

Dérive: Place-making Practices on Foot

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The Dérive is an embodied research method used by the Situationist International to conscientiously engage in new experiences by wandering through an urban environment. I enact the Dérive to study my new city and home by following the Green ARtery—a 22-mile walking path connecting green spaces and parks in Tampa, FL. This paper focuses on how performing place-making practices through participatory walking presents a spatially and temporally unique means of conducting research—simultaneously exploring and creating. The established physical locations, and the trail connecting them, symbolize the city’s history and culture, as well as its desire to identify itself as “pedestrian friendly.” The path and spaces are “read” through the interactive movements of the flâneur—a public performance of auto/ethnographic and phenomenological research situated within a larger “storied” space. As such, this paper considers the action of walking and the interactions of in-situ analysis to understand the lived experience, ultimately exploring how history and culture permeate from the asymmetries within subject/object relationships.

The walk begins with the first step, the first thought. Walking is a conversation with the environment, each step a turn taken—the space between, latency in motion.

I use what the Situationist International coined as the *dérive* to guide a walking journey in Tampa. The Situationists describe the *dérive* as a means of walking meant to break capitalism’s monotony by introducing new experiences. Although traditionally an individual act, this practice is not limited to personal experience as it encourages conscientious and public interaction. The *dérive* is meant here as a radical intervention against individuation or insular living and as a means of analyzing how we perceive the built environment. This active and participatory

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experience lends from psychogeography, a practice of exploring the specific effects of a geographical environment on the body. As Guy Debord notes, psychogeography is to movement, what psychoanalysis is to language. In other words, just as walking reveals the impact on behavior, emotion, connection, and belonging, the influences on thoughts, feelings, and actions are revealed through talking as well.

The phenomenological interpretation of walking focuses on the corporeal experience, as we perceive the world through our feet (Ingold and Vergunst). I wonder how we “communicate” with our environment, and in what ways our behaviors are shaped and formed by navigating the spaces within which we live, “[how] the relationship between place and identity emerges” (Moles 1.1). How can we be more conscientious of our environments, more in tune with how they shape our interactions? As Ingold states, “the landscape tells—or rather is—a story,” (317) a story written by others, available to read, interpret, understand and continue. Walking is “an activation of landscape whereby one does not dwell but flows through space—reading and performing space.” How do we interact with a place’s historicity, or what does a place tell us about its past? My purpose here is to use walking as a probe (De Leon and Cohen) and as a means of communicating with the place. I engage with the mobile research method of walking—wandering, relinquishing direction, and becoming attuned with how the space directs me. I perform the *derive* to ethnographically explore how the environment’s spatial arrangement encourages specific interactions, produces certain convictions, and invokes particular memories. The private act of rumination during the public act of walking frames this paper as a development of spatially oriented ethnographic fieldwork, whereby the walking constitutes self and place.

As a recent transplant to Tampa, Florida, I heard about the Green ARTery—a 22-mile walking and bike path designed to connect all of the city’s park spaces—from new friends. The Green ARTery, initially conceived by city planners, stretches from Downtown, north to Sulphur Springs, and from the Hillsborough River east to 30th Street (Griffin). The project is still in the initial stages of the proposal, and the route is not physically marked but is locatable on Google maps and the Green ARTery website. The digital map does not wholly represent the terrain and vice versa. The map does not consist of tangible elements, and the landscape itself does not designate the desired flow. The terrain certainly promotes movement, but rarely is it singular in direction. Instead, one can backtrack along a route (street, sidewalk, trail) or diverge along multiple trajectories at any given moment. The map directs the movement, giving precise order to the space, but lacks the physical flow, “the rhythmic totality of place” (Edensor 69). There are several points where street crossings are undesignated and where trails are ungrooved.

Building upon Baudelaire and Benjamin’s writings on the *flâneur*, I use “mobile methods” to explore the Green ARTery through “walking as a means of

knowing and understanding the city” (Lund). Mobile methods incorporate motion as part of the relationship between subject and researcher; thus, movement is a contextual basis of the “in situ” experience. Influenced by previous research in ethnography, space/place, and phenomenology, mobile methods are a means to perform active qualitative research. Thus, mobile methods are an immersive means of research, emphasizing an embodied flow, or “lived experience,” and are used here to “understand and theorize aspects of human experience and social action [with] objects and [in] environments” (Kusenbach 256). However, in this particular exercise, I use mobile methods predominantly in the phenomenological sense of experiencing the environment as an ethnographer. Although walking is an individual act, it activates space by performing connectivity through movement, therefore public for others to observe. As Murray states, “Mobile practices are placed at the centre of social relations, and social relations are placed at the centre of space and place” (469).

