

BASEL, SWITZERLAND

It dawned on him four kilometers in that he was on the wrong side of Lake Titisee. He checked the map and compass again—right—same direction, lake on the right instead of the left. He rotated the map 180 degrees, maybe he was holding it wrong. Nope, still wrong side of the lake.

He made a mental note to write the guidebook author whose introduction sought input from wanderers who found a mistake or something noteworthy the guidebook missed.

He already planned on sending a brief about the woodland instrument he played on the way to Karlstein—two horns with mouthpieces attached to long tubes, rounded wood slats on the left with a hammer attached on a chain, rectangular slats on the right with a mallet of its own. On the base were attached hollowed out wood bells and two beaters to drum with.

He jammed with the squirrels for twenty minutes before giving himself over to the uphill. That was one of the hardest days. He was over an hour slower than the author's time.

Yes, he would have to write the author, an intrepid woman with clean prose who made consistently better time than he did. He would tell her about the woodland instrument she neglected to mention and say she had put the trail on the wrong side of the lake.

This day was difficult as well—he would ascend to the highest point in the Black Forest.

After the first long rise out of the lakebed, he crossed a small railway station. Strange, he thought, that's not the name of the town on the map. He was seven kilometers in. Station must have a different name than the town, he thought. It happens.

The steep out of town was foremost on his mind. So he let go of his concerns and got to stepping up the forest roads and switchbacking rugged rocky trails just as the map had shown. He came upon a clearing from which he could see Mount Feldberg—his goal.

He pulled out his compass to sort out the approach. He was on the wrong side of the mountain! Twelve kilometers in, 1200 feet of elevation gained.

He felt dizzy. "Scraw, scraw," the raven screeched. How had he ended up on the wrong side of the Feldberg? His accommodations were booked and paid for all the way to Basel.

He checked the map one, two, three times. He was on an alternative

route that led to a completely different destination for the night. He had followed the blazes from the beginning. How had this happened?

He remembered his Aussie friends laughing on the Camino—they thought they had seen his doppelgänger when it was really him. He was his own doppelgänger. Was his doppelgänger on the right trail while he blundered his way here?

What should he do? Re-trace his steps, exhaust himself, and risk wandering the forest in extreme dark? Should he follow this trail to Basel? Maybe that would lead to an alternative future. Maybe that life would be without annoying habits; maybe he'd finally cultivate a rich inner story.

He slowed his breathing and emptied himself of everything but the perceiving self. He saw intense colors of hardwood leaves at his feet, yet the pine needles were still green and fragrant. He stood there, abstracted.

What did it matter if he were coming or going? Every possible outcome began with moving, unless he stopped there forever, becoming part of the vast network of forest life. *Only what moves can rest.* He thought. *What does it mean to depart when arrival shares the same present space?*