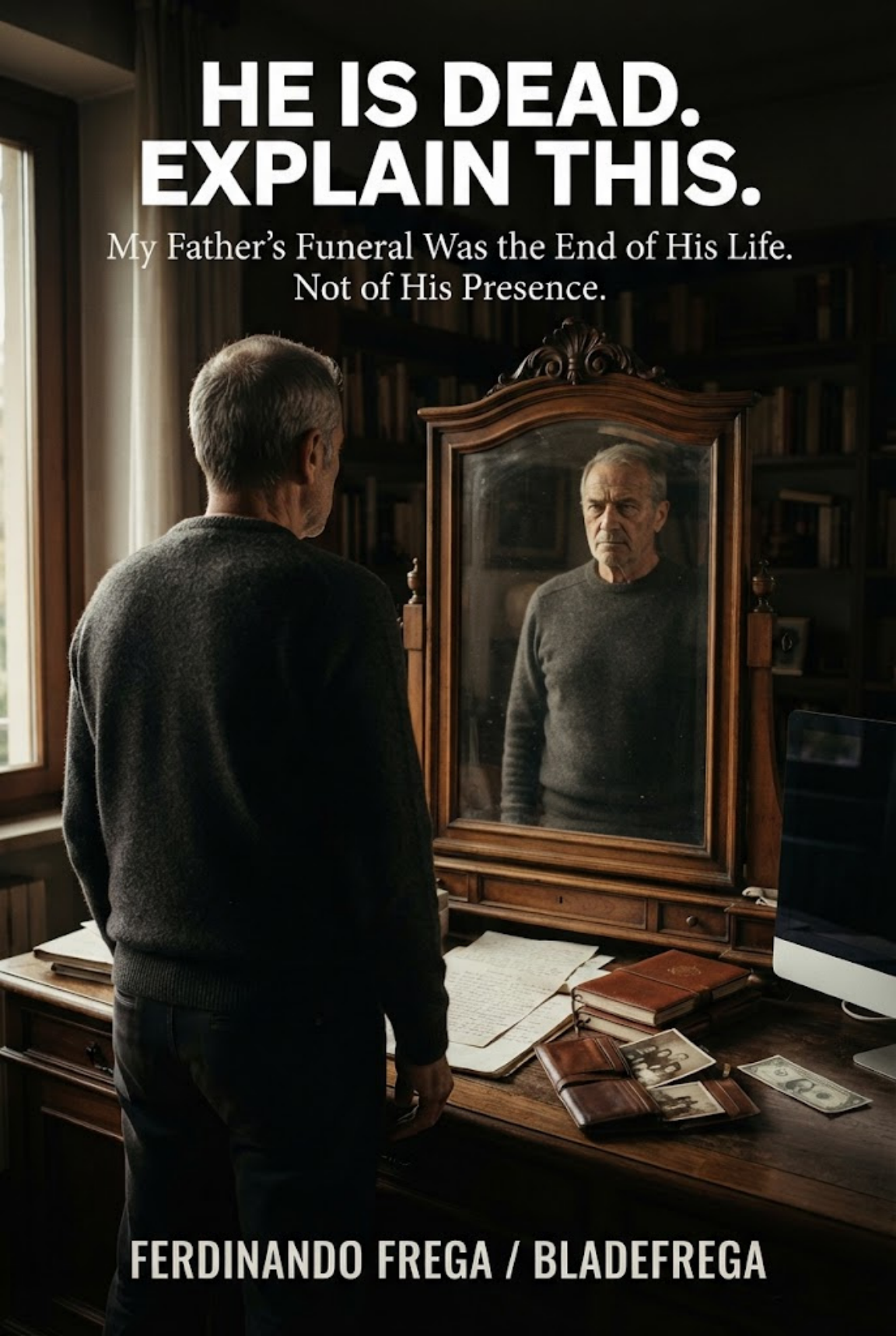
HE IS DEAD.
EXPLAIN THIS.
My Father's Funeral Was the End of His Life.
Not of His Presence.
FERDINANDO FREGA / BLADEFREGA

HE IS DEAD. EXPLAIN THIS.

My Father's Funeral Was the End of His Life. Not of His Presence.

My father died.

That is not a theory.

There was a funeral.

There was a coffin.

There was a cemetery.

There were relatives shaking hands, speaking softly, repeating the same sentences that people have repeated for centuries when they have nothing useful left to say.

He was seventy-nine years old.

I was sixty.

The mathematics of death were perfectly clear.

What happened afterward was not.

For one year I behaved as any reasonable man would.

I mourned him.

I remembered him.

I missed him.

Sometimes I spoke about him.

Most of the time I did not.

Life, like a patient creditor, came every morning to collect its due.

Bills.

Work.

Family.

