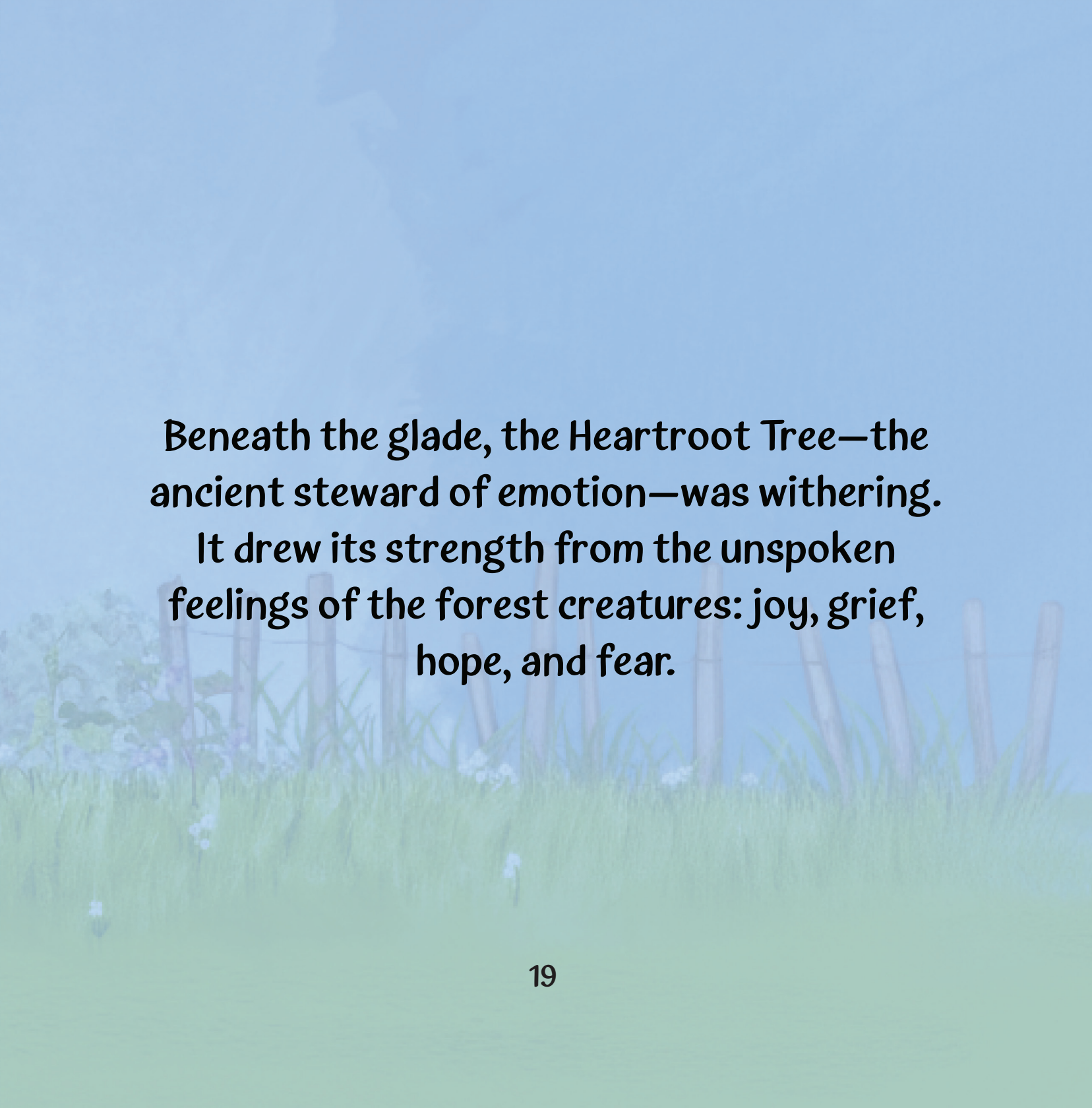
The pictures are added to this message.



The background of the page is a soft, blue-toned landscape. In the foreground, there is a green field with several small white flowers. A wooden fence with vertical posts and a thin wire runs across the middle ground. The background is a hazy, light blue sky with faint silhouettes of trees or hills. The overall mood is quiet and mysterious.

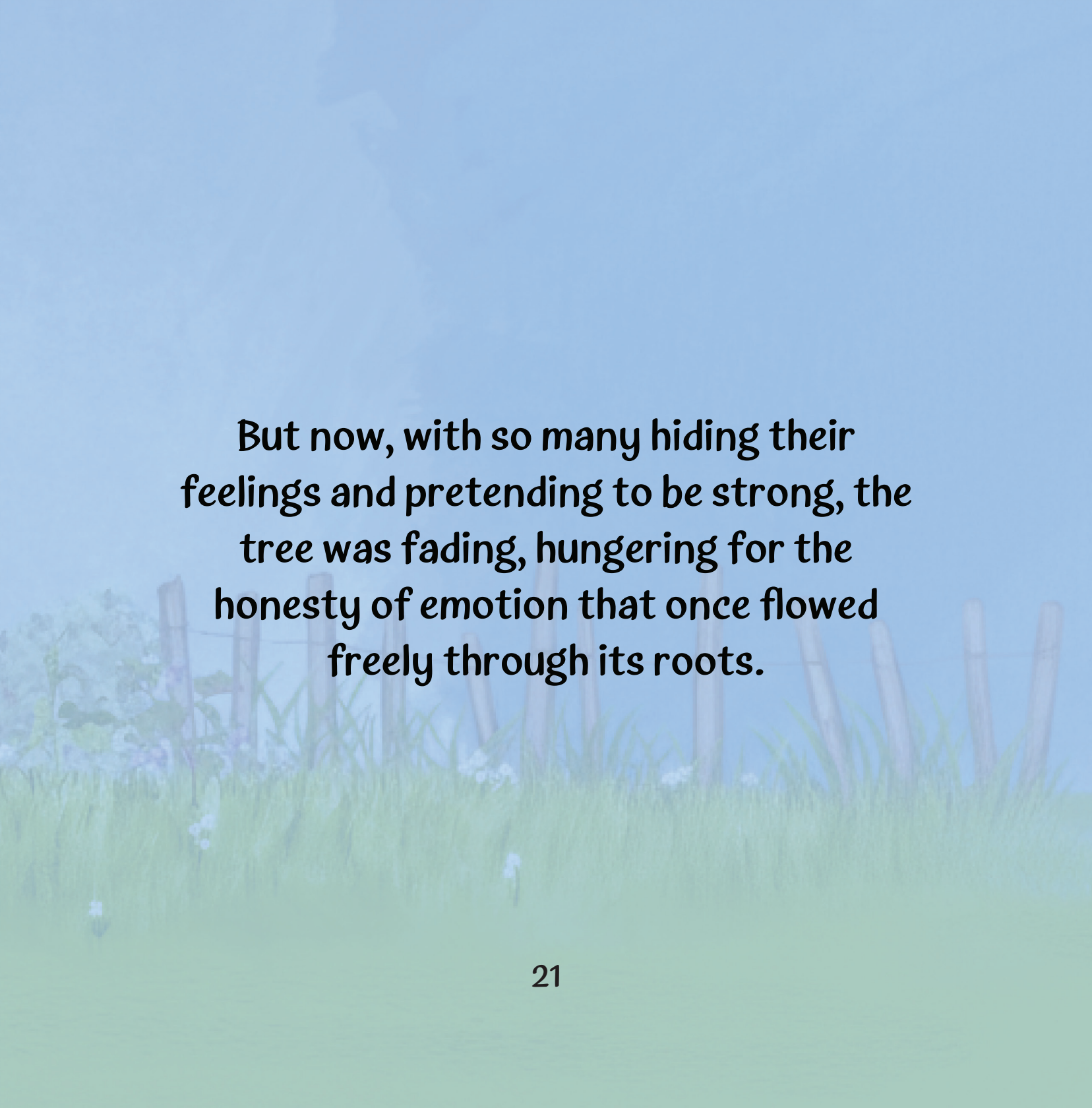
**Something was wrong. The trees
held their breath. Even the
mushrooms leaned in, listening.**





