1. A day described from the inside

When someone asks about your day, you may name events: a meeting, a journey, an errand, a conversation. This is one kind of account. Another account concerns how you inhabited those events. You were interested during the meeting and lonely afterward. You felt relieved when an errand was canceled. You enjoyed a conversation while worrying about the work waiting at home.

The second account can be harder to access because it contains no obvious evidence of productivity. It may also complicate the first. A good event can contain a difficult feeling. A difficult event can contain a moment of pleasure. Your experience rarely arrives already sorted into a clean category.

Return to the last day you described with one broad word. Let that word remain while you recover the particulars it could not hold: the pace of an hour, an exchange that stayed with you, a physical need you noticed late, a moment you wanted to prolong. Your first account may have served a practical purpose. A short answer can be appropriate in conversation and still be too narrow for your own understanding. Notice whether you simplified to protect privacy, spare someone concern, move quickly, or avoid meeting an experience yourself. Those purposes are different. Giving yourself a fuller account allows you to choose which kind of brevity you still want.

You may use fine because you do not want a long conversation. That is a reasonable choice. Privacy is different from being unable to name your experience even

to yourself. You can keep a brief outward answer and still have a more particular inward one.

Sometimes the inward account is surprisingly difficult to write. You may remember tasks more readily than feelings, or find that every feeling immediately becomes a judgment. I was annoyed becomes I should not have been annoyed. Before the experience can be described, it is put on trial.

Try allowing description a little time before evaluation. Annoyance might concern hunger, a repeated interruption, an expectation, or something you cannot yet identify. Naming it does not decide whether your action was appropriate. It gives the inquiry a starting point.

The aim is not constant self-monitoring. You need room to live without documenting every moment. A few particular observations can reveal more than a day spent checking whether you are present enough.

An ordinary hour

Choose an hour you remember reasonably well. It need not be important. First, describe the events as someone nearby might have seen them. Include what you did and what happened around you.

Now describe what someone nearby could not have known: your attention, interest, reluctance, pleasure, fatigue, or uncertainty. If you cannot remember, mark the gap rather than filling it with a guess.

Read the two accounts together. What becomes visible only in the second? What becomes clearer when both are present?