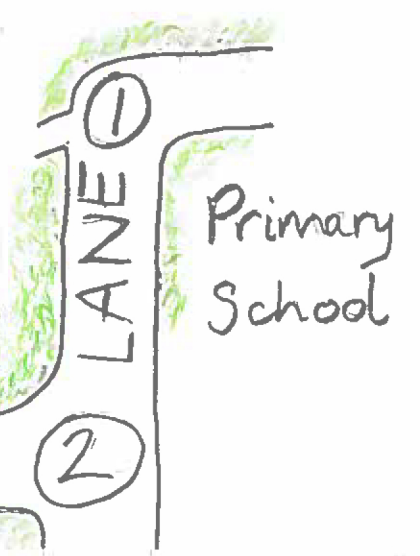


THE LANES, EXWICK EXETER

A Sound Walk
Emma Welton
April 2021

① A threshold between city and farmland. At your ears, the A30 exhaling from the West meets city transport breath filtered through innocent leaves.

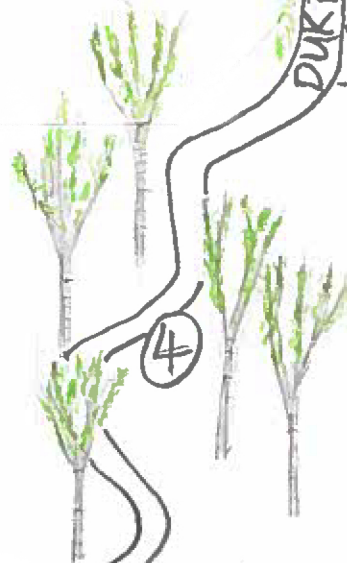


③ Your arms might brush the hedges in this narrow strip of birdsong. Become invisible and inaudible so birds come close. Their vibrations might take your breath away. I heard no life from the fields beyond.

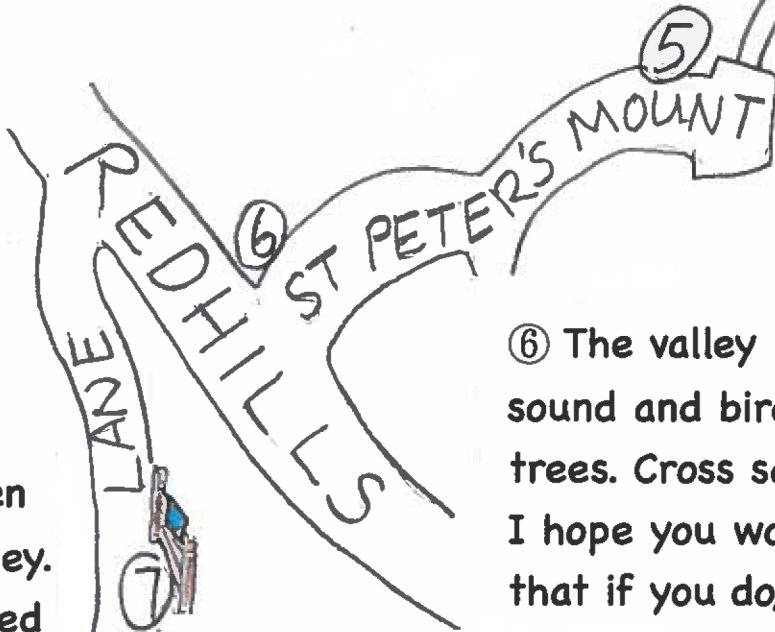


② Conscious of your footsteps, walk slowly. You might hear rooks rattle, neighbours talk, distant sheep 'baaa'. The sheltering hedges are full of twittering. Allow a bird voice to halt you. (Listen for it next time you're here.)

④ The copse's young leaves were damp and limp. I waited for wind to play them, but none came. It was just the lightness of birds and heaviness of people moving around, engine by engine.



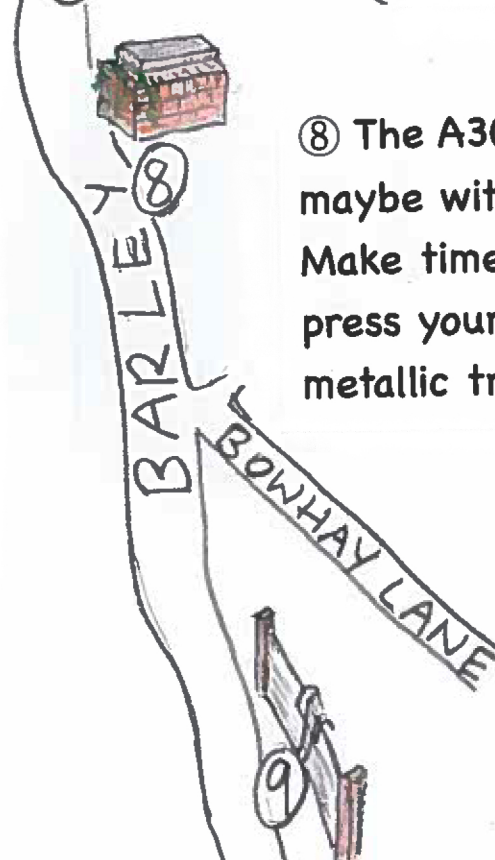
BE CAREFUL
CROSSING
REDHILLS:
no pavement,
poor visibility.



⑤ This habitat is very quiet. Seek out the music. I heard boiler flues exhaling, and my footsteps.

⑥ The valley acoustic contains road sound and birdsong from the ridge trees. Cross safely to Barley Lane. I hope you won't meet a car, but that if you do, it passes quietly.

⑦ At the gate, listen back across the valley. Recall how it sounded from the other side. Can you hear your breath as you climb up this ancient lane? Centuries of animals have cut deep sides into this earth, breathing like you.



⑧ The A30 breath re-appears - maybe without its city counterpart. Make time for the reservoir drain: press your ear onto the lid to hear metallic trickles in the chamber.

Walk distance:
approx. 1.5 km.

⑨ At the double metal gate, breathe in the audiorama, Exeter's Symphony. Think of other cities you know. Is their music similar, or different?