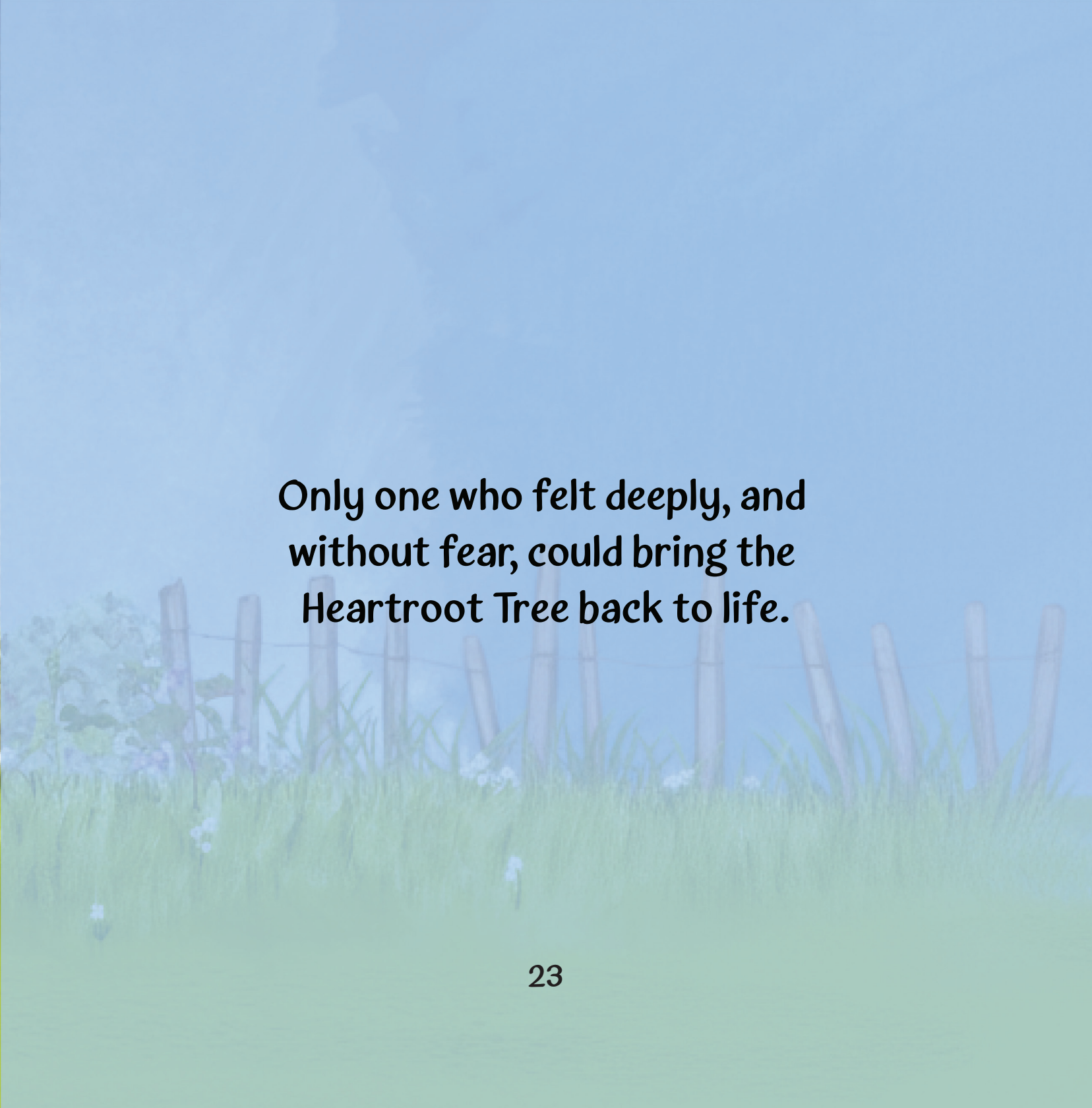
Beneath the glade, the Heartroot Tree—the ancient steward of emotion—was withering. It drew its strength from the unspoken feelings of the forest creatures: joy, grief, hope, and fear.





