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Paper, After Dark

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A short book
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Paper, After Dark is a short book about paper after dark. It was made to be read in one sitting, then put back. The sentences stay with the damp sheet and the after midnight. They do not wander off into a story they cannot pay for.

A record of paper after dark is not the thing itself. The damp sheet took the light and gave a duller light back. From the press room I could measure the band with a hand, then with the roller, and the two measures did not match. I kept the second measure. The first one had too much of me in it.

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There is a kind of attention that starts only after the after midnight. In the press room I kept the damp sheet clear so paper after dark would have somewhere to sit. The fan came and went. I did not turn toward it. When I finally used the roller, the mark was smaller than the decision to make it.

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I went back to the press room in the after midnight. The damp sheet was where I had left it. What I had come to see was paper after dark, and it had not agreed to be simple. I set the roller down and did not pick it up again until I had looked long enough.

What I left out was larger than what I put in. The press room had corners I did not describe, and a window I refused to make into a view. On the damp sheet, paper after dark stayed inside its own edges. That refusal is the subject, as much as the color is.

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Close the book and the press room does not travel with you. What travels is the sequence: the damp sheet, the roller, the decision to stop. The fan will be different wherever this file is opened. The rights in the file stay where they were.

I numbered nothing. A date would come later, on a catalog card, but the after midnight inside the work is not a clock time. The

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roller has no opinion about dates. The damp sheet only shows that the mark was made, and that it was allowed to remain.

The after midnight made the press room smaller. On the damp sheet, paper after dark held still, which is not the same as being finished. I could hear the fan and, under it, nothing that needed a name. The roller waited. Most of the work was in the waiting.

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Later the after midnight changed and the color cooled. I did not correct the damp sheet. Correction would have been a different book. The roller left a trace at the edge, thin enough to miss if you were only passing. The fan filled the pause, and the pause was part of the page.

If you license the file, you are not buying the press room. You are buying a described use of paper after dark, for a term, in a territory, in writing. The watermark on this preview is the reminder that the looking is not the license. The damp sheet goes on being itself after the agreement ends.

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I read the page the next day in a different after midnight. The paper after dark had settled. It looked less like an event and more like a fact. Facts are easier to credit and harder to decorate. I prefer them.

I looked again at the damp sheet. The paper after dark was still there, neither better nor worse. The roller had done what it can do, which is very little, and enough. Outside, the after midnight continued without needing a sentence.

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A margin is also a decision. I left one, then widened it, then stopped before the damp sheet became only frame. Paper after dark stayed in the middle, where I could find it again.

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Someone will ask what the picture is of. It is of paper after dark, and of the time it took to leave it alone. The press room is not in the file. The attention is.

I copied one sentence into the catalog note and deleted it. The note only needs the title, the date, and the fact that the rights are reserved. The paragraph can live here.

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The the fan changed pitch. I did not rewrite the page to match it. A book that chases the room never gets out of the room.

On the second reading the paper after dark looked plainer. Plain is not a defect. It is how a field survives being looked at twice.

I set the roller parallel to the edge and did not draw. The alignment was the note. The damp sheet recorded nothing, which I then had to write down in words.

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I looked again at the damp sheet. The paper after dark was still there, neither better nor worse. The roller had done what it can do, which is very little, and enough. Outside, the after midnight continued without needing a sentence.

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