

Soundwalk from Home

Listen.
Words
on this printed page
are sound.

Listen.
The quiet voice
on this printed page.
is sound.

Listen.
Life
in this neighbourhood
is sound.

Listen.

Put aside one hour and go for a walk in your neighbourhood. Do nothing but listen. If you are walking with someone or several people, make clear to them that this hour is spent in silence with each other. Listening together to everything.

Open the door of the building in which you live, step out and listen. Walk and listen. Stop and listen. Go around the next corner and listen. Find a favourite spot in your neighbourhood and listen. Don't speak to anyone. Walk on and listen.

Listen
for voices
while walking.

Listen
for pauses.
Listen.

There are sounds because it is this time of the day.
Stop and listen

Listen for hums and motors
for birdcalls
and for pauses between the birdcalls.

Listen for echoes.

Hear your breath
and its rhythms
your footsteps
and their rhythm.

Stop for a moment and listen to your thoughts. Let them pass like the sound of a car. Follow them until you cannot hear them any longer.

Hear
the pauses
between sirens and horns and airplanes

The sounds of this season.

of clothes
and of wind.

Listen
into the distance

Stop
listening
for a moment.

Return home

Did you hear the sounds
of this place
of this time
in your life?

Put aside another hour
on another day
and go for a walk in your neighbourhood
do nothing but
listen

Hildegard Westerkamp (February 1997)