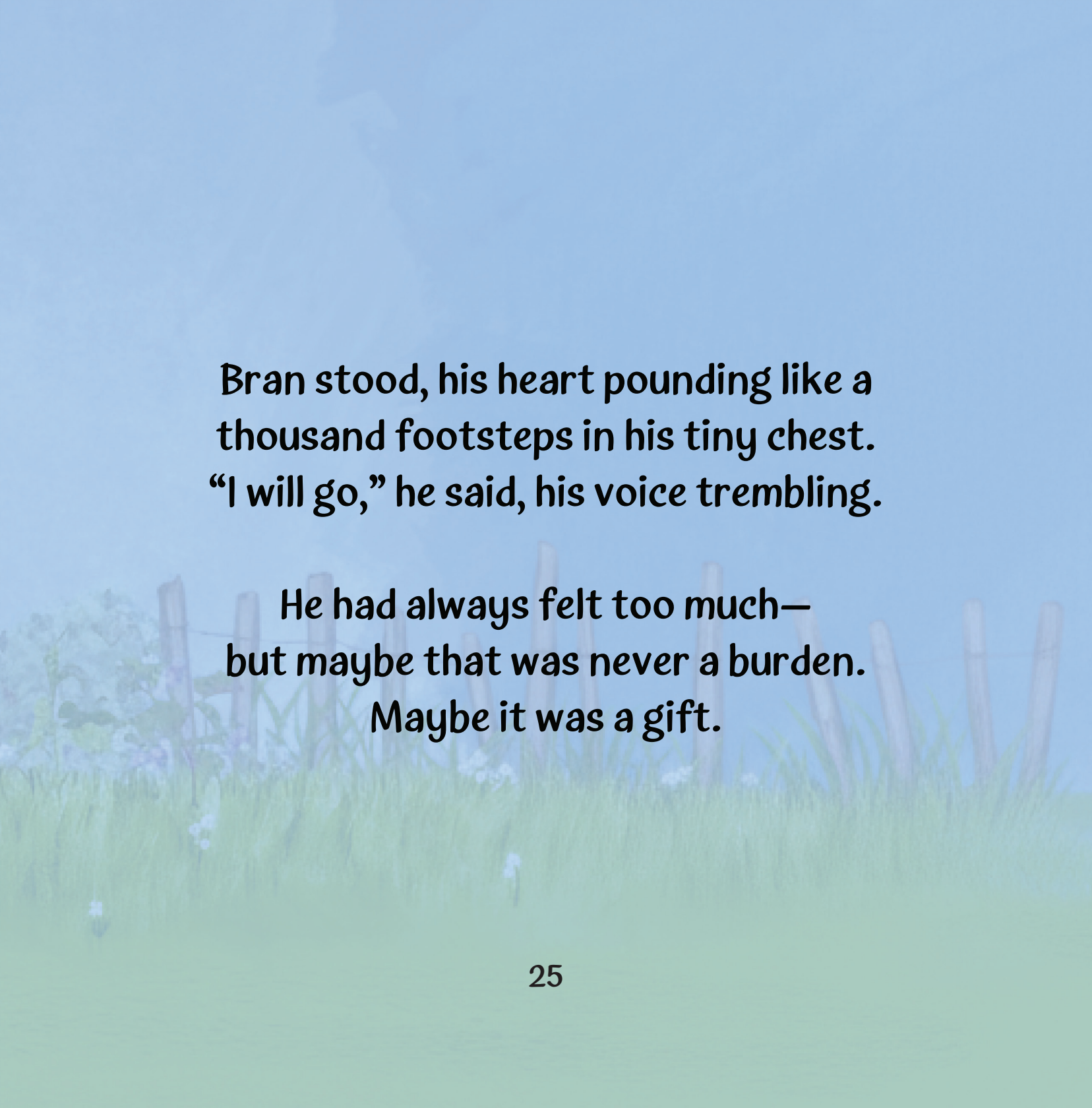
But now, with so many hiding their feelings and pretending to be strong, the tree was fading, hungering for the honesty of emotion that once flowed freely through its roots.



A background illustration of a giraffe in a field with a fence and flowers. The giraffe is in the upper left, looking towards the right. The field is green with a wooden fence in the middle ground. There are small white and purple flowers scattered throughout. The sky is a light blue gradient.

**Only one who felt deeply, and
without fear, could bring the
Heartroot Tree back to life.**





Bran stood, his heart pounding like a thousand footsteps in his tiny chest. “I will go,” he said, his voice trembling.

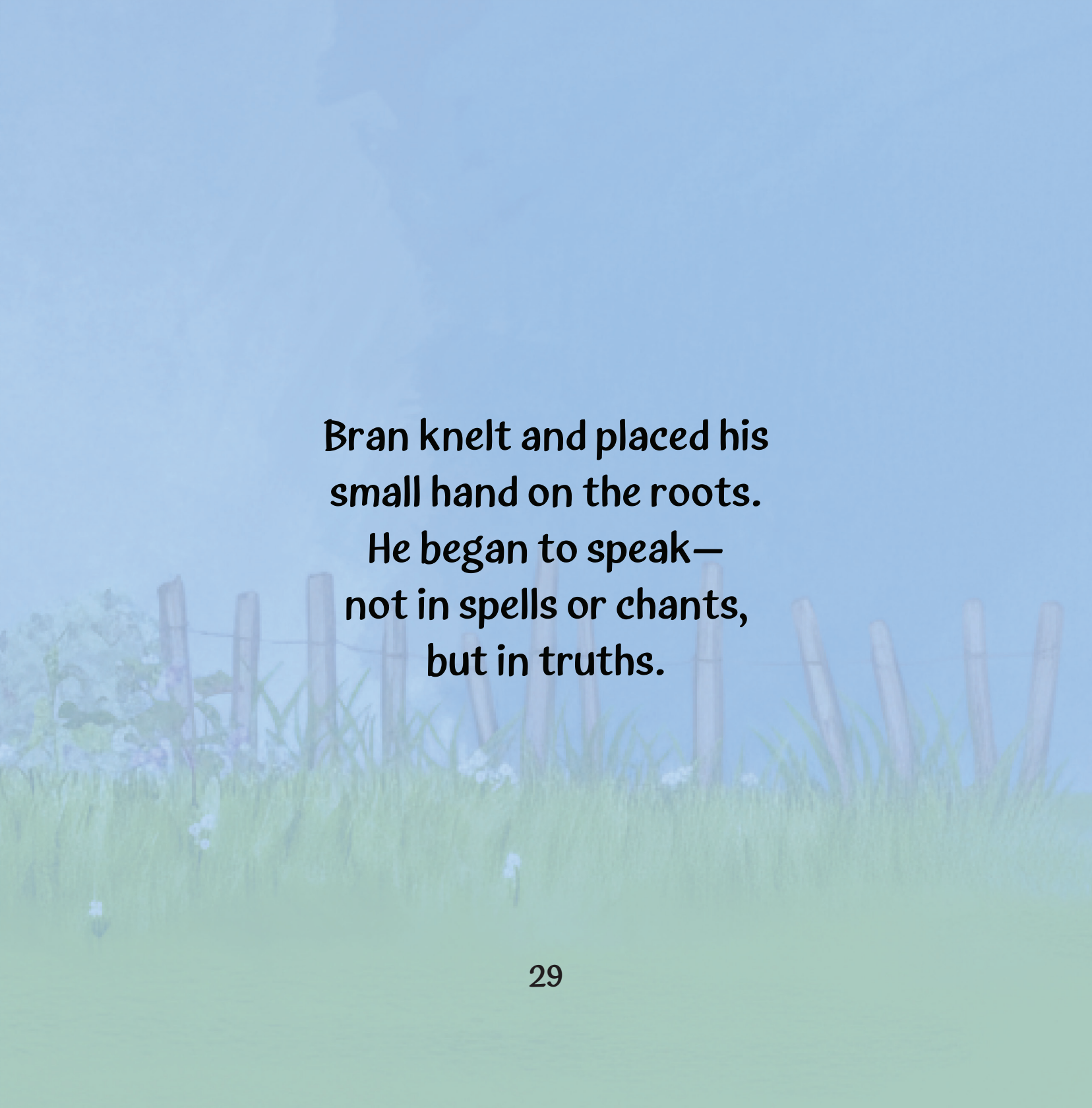
**He had always felt too much—
but maybe that was never a burden.
Maybe it was a gift.**



With the mushrooms guiding him,
Bran descended into the hidden hollow
beneath the glade.

