

STEPS to DEAD END, EXETER

A Sound Walk
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⑨ Stretch your hearing through dead-end brambles into the newly-forbidden farmland beyond. Skylark's endless burble reached my trapped ears, sounding like freedom.

At night, you can hear badgers. Locals say traffic is only inaudible here during a southwesterly storm.



⑦ A beech hedge shivers browncrinkled leaves. Connecting tree canopies host unbroken bird choir... then train clatter fills the valley, glancing pinball-like off Gloucester Road's angled houses.

⑤ Pause.
What bubbles up from the valley? While I listened, avian soloists owned the airspace. Their host trees grow far apart, so their songs can't amass into a chorus.

③ You may hear an agitation of sociable creatures. Gregarious starlings whistle & crackle like electricity, pigeons cou-cou-couple, sparrows chipchip, children chatter.

As you ascend, does the atmosphere shift? The landscape is threaded with tyres and engines; train rumbles arrive in waves, riding breezes.

② On the exposed high terrace, face the panorama. Scan your ears (eyes closed) slowly from left to right. Learn the valley this way. Where does the wind blow from? What sounds does it bring?

⑥ Wheels: bicycle, suitcase, scooter, van, car. Heelys accompany children's smiling voices. My ears kept turning towards birdsong from treetops beyond quiet houses.

④ If it's windy, a foliage orchestra performs outside no31 - a living treat for all the senses. Immerse your ears in the rhythms and textures of leafdance. (Listen for the secrets grasses share.)

① Stand here for a while. Grow roots into the pavement. Breathe... tuning in to the music around you. When you ascend the steps, listen for rigid fan palm leaves scraping bricks and each other.

Walk distance: about 1/2 a kilometre

