

La Biblioteca de Babel

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PENNY McCARTHY

LA BIBLIOTECA DE BABEL

THE GOOD READER



MA BIBLIOTHÈQUE



LA BIBLIOTECA DE BABEL

PENNY McCARTHY

In his short story, *Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote*, Jorge Luis Borges achieved a re-creation of the Cervantes text without actually re-creating Cervantes's life. Instead, he decided that the best route was 'continuing to be Pierre Menard and coming to the Quixote through the experiences of Pierre Menard'. Following Borges, we know that the same words read differently from a different pen and that each reader is, as much as himself, a literary creator. Penny McCarthy interprets *La Biblioteca de Babel* by transcribing sections from her own printed copy of the book alongside Borges' first draft. So exquisite is his insect-like handwriting, with its black crossings-out and peculiar typographical symbols, its repeating visual rhythms, that in some way his script ceases to be text and instead becomes its own image. Meaning is always an on-going process for Borges, concerned less with making than making over. This version of *La Biblioteca de Babel* is presented alive to its intentions and potential for appropriation. Meticulous copying intentionally erases the boundaries between McCarthy's version and the original Borges: we cannot know for certain who wrote what.

Penny McCarthy works primarily with drawing and text. Her work is presented internationally in a variety of contexts: in museums and galleries, at conferences, and as live projects and publications.

THE GOOD READER is a series that addresses reading, as both virtue and duty. The editor invites authors she considers to be good readers. She agrees with Nabokov that a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader, is a re-reader.

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