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Dear Low Drifter,

Like you I'm many things, one of them is a psychogeographer. This means I'm interested in how places make us feel and why they have that affect: is it the architecture, atmosphere, our positionality, stories we have heard, who else is or isn't there or something else entirely? I love wandering and wondering and I believe walking is more than pedestrian. We can transform walking into both a creative and political act. The right to shape our everyday environment, to turn our desire lines into concrete paths, the right to take up enough space to flourish: I think every body deserves that chance. We can use our footsteps to critically engage with space, uncover hidden power structures, amplify seldom heard voices, connecting not just with place but the people we encounter by chance. There are beaches under the pavements and goddesses strolling the canal towpath. A map is nothing but a line drawn, but it is also, always, an act of power, of enclosure, of limiting and owning and the challenge is to remember we can draw our own lines too. We can remap our environment according to our dreams, desires and memories.

Songs can be a map too. For years before I visited, my Bristol was a set of 'Sarah Records' postcards and a vision of dreaming geese. I was sure I would one day meet a kindred with all 100 records, fall in love and live happily ever after in There and Back Again Lane. Songs can conjure ghosts, weave magic, plant the seed of an idea that starts the revolution that changes the world. Songs are a primal, vital, form of connection and communication as Nick Drake says "if songs were lines in a conversation the situation would be fine." So many times I have shared songs with others, hoping they would get the subliminal message I was sending, but we all receive differently just as we all stand in different worlds even if we are hand in hand.

Wherever we are we stand on a tapestry of stories, we're at the intersection of so many other people's journeys. If we pay close attention, dive deeply enough, we can catch their resonances. The political geographer Doreen Massey helps us visualise space not as something fixed or static but as a constellation of relationships. We are all part of a vast network of contacts, connections, and flows: love, yes, but also ideas, music, culture and the more tangible money, goods and technologies. Not all flows are equal and we must always be conscious of power. Who is drawing the lines? Some of that power is ours of course, individual and collective, we can shape the future of our stories even when the world is full of chaos. This is true even (especially) during a time of pandemic when the greatest love we can show is keeping our physical distance from each other even as the cracks in the system become too huge to ignore. It's a cliché perhaps but it's true: solidarities can transcend borders, break through the lines. Energy, melody, serendipity cannot be contained.

There's a contradiction and tension here of course: if everything is constant flux how do we know where we are, what home feels like? Where can we find an anchor if we are constantly adrift? Songs, stories, memories can orientate, inspire and guide us. Past echoes, fragments of space, threads of time, glimpses of sound, scraps of images. A farewell hug, the smell of Welsh cakes, sand between our toes, a puppy snoring, that weird electrical hum, pint pots chinking, a misremembered bookcover, the second before a first kiss... Whatever comes next I hope we don't ignore the way divisions, inequalities, oppressions inherent in the systems we have constructed have been revealed to us by

Covid-19, Disabled peoples organisations, climate change, human and animal rights activists, decolonisation campaigners and so many others. Our world is not natural, accidental or pre-ordained. We know who the real key workers are and how corruption flows when the market rules. Caring, creating, questioning. We can't let these new connections dissipate: we will not forget.

When physical exploration is hard we have the opportunity to dive deeply into our memories and all those maps made by others. We can travel in our dreams and imagine a better world, there is always another chance to take a first step. It doesn't stop the yearning but the places we miss will still be there when we are better. Changed, of course, but so are we and the flux is how we know there is something worth treasuring, remembering, wishing we could hold on tight but knowing that we never can. Places hold, make, save space for us but they don't actually care whether we are in them or not; they linger far longer than we ever do. We can't be everywhere at once so let's keep drawing lines between people, places, joining the dots across time and space, channelling invisible energies, atmospheres, feelings, spirit.... We call this lots of things but perhaps it's just the same light refracted through a different prism.... Art, psychogeography, poetry, magic, faith, hope, coincidence, music....Drift well, wherever, however, whatever you are....

Love and golden apples



PS. Some more things to read, watch and listen to if The Low Drift inspires you to go further into psychogeography (although not everything here would choose that label). In no particular order an uncomprehensive treasury of excellent bouncing off points:

- *Savage Messiah* by Laura Grace Ford
- Patrick Keiller's *Robinson* Films (*In Ruins* is my favourite)
- Phil Smith's *Mythogeography, Counter-Tourism On Walking* and more
- *Walking Inside Out: Contemporary British Psychogeography* edited by Tina Richardson (includes a chapter by me on why I walk the way I do)
- The Walking Artists Network (www.walkingartistsnetwork.org) and WalkCreate gallery (walkcreate.gla.ac.uk) for online resources
- Radio shows produced by Jo Norcup's Geography Workshop
- Sonia Overall's #DistantDrift
- The art of Jane Samuels (like this album cover) (www.jane-samuels.com)
- The Fife Psychogeographical Collective
- *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* by Greil Marcus

And you are more than welcome to join The LRM online or the streets of Manchester, see the postcard for where to find us or email mlrose@thelrm.org

Morag Rose is a walking artist, activist and academic. In 2006 she founded psychogeographical collective The LRM (Loiterers Resistance Movement) and has written, exhibited and performed extensively. Morag's interventions in space include giant cake maps of Manchester, metaphysical treasure hunts, creative tours exploring lost rivers, gentrification, modernist heroines, hostile architecture and drinking cultures (amongst other things) and international games of CCTV bingo. At the heart of all her work is an assertion that the streets belong to everyone.