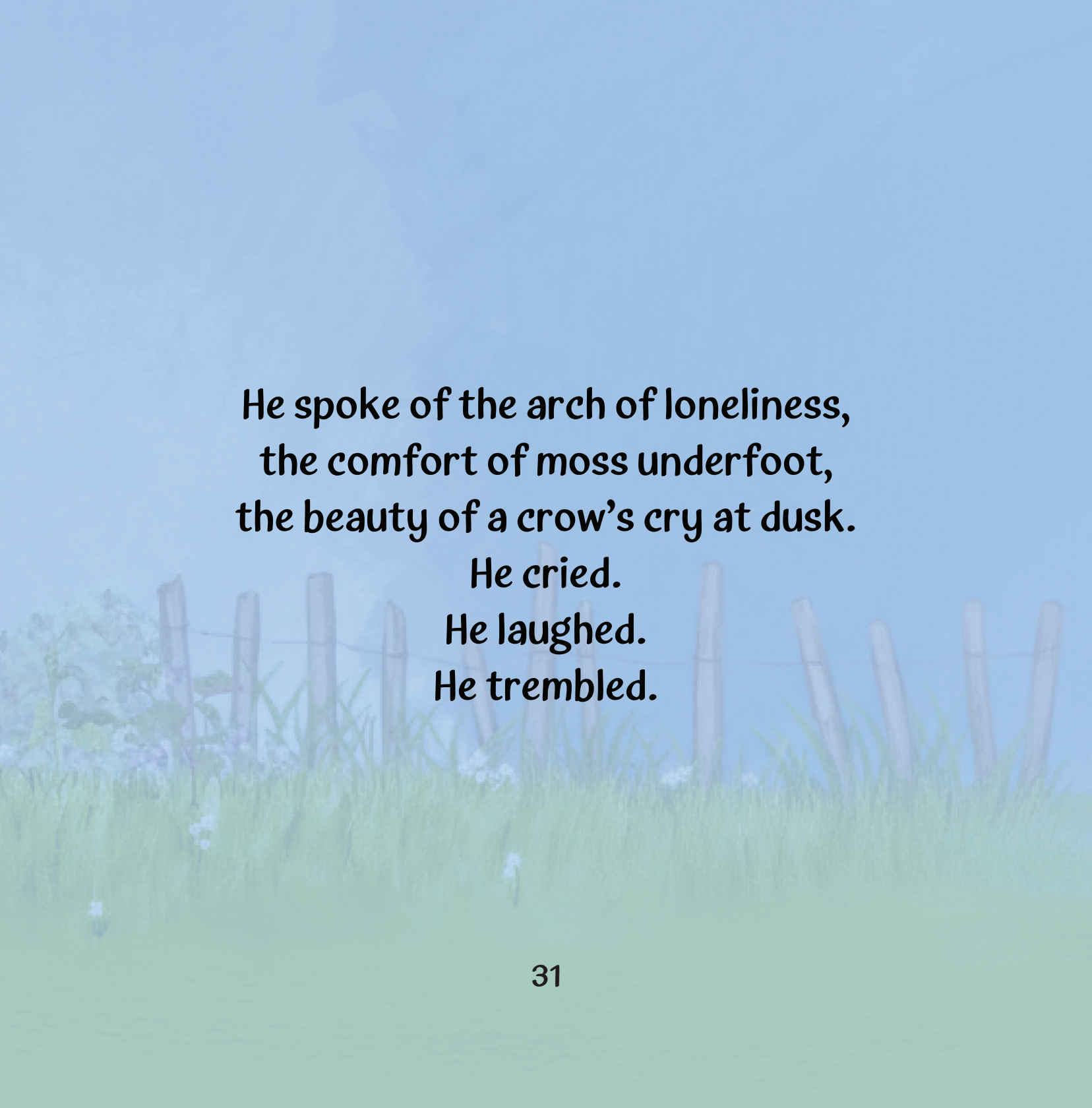
There, in the quiet gloom, stood the
Heartroot Tree—
curled in on itself,
its branches bare,
its bark pale and dry like forgotten parchment.





