

He had set himself a great deal to do that day. The previous evening, over a beer, he had spoken of it, presuming to say that the final result of his efforts would of course soon leave his studio, would of course soon be there for everyone to see, and that in it, as he went on to promise the friend sitting across from him, what he now, here, apparently could not convey would eventually become comprehensible. The friend, irritated, had been wanting to go home for at least half an hour, had made several attempts, had paid for his first beer at the bar, then for his second and the painter's first, then for the painter's second. That night the friend had got home around three.

It might have been that he had simply made a poor start to the day, that on waking he had reached for the alarm on his phone and thereby for his phone, that he had spent the following hours reading articles about others, and that he had eventually begun reading a badly formatted PDF. In order to read he had been obliged to keep dragging the file across his screen in the direction of his reading, which, given the postures available to a man lying in bed, had proved not especially sustainable for the muscles of his neck. With a neck so tense he could not go to the studio. It might therefore have been that on that morning he had asked at the pharmacy for a roll of kinesiology tape and had then returned to bed, in order to finish what he had been reading.

It might just as well have been that on that morning he had left the house in great haste, had set his bicycle in motion by running beside it, had leapt onto the bicycle as it rolled, had missed the pedal with one foot, had scraped his leg along the frame, and had thereby torn open his left trouser leg and banged his knee. Until the wound had been dressed he could not go to the studio.

Basically, all possibilities seemed that morning to lead by way of the pharmacy.

Or, another possibility: he had been swimming that morning, had motivated himself, had recalled how he had almost become a swimmer, how he had almost swum for money and for medals and had then decided against it and for painting. A kick to the head had nearly knocked him out. In a moment of half-lucidity he had wrenched his head clear of the water and made ready to shout at the person who, presumably by accident, had kicked him, but he could no longer identify the person, the body he had seen only under water. He had left the pool, the rage still in his body.

After some weeks it had nonetheless been noticed that no one had heard anything more from him, the door of his flat was shut and so was the door of the studio, he had disappeared, he who, so it seemed, had stood before the great deal he had set himself, which might have led him whoknowswhere, and instead he stayed missing.

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