What is Your Ground?

This course starts with dérive.

https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/guy-debord-theory-of-the-derive

https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/psychogeography-a-purposeful-drift-through-the-city/

Before the course starts, you should drift around your neighborhood. Try to see what the circumference of your ground is. It need not be a circle, but there should be points of interest. Particular trees, creeks, boulders, works of art and other landmarks should be noted. Before the five weeks end, as early as possible, create a map of this ground and name it. It should have clear boundaries. You can use Google Maps, or you can do a crude rendering by hand. You can make it a work of art and you need not show anyone. The more you can walk your "ground" as you have defined it, the more success you'll have from this workshop.

In my 2023 interview with Robert Bringhurst I told him Michael McClure said: "The way to the universal is by means of the most intensely personal." Bringhurst had a friendly amendment. "The way to the universal is by means of the most intensely local." Develop your ground and consider the proposition that mind is a biospheric quality. Could you develop relationships with more-than-human entities in your circumference, your ground? Are there specific indigenous names for features in your neighborhood. The bay that the creek to the north of my house flows into, or the creek itself was known as dxʷwuqʷəb or "place of loon." There are no loons here anymore, but there are eagles, osprey, coots, ducks, geese, a beaver, buffleheads, crows, kingfishers, cormorants, mergansers, squirrels, blue herons and other critters. What non-human animals are in your circumference/ground?

EROS

In Robert Duncan's H.D. Book: The Roots of Modernism the chapter on Eros starts:

> *The work, the ground, and Eros lie at the heart of our study here. The*



work itself is the transformation of the ground. In this ground the soul and the world are one in a third hidden thing, in imagination of which the work arises. It is the work of creation then. It is Poetry, a Making. It is also the opus alchymicum of Hermetic and Rosicrucian alchemy. The rhymes of this poetry are correspondences, workings of figures and patterns of figures in which we apprehend the whole we do not see. The path that poetry creates between reality and the soul is the path of a conversion. Our path here must often come close to the path of depth psychologies and of theosophical schools, but we are tracing the path of Psyche and her Eros as workers of a fiction in the art of poetry, projecting not a cure of souls or an illumination of souls, except as the secret of fictions may cure or illumine, but the inner works of the poetic opus.

Questions to consider:

How are our lives shaped by eros (which AI wants to suggest is "erosion")?
How has your life been shaped by erotic choices?
Can you imagine a kind of relationship to your circumference that is charged with a psychic energy that's akin to eros?

EXERCISE

Write a poem about your circumference. Naming it is a good step. What are the qualities of this ground? Maybe your circumference map is part of the poem. You can use the cover poem technique and write a cover of the Tribe exercise. Or, you can walk the ground with a pocket journal and write down an opening phrase that comes to you and write a poem from there when you return to your desk. Or you can write during your dérive.

You can also take a photo of each landmark as you walk your ground and have as many chapters as there are landmark features. You can write Haiku or American Sentences for each landmark and expand each of the them into Haibun when you get home to write. If you can interview the feature, which requires a suspension of the belief that only humans are sentient, you can get good material that way. You can orient your poem north to south, or east to west. You can write the east section in the morning near sunrise and the south

section in the midday and the west section at sunset and the north after dinner.

As always, you are never required to share your work in the Zoom room, but a 5 minute check-in each week is helpful to get the most out of this experience and help me in my ongoing desire to tailor the materials to the needs of the participants.

1,000 hyperlocal blessings.

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LINKS

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https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/psychogeography-a-purposeful-drift-through-the-city/

https://paulenelson.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Cover-Poem.pdf

https://paulenelson.com/workshops/tribe-exercise/

https://paulenelson.com/workshops/haibun_exercise/

