

TWO MEN IN A SHOWER

Flipping through reruns, infomercials, I stalled
on palm tree silhouettes, an orange sky. David

Hockney's name faded in, solidified, faded out.
Just days ago, snowed-in, I consumed an entire

volume of his work : the play of light on water
in his paper pools; photo collages and reversed

perspectives, vanishing point now the starting
point for a canvas that opens out, viewer lodged.

When I sat, then, and wrote the words "two men
in a shower," wet plastic stirred, its translucent

surface beaded, droplets heaving into streaks
as shadowy flesh touched, bent, and broke-up

the shower stream's thin spray. I thought, could
a digital snapshot recreate this? It could alter

but then, viewer, would it still hold true? Only
many photos co-joined, not in the sense of mosaic

or of animation flipbook, but whole corners over-
lapped like two bodies that bend, straighten, bend

again. True I washed him then he, me : one arm
lifted, then a leg, muscle sliding against muscle.

And when I drew the curtain back, when my hand
reached out to grab a towel did the account equal

truth or something new? My foot crossed the tiled
lip as he cast a towel, rubbed my back down,

droplets and streaks erased, linked, then released.
Did the scene stall here removed from time or did

you complete it, viewer? Focus on the hand held
against my abdomen, the hand on the frame, what

extends beyond the frame : a scene reflected before
the shower, into the shower, the extended after.

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David Hockney's 1963 oil on canvas.

