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The Second Proof

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A short book
BM-2019-256
2019

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The Second Proof is a short book about a second proof. It was made to be read in one sitting, then put back. The sentences stay with the translucent sheet and the midday. They do not wander off into a story they cannot pay for.

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

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I numbered nothing. A date would come later, on a catalog card, but the midday inside the work is not a clock time. The grease pencil has no opinion about dates. The translucent sheet only shows that the mark was made, and that it was allowed to remain.

I went back to the light table in the midday. The translucent sheet was where I had left it. What I had come to see was a second proof, and it had not agreed to be simple. I set the grease pencil down and did not pick it up again until I had looked long enough.

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There is a kind of attention that starts only after the midday. In the light table I kept the translucent sheet clear so a second proof would have somewhere to sit. The hum came and went. I did not turn toward it. When I finally used the grease pencil, the mark was smaller than the decision to make it.

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If you license the file, you are not buying the light table. You are buying a described use of a second proof, for a term, in a territory, in writing. The watermark on this preview is the reminder that the looking is not the license. The translucent sheet goes on being itself after the agreement ends.

I read the page the next day in a different midday. The a second

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proof 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.

The midday made the light table smaller. On the translucent sheet, a second proof held still, which is not the same as being finished. I could hear the hum and, under it, nothing that needed a name. The grease pencil waited. Most of the work was in the waiting.

What I left out was larger than what I put in. The light table had corners I did not describe, and a window I refused to make into a view. On the translucent sheet, a second proof stayed inside its own edges. That refusal is the subject, as much as the color is.

Close the book and the light table does not travel with you. What travels is the sequence: the translucent sheet, the grease pencil, the decision to stop. The hum will be different wherever this file is opened. The rights in the file stay where they were.

A record of a second proof is not the thing itself. The translucent sheet took the light and gave a duller light back. From the light table I could measure the band with a hand, then with the grease pencil, 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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I looked again at the translucent sheet. The a second proof was still there, neither better nor worse. The grease pencil had done what it can do, which is very little, and enough. Outside, the midday continued without needing a sentence.

A margin is also a decision. I left one, then widened it, then stopped before the translucent sheet became only frame. A second proof 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 a second proof, and of the time it took to leave it alone. The light table 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.

The the hum 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 a second proof looked plainer. Plain is not a defect. It is how a field survives being looked at twice.

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

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