**Bran knelt and placed his
small hand on the roots.
He began to speak—
not in spells or chants,
but in truths.**



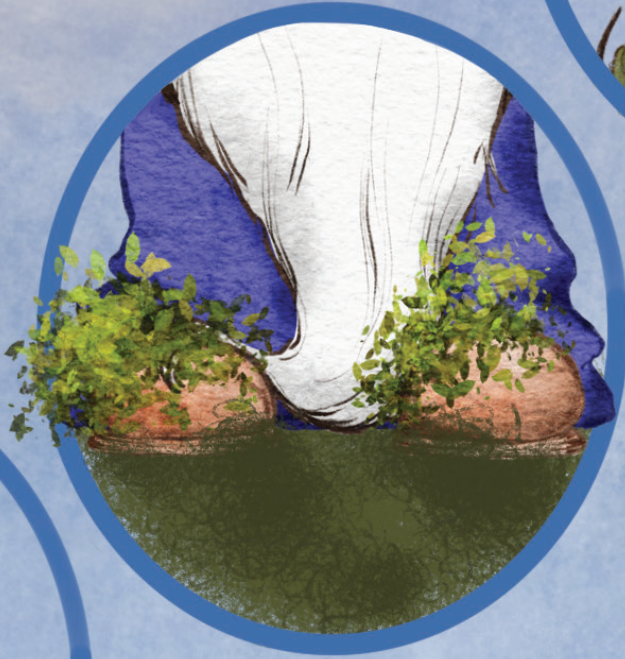


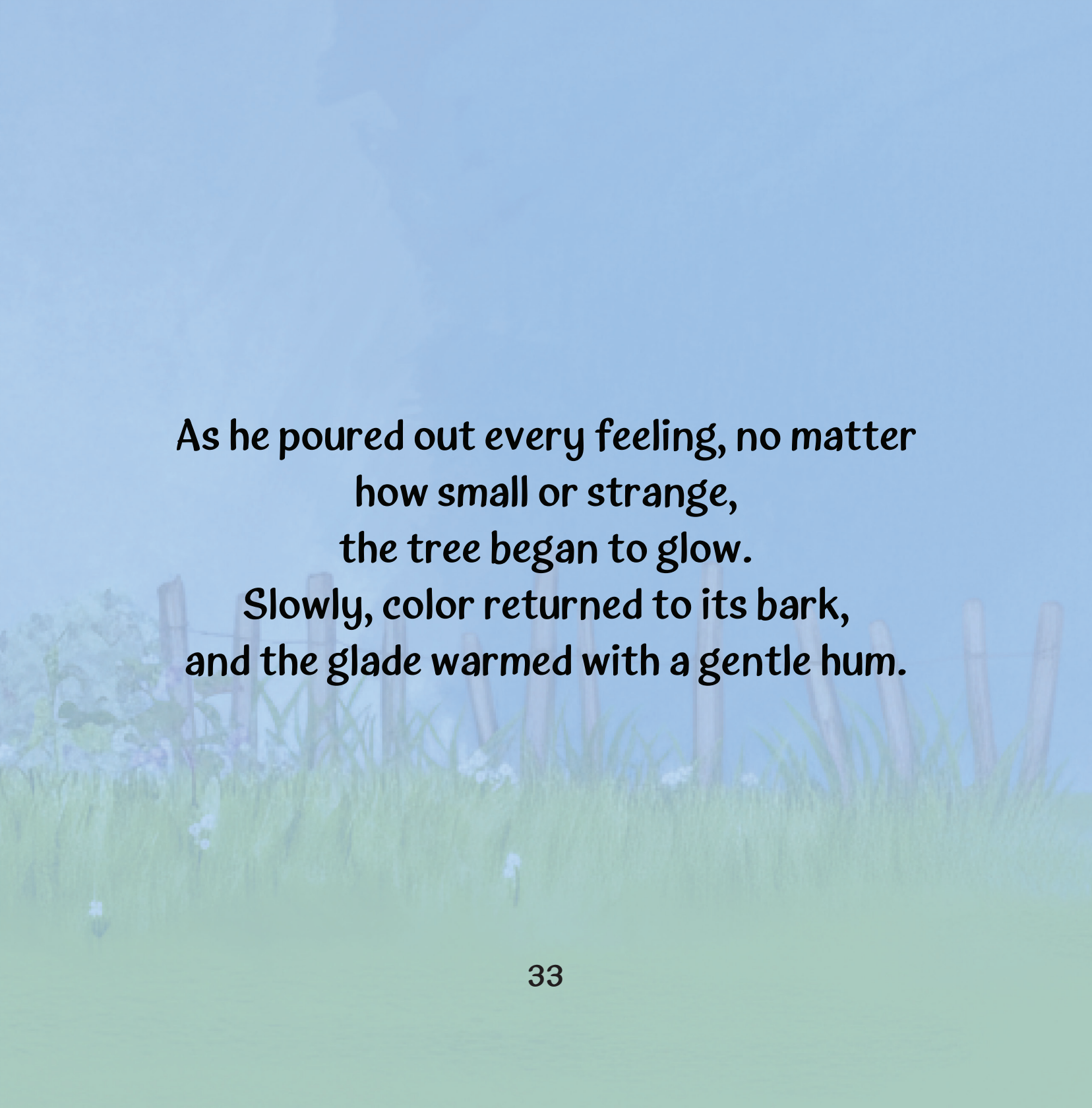
He spoke of the arch of loneliness,
the comfort of moss underfoot,
the beauty of a crow's cry at dusk.

He cried.

He laughed.

He trembled.

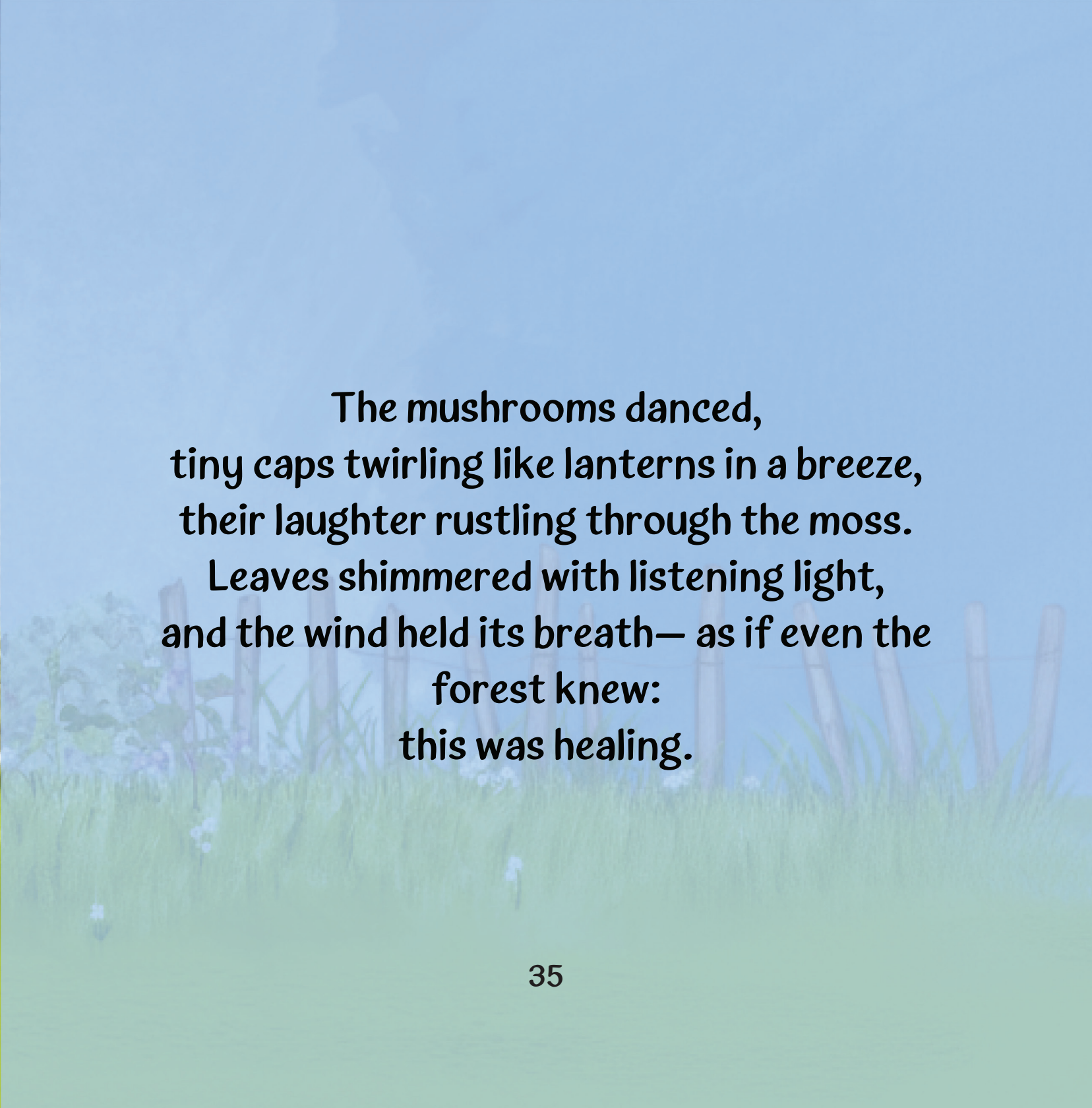




As he poured out every feeling, no matter
how small or strange,
the tree began to glow.

Slowly, color returned to its bark,
and the glade warmed with a gentle hum.

