

Space for making notes

## An Awareness Walk

*Become inclined to watch the way of rain*

*When it falls slow and free.*

*Imitate the habit of twilight,*

*Taking time to open the well of colour*

*That fostered the brightness of day.*

*Draw alongside the silence of stone*

*Until its calmness can claim you.*

*Be excessively gentle with yourself.*

*– John O’Donohue “A Blessing for One Who is Exhausted”*

Set off alone and start walking.

Find your own space and breathe deeply. Be aware of your own body. Feel your limbs and the ground under your feet ... pavement, tarmac, shingle, grass, steps, sand, gravel.

Smell the air. What does it hold ... car exhaust fumes, earth, food, flowers, perfume?

Look at the sky ... the many shades of blue, grey, pink ... the clouds, their movements, colours and shapes.

Listen to all the sounds around you, close at hand and far away ... traffic, voices, birds, wind, planes, machinery, music. You may like to make a list.

Touch things as you walk. Feel the textures of wood, stone, brick, concrete, metal, fabric, soil, vegetation. Look at things near and far ... shapes, colours, textures. Be aware of the people you pass (without staring too hard!) ... their faces, eyes, skin, hair, clothes. How are they walking? What are they carrying?

*Do stuff. Be clenched, curious. Not waiting for inspiration's shove or society's kiss on your forehead. Pay attention. It's all about paying attention. Attention is vitality. It connects you with others. It makes you eager. Stay eager.*

*- Susan Sontag*

Be aware of litter, gutters, cracks, dark corners, signs of death and decay. Perhaps you may find something unexpected there.

Look at the buildings ... their shape on the skyline, roofs, chimney pots ... their doors and windows, wall colours, any ornamentation or graffiti.

Choose one building in particular. What is it used for? Perhaps its use has changed through time. Is the building casting shadows about it? Look closely at the patterns and colour of one brick/stone. Feel the texture. Where may it have been made or quarried?

Find a tree, bush or plant to look at. Consider its overall shape, its silhouette against the sky, the way its branches fall. Go up close and feel the bark or stem, look at the patterns and colour. Look at a leaf, its shape, colour and texture.

Pick up a small object from the ground ... a stone, seed pod, coin, piece of gravel, metal or plastic. Look at its shape and colour. Turn it over in your hands and feel its texture. What may its journey have been to the place where you picked it up?

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour*

*- William Blake "Auguries of Innocence"*

*The dream of my life  
Is to lie down by a slow river  
And stare at the light in the trees -  
To learn something by being nothing  
A little while but the rich  
Lens of attention.*

*- Mary Oliver "Entering the Kingdom"*