Rebecca Solnit posits that “exploring the world is one of the best ways of exploring the mind, and walking travels both terrains” (13). Since the Peripatetic School of Ancient Greece, where Aristotle became known for walking while lecturing, movement and thought have been interrelated. The history of the mobile auto/ethnographer, situated in an urban environment, begins with Baudelaire’s musings of the Flâneur, one who casually strolls around the city. Walter Benjamin expanded on Baudelaire’s writings, elaborating on the unique characteristics of the flâneur’s movement in their environment, enabling incredibly rich observations of social interaction. “That anamnestic intoxication in which the flâneur goes about the city not only feeds on the sensory data taking shape before his eyes but often possesses itself of abstract knowledge—as something experienced and lived through” (Benjamin, 417). Walking is defined as both a physical and cognitive activity. As Tuan proposes, “spatial ability becomes spatial knowledge when movements and changes of location can be envisaged... If I can ‘see’ myself walking and if I can... analyze how I move and what path I am following, then I also have knowledge” (68). Therefore, our ability to perceive and understand an environment is dependent upon this spatial knowledge.

There are three types of walking practices: purposive (a necessary mode of transportation towards the desired location), discursive (a relational activity marked by participation with the environment through global-touch), and conceptual (a performative, reflective, and critically aware mode of walking intended to redefine the space and the relationship with it) (Wunderlich). Throughout this paper (and my walk), the “conceptual walk” is operationalized as a method by which the alteration of perception can alter human interaction. As De Certeau argues, walking is a form of resistance against the imposing order of city spaces, which counters the body-subject’s (Merleau-Ponty) habitual and automatic movements. The body-subject reinforces the notion of walking as routinely mundane and therefore indistinguishable or unconscious; however, Rendell rejects

walking as mechanical and propose it as the basis for a relationship with particular urban environments or locations:

Through the act of walking new connections are made and re-made, physically and conceptually over time and through space. Public concerns and private fantasies, past events, and future imaginings, are brought into the here and now, into a relationship that is both sequential and simultaneous. Walking is a way of at once discovering and transforming the city. (Rendell 153)

Thus, walking is a mode of experiencing place, “a multifaceted activity and a temporal practice” (Wunderlich 125), or as Jeanine Middleton expresses, walking is embodied and reflexive (Middleton). Walking is a method of inquiry to understand further my new location and a means of place-making in shaping the city (both physically and conceptually) through my interactions with it.

The city, or urban environment, is an established place. To understand how place is distinguished from the more abstract sense of space, the two associated labels (space and place) require explanation. The terms, encompassing numerous definitions and connections, are not inextricable; however, their relationship indicates auto/ethnographic research in the sense that place and space are dependent upon the actions within them. “What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value” (Tuan 6), or as Setha Low claims, place is space plus meaning. Thomas Gieryn provides some examples of this as space “becomes a place only when it ensconces history or utopia, danger or security, identity or memory” (465). Michel de Certeau further elaborates on the experience of place; where place is an established order within a material location (space), movement through place is “composed of intersections of mobile elements,” resulting in “successive contexts.” This recursion occurs when “through the act of walking new connections are made and re-made, physically and conceptually over time and through space” (Tuan 10). Thus, the focus on movement that de Certeau subsumes in his use of the term space (re)produces place as “the street, geometrically defined by urban planning, is transformed into a space by walkers” (117), or as Edensor states, “walking is part of the concatenation of rhythms through which place is (re)produced” (77).

Additionally, Edensor posits walking as a rhythmic movement within a surrounding place, which itself possesses a rhythmic flow, “traffic, shop opening hours, lunchtime, seasons and weather” (69). Larsen summarizes in saying that “through such mobile, co-present, participatory immersion in the rhythms and flows of movement, researchers... explore how movement is a place-making activity” (60). Lastly, Sarah Pink proposes an approach to transition and establishment by looking at the implications of ethnographic place-making. Here we see psychogeography and place-making as already entangled in ethnography’s embodiment and the relational ties to the research subject—we are always already

situated within a place.

Walking as a mobile place-making activity incorporates a confluence of the “complex polyrhythmy of place,” illustrating the bilateral exchange between person and place—an outgoing inscription of the person onto the place and an incoming stratum of meaning of place marked on the body (Edensor 69). While the basis for mobile methods exists in the researcher’s lived experience, there is an apparent lapse regarding the reflexivity of the personal experience. Previous research hints towards this theoretical grounding and reveals limitations in the absence of the reflexive underpinnings, which only stand to augment ethnographic research concerning the physical environment and the influence on the notions of spatial, collective, and individual identity. As I walk through these streets, I perform an emerging other. The city emerges as something else, something different than what I previously perceived it to be with each step. The city becomes less strange and more recognizable, and I change as well, becoming someone else, less (a) stranger.

Throughout my walk, I noticed instances where the landscape occasioned introspections by provoking memories of past experiences and places or bringing forth perceptions, which I found particularly keen. The arousal of thoughts demonstrates the connection between the physical walk and wandering thoughts. Therefore, this paper bridges the public and private acts of walking and thinking. To illustrate the relationships between present place and memories, I denote through latitude and longitude coordinates the specific locations, and the italicized text presents my ruminations and reflections.

27.997