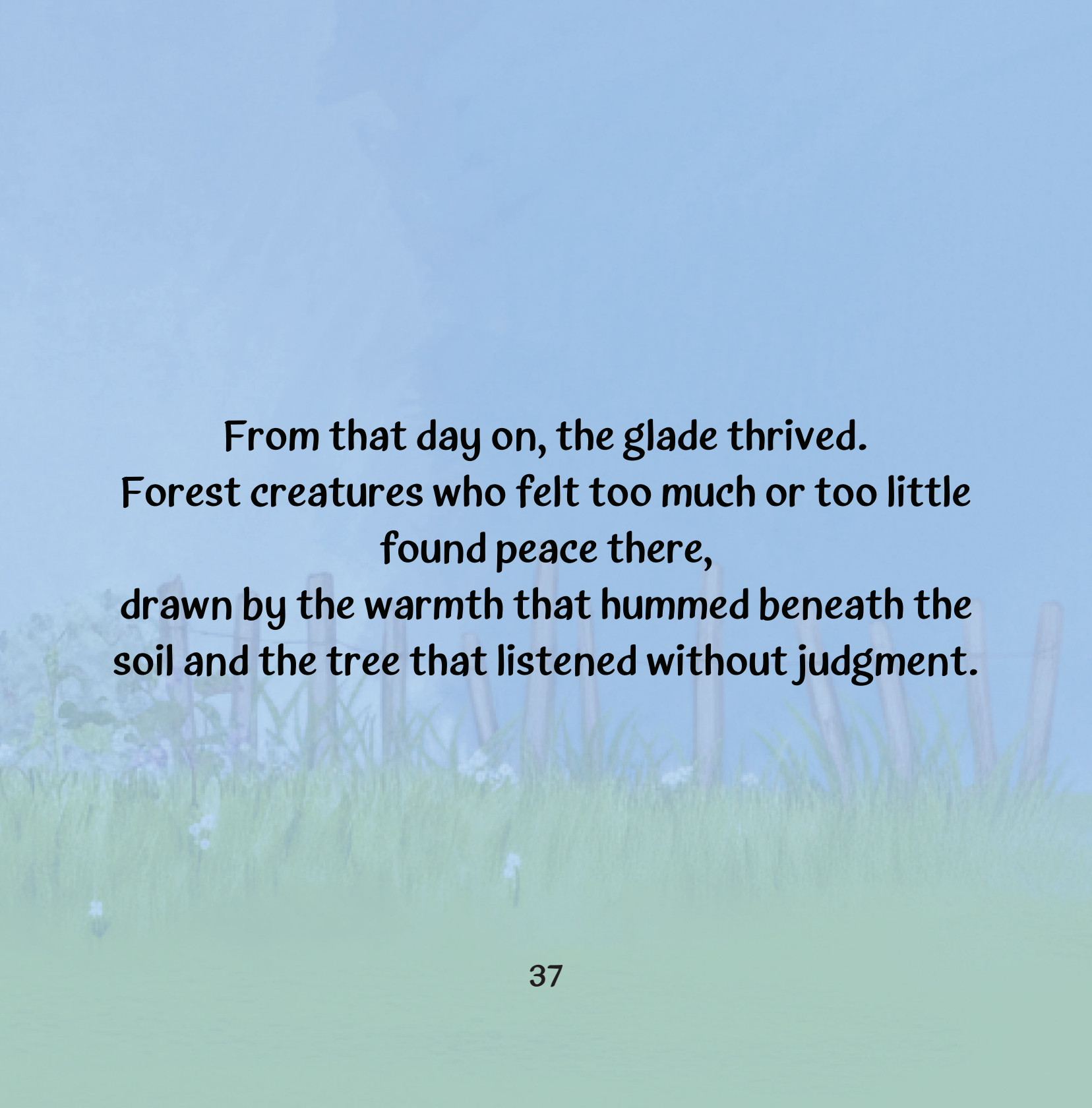




The mushrooms danced,
tiny caps twirling like lanterns in a breeze,
their laughter rustling through the moss.

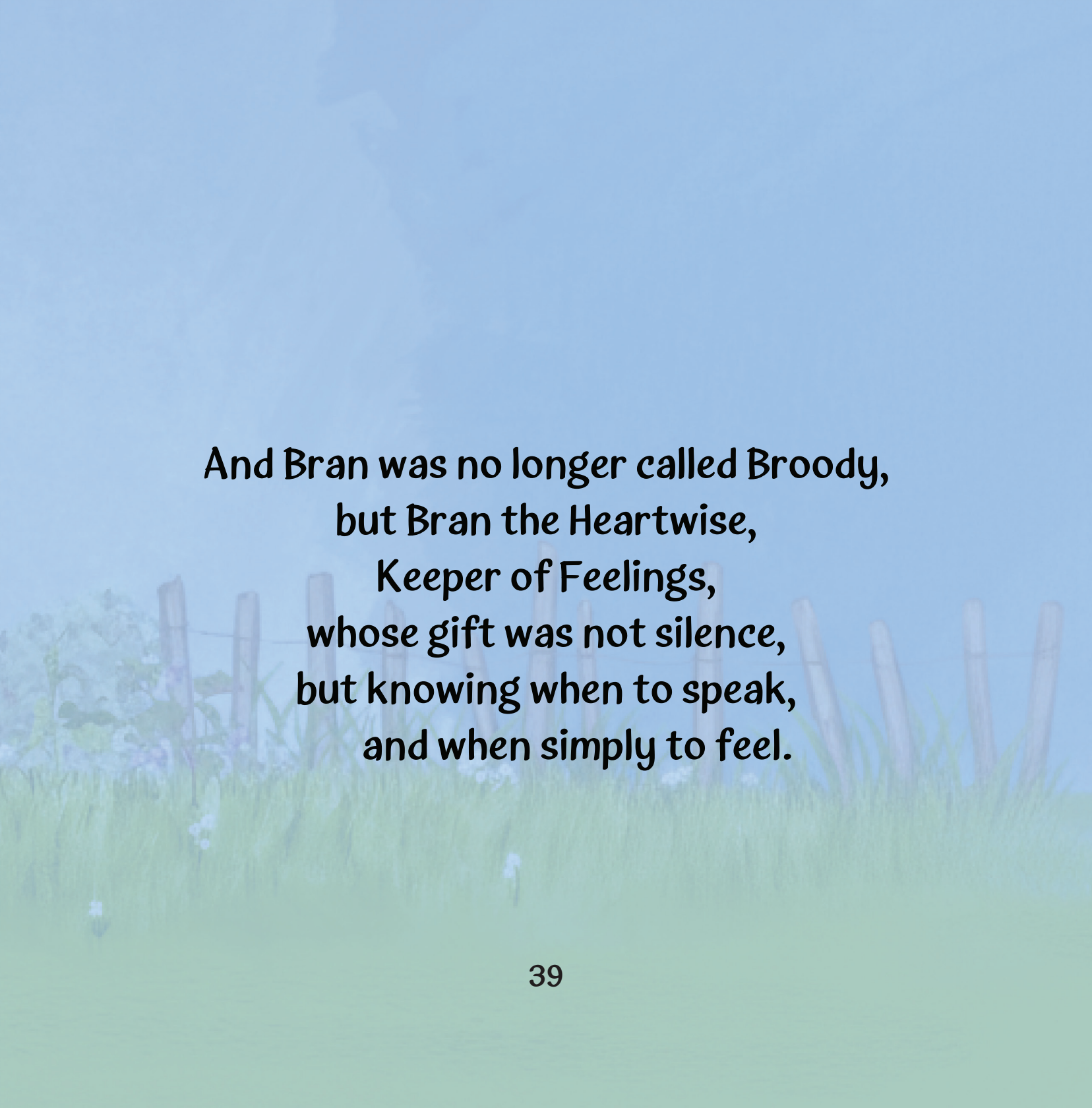
Leaves shimmered with listening light,
and the wind held its breath— as if even the
forest knew:
this was healing.