Responsibilities.

Days became weeks.

Weeks became months.

Then something changed.

Not suddenly.

Not dramatically.

Quietly.

The way rust appears on iron.

The way dawn enters a room.

The way a son discovers that time has been working on him without permission.

I started drinking a glass of wine at lunch.

My father used to do that.

I developed an obsession with chili peppers.

My father loved them.

A persistent cough appeared.

The same irritating cough he had spent years pretending not to have.

Then came the jokes.

The same dry irony.

The same timing.

The same habit of smiling before delivering the punchline.

One evening I caught my reflection in a mirror.

For a moment I laughed.

Then I stopped.

I recognized the face.

But I did not recognize the man.

I cannot explain that feeling better than this:

I looked exactly like myself.

Yet somebody else seemed to be standing there.

That was the beginning.

Or perhaps it had begun much earlier, and I simply had not noticed.

Around the same time, something else happened.

On June 9, 2026, I sat down in front of my computer to renew an old WordPress site.

That was the plan.

A simple administrative task.

One of those boring activities that adults perform because reality insists on existing.

Instead, I bought a new domain.

Gillettenarrative.com.

I invented a name.

Then I began building something that nobody had asked me to build.

The strange part was not the work.

The strange part was the purpose.

I was not trying to sell anything.

I was not launching a business.

I was not chasing investors.

I was not looking for approval.

I was giving everything away for free.

The harder I worked, the less rational it became.

Ten hours a day.

Twelve.

Fifteen.

Twenty.

If obsession had an office, I had become its night shift manager.

Still, I continued.

Then Bing did something unexpected.

One of my pieces appeared first in a Gillette search.

My family called it luck.

A coincidence.

An accident.

I agreed.

Right before testing it.

I published another work.

It happened again.

Then another.

Again.

Eventually, even coincidence started demanding an explanation.

My brother-in-law worried about lawyers.

I worried about understanding what was happening.

Those are two very different concerns.

One fears consequences.

The other seeks causes.

I have always preferred causes.

But while I chased answers, my body entered the conversation.

First an inflamed gland.

Then a dental abscess.

Then back pain.

Then leg pain.

One symptom after another.

Nothing catastrophic.

Nothing dramatic.

Just enough to make a man pay attention.

One day, while searching in the basement for an old computer mouse, I found a photograph of my grandmother.

My father's mother.

I had not been looking for her.

Yet there she was.

Waiting inside a forgotten box.

I put the photograph in my wallet.

Not because I had a reason.

Because I had no reason not to.

Later I tried to explain some of these things to my wife.

She listened carefully.

Then she scheduled an appointment with a psychiatrist.

I considered that a perfectly reasonable reaction.

The truth is that I would probably have done the same.

Because by then a question had started occupying my mind.

A dangerous question.

Not because it had an answer.

Because it did not.

What exactly survives when a person dies?

Not legally.

Not biologically.

Not religiously.

Humanly.

A voice?

A habit?

A memory?

A gesture?

A preference for wine?

A smile?

Can a father disappear and still remain present inside the architecture of another life?

I do not know.

I only know what happened.

The more I looked for my father, the less I found him in cemeteries.

The more I found him in myself.

Eventually the physical problems subsided.

Garlic.

Beans.

Rice.

Long walks.

Time.

The body recovered.

The questions remained.

One afternoon I left home with one dollar in my pocket.

One dollar was all that remained from the seventy I had expected to survive the rest of the month.

Fortunately, my pantry was richer than my wallet.

Rice.

Beans.

Onions.

Garlic.

Enough to keep a man alive.

Not enough to impress anyone.

On the street I met two elderly men.

Poor.

Dignified.

Invisible in the way old people often become.

They did not ask for money.

They did not ask for help.

They simply existed.

I handed them my last dollar.

"Don't argue about it," I said.

"If you can't spend it, maybe it will bring you luck."

They laughed.

I walked away.

After a few meters, one of them called me back.

"Hey, good man."

I turned.

He smiled.

Then he said something I have never forgotten.

"Everything that is lived can be told for only one reason.

Because it happened."

Then he walked away.

I never saw him again.
People often search for God when life becomes difficult.
I rarely do.
Not because I reject Him.
Because I have never been very good at searching.
I prefer observing.
Watching.
Paying attention.
Looking carefully at the things most people dismiss.
A coincidence.
A photograph.
A smile.
A dead father appearing inside the habits of his living son.
My father died.
I know that.
The funeral proved it.
The coffin proved it.
The cemetery proved it.
But if death ended his life, it did not end his presence.
And if you disagree, that is perfectly acceptable.
I am not asking you to believe me.
I am only asking you the same question that I asked myself.
He is dead.
Explain this.

Ferdinando Frega
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Nando the Scribe