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You watched the light change in the room for twenty-four hours.

Well, that's not entirely true. Sometimes, you weren't really watching at all. You were off making a toasted sandwich. Or in the loo. Or just lying on your back with your eyes closed, trying to follow your own breath.

Actually, nobody would know if you ducked off to have a snooze in your comfy bed at home. No one was checking up on you. It was your idea.

So to say that 'it was all about observing changes in the light' as it filtered into the room through those nine big windows on the south wall, doesn't really give the full picture. It's what you might call a simplification. An obfuscating simplification, to be unnecessarily wordy about the whole thing, but not an unpoetic one. Lots of people thought it was a good idea, although most of the time they couldn't say why.

Your idea was to reduce the amount of stimulus in the room to an absolute minimum. The windows were papered over so that when the sunlight struck them they glowed like lampshades. There was a single bare light bulb hanging from the ceiling. This stayed on the whole time. All your crap was shifted out for the day.

It was Wednesday.

Noon came around and you began.

Began what?

Twenty-four hours with nothing to do but watch the light change.

How long, exactly, is twenty-four hours?

It's eighty-six thousand, four hundred seconds.

It's exactly one day.

It's one thousand four hundred and forty minutes.

You made yourself a diagram to come to grips with all these numbers. Your diagram was a long horizontal paper scroll. You drew a vertical line to represent each hour. You began in the middle, your day of watching the light change.

You drew a line for noon, a line for one, a line for two, a line for three, a line for four, and a line for five, a line for six, a line for seven, a line for eight, a line for nine, a line for ten, a line for eleven, a line for midnight, a line for one in the morning, a line for two, a line for three, a line for four, a line for five, a line for six, a line for seven, and a line for eight, a line for nine, a line for ten, a line for eleven, and a line for twelve.

That was Wednesday, which became Thursday.

And so you continued along the paper scroll, one line per hour, repeating the line again and again until you ran out of wall.

It took a long time to do this drawing. But nowhere near as long as twenty-four hours.

Mid-afternoon, the sticky tape holding up the paper to one of the top windows began to work loose. The sun had been beating against the glass and this must have melted the adhesive gum. The paper sagged in the middle and began to inch its way towards the floor, picking up speed as it pulled away from the window. You stood underneath, watching this. It irritated you. You'd set everything up perfectly in advance, so that all you'd have to do was watch the light change. But now you couldn't watch the light change. You'd have to fetch a ladder and fix the paper instead.

Around seven, the light began to fade. Actually, it had been fading since noon. But now it was really dropping off fast, and you glued your eyes to the windows, hungry to witness the moment when the light *really changed*. You imagined that you saw this change as it took place. You imagined that you *were really there* when it happened. One second there was light, and the next second there was no light, and you saw this change take place.

But you didn't. Somehow you missed it, and now it was dark, and there was no more light in the room, except what was coming from the light bulb.

The light bulb was an unfriendly presence. It didn't provide enough illumination to do anything but remind you of the dark. Your iris expanded so much in the gloom that every time the bulb was in your field of vision it burned and stung. You began to hate the light bulb.

If the day had seemed brisk, and skipped by quite quickly, then the night stretched itself out ahead of you. Eleven hours to go, in *this* room, with *this* incandescent bulb. You began to doubt the cleverness of this idea.

Night time. Perhaps now you'll really feel those twenty-four hours as they pass by, minute by minute. You sit in a dark corner of the room, hiding from the light bulb, in the shadow of a structural I-beam. You wait one minute.

For the first 15 seconds you worry about how to endure the length of that minute. Your mind floods with thoughts of other things you should be doing. Your cat is overdue for a flea treatment. You're out of floss. You left your bike locked up at Central and it's been there for days. Your grandmother's getting old and might not be around for much longer and haven't you been meaning to visit her for ages?

You snap out of it and come back to the room. Thirty seconds have gone by and you missed them. Now there's only 25 to go. You take a deep breath and feel a clock ticking inside your head, feel the blood beating in your veins, feel the light bulb lurking behind the I-beam. The light bulb is waiting for you. It's going to be there all night.

And that minute is gone.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Lucas Ihlein.