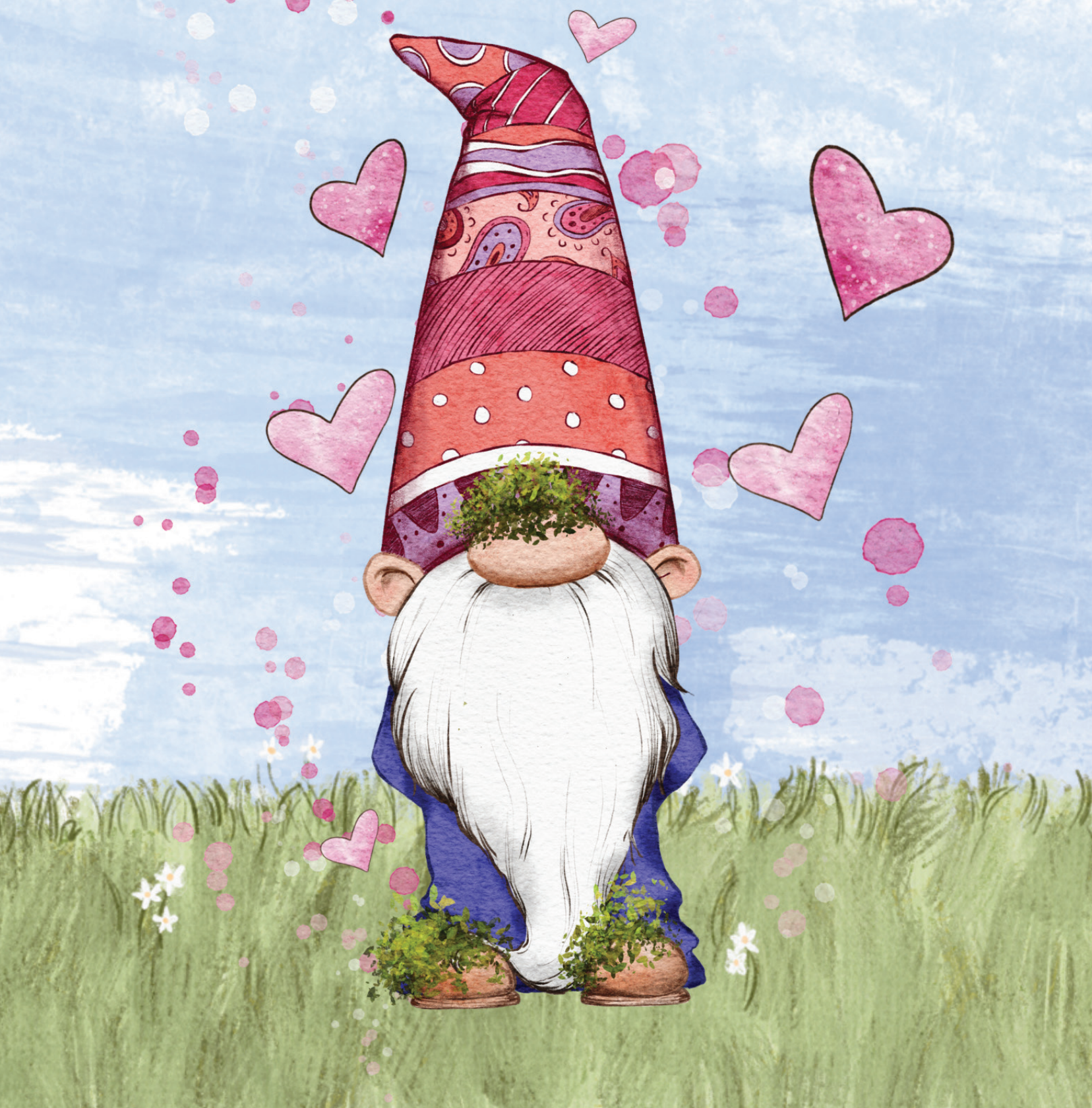


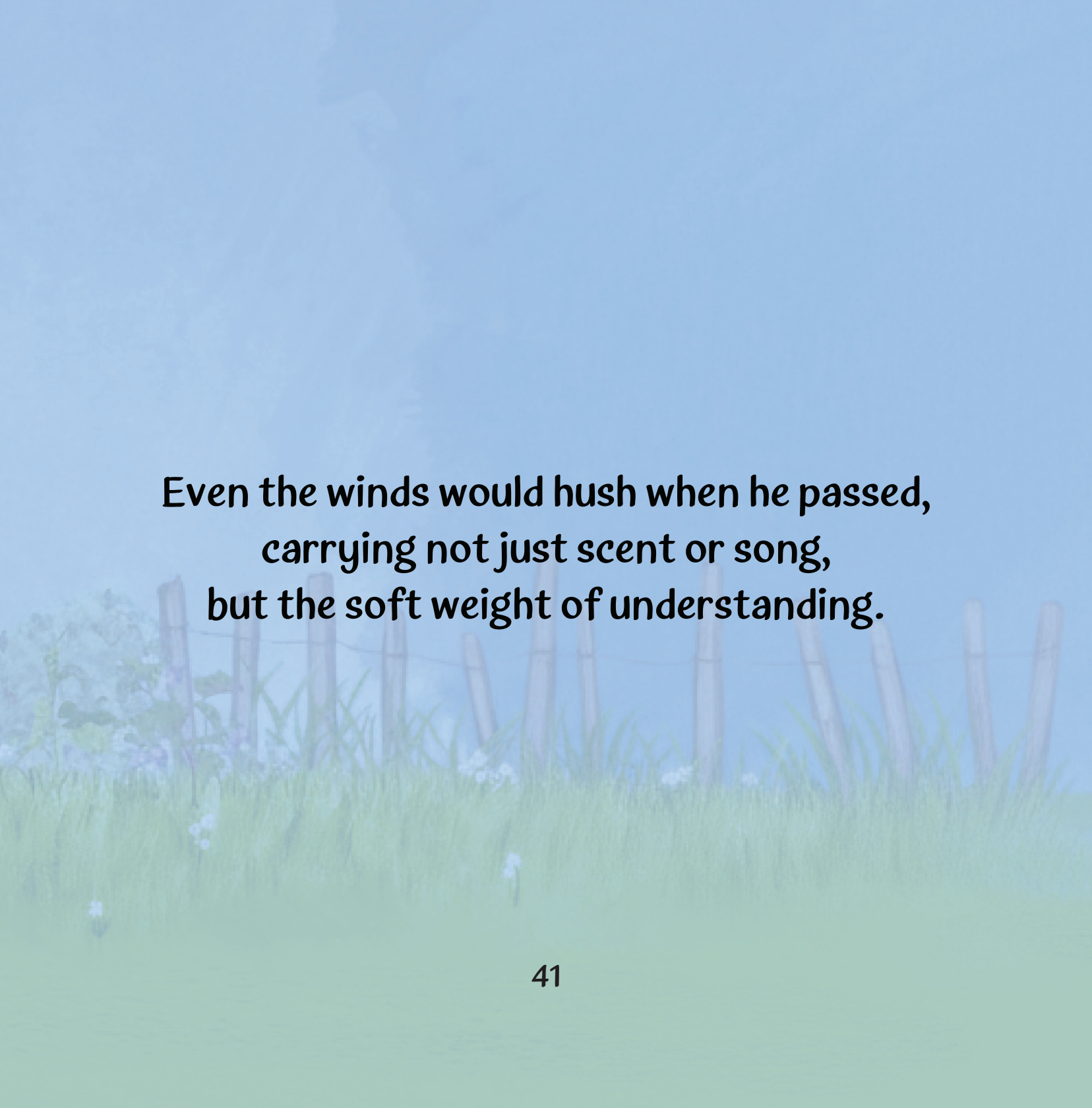
**From that day on, the glade thrived.
Forest creatures who felt too much or too little
found peace there,
drawn by the warmth that hummed beneath the
soil and the tree that listened without judgment.**





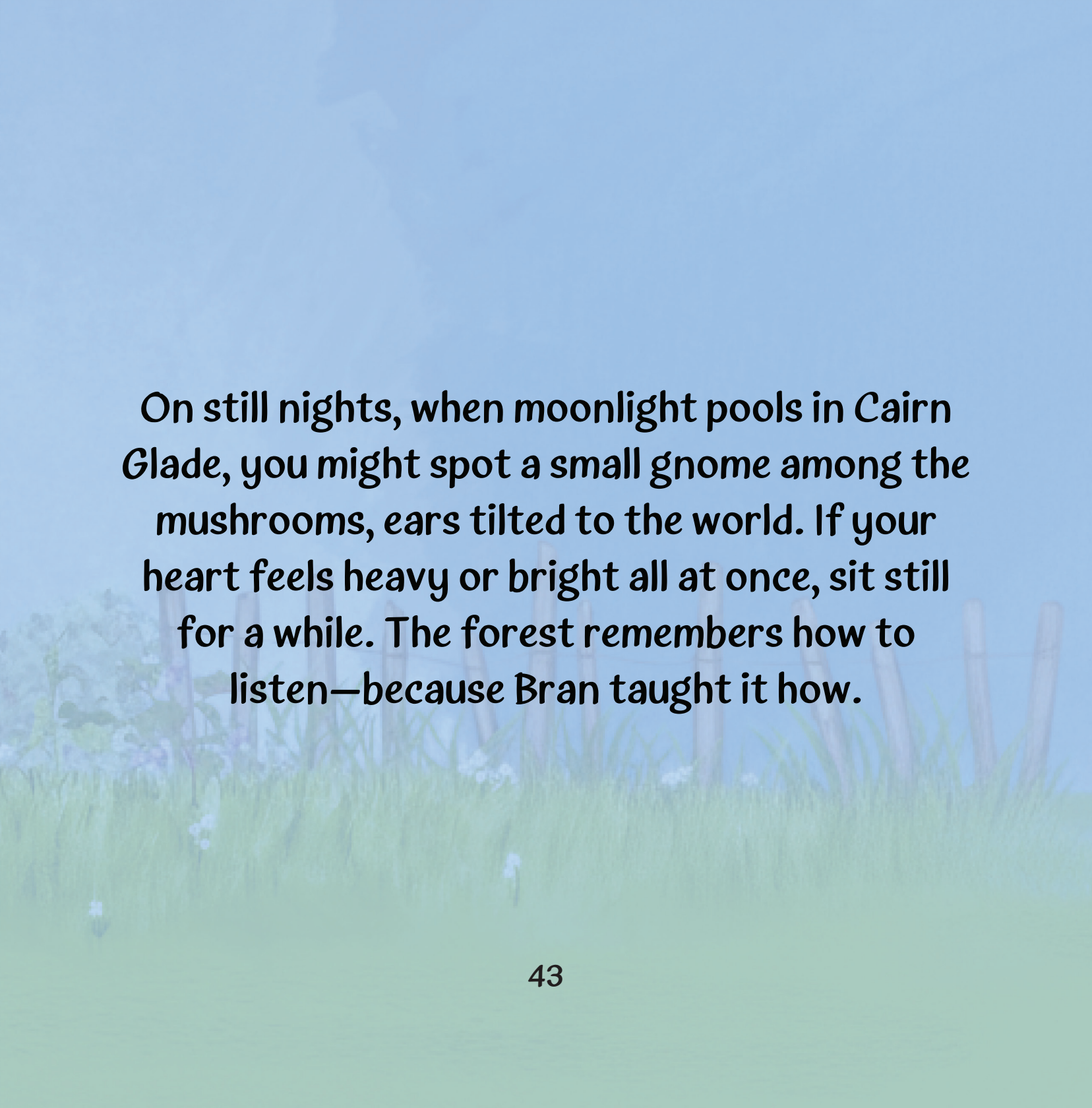
And Bran was no longer called Broody,
but Bran the Heartwise,
Keeper of Feelings,
whose gift was not silence,
but knowing when to speak,
and when simply to feel.





**Even the winds would hush when he passed,
carrying not just scent or song,
but the soft weight of understanding.**





On still nights, when moonlight pools in Cairn Glade, you might spot a small gnome among the mushrooms, ears tilted to the world. If your heart feels heavy or bright all at once, sit still for a while. The forest remembers how to listen—because Bran taught it how.



About the Author

Julie Kirchner is a Marriage and Family Therapist and a Registered Play Therapist with extensive experience working with children.

Specializing in helping young people navigate and express their emotions, Julie is passionate about supporting children in their emotional growth and well-being.

With a deep understanding of the unique challenges children face, Julie has dedicated her career to providing compassionate care and guidance to them.

This book reflects that commitment, offering a meaningful way for children to explore and understand their feelings.

