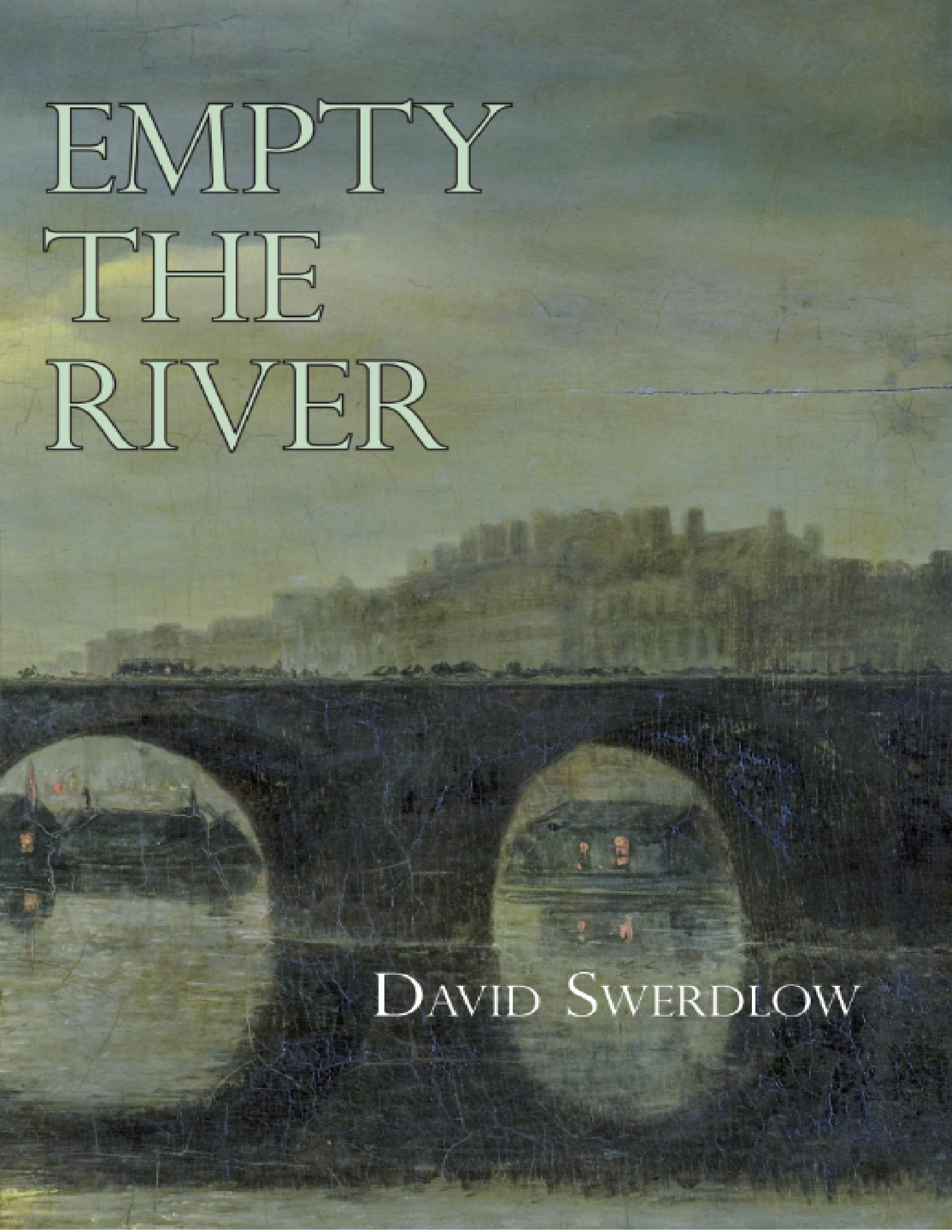
EMPTY THE RIVER



DAVID SWERDLOW

Our Wool Coats

If the world needs to know, tell it
our wool coats smell

of the bodies we carry.
Tell it the sleeves

of our wool coats
whisper to each other

in the square
when we stand side-by-side

like the stone slabs
pressed into patterns

beneath us.
Tell the world our wool coats

brush up against each other
like the lonely

cats we harbor
in our back alleys.

Tell the world we stand at attention
though we're never as still

as the hemlocks lining the road
by the river, the river

whose current we see
while our wool coats hang

on our shoulders
with as much

weight as can be borne.
Tell the world

our wool coats know
how to be hollow.