

Shadow-walks in the USA **Viv Corringham**

At the end of the road 9.36
Walking across from Manhattan 9.00
In the machine 10.01
Hometown 8.54
Always the water 8.12

These compositions were created from recordings gathered during five artist residencies in the USA in 2006 and 2007. They are based on environmental sounds, my own singing in location, and conversations with people who took me on their special walks in these five places.

Shadow-walks is an ongoing project, which involves three main elements: walking with others, listening to environmental sound, and my own improvised singing. The project developed through an interest in our relationship with familiar environments. When we walk through a particular location frequently, I wonder how that affects our psyche, and how we affect the place. James Joyce wrote that places remember events, and I found this idea very interesting—that everything that happens leaves traces that we might be able to sense. If, throughout a lifetime, a person walks through certain places repeatedly, along the same route, does that ground retain traces of the person's own history and memories? In a sense, *Shadow-walks* are an attempt to make a person's traces audible.

In each new place, I ask local inhabitants to take me on a special walk, a walk that has been repeated many times and has distinct meaning or significance for that person. An initial walk with the person along their selected route, in which environmental sounds and conversations are recorded, is followed by my solo walk in which I attempt to sense my previous companion's traces on the walk and to make this audible through improvised singing in the location. These recordings are then taken back to my studio, where I edit them together to become the final work, the *Shadow-walk*. Through my improvisations and the final compositions, I am trying to convey people's special relationship with familiar places and also how that links to the interior landscape of personal history, memory and association.

I am very grateful to everyone who has shared a walk with me.

At the end of the road (9.36)

Grand Marais, Minnesota

Nine people took me on walks through howling winds and April ice in this Northern border town where they have escaped their pasts and left their cities to be close to the lake and the wilderness.

Walking across from Manhattan (9.00)

Brooklyn, New York

Walks beside the river, in traffic, through parks and into subways with 5 adults, 1 child and 3 babies.

In the machine (10.01)

Cal State University, Fullerton, California

11 students and 2 faculty members led me on walks around the campus: from class to parking lot, to calm oases, to evening jobs, and to recreate a walk where one day a life changed.

Hometown (8.54)

Rochester, Minnesota

3 companions, including a long-time resident and a mall-walker.

Always the water (8.12)

The Bay Area, California

Walks by ruined baths, in the Mission and around Berkeley with 2 musicians, a phonographer and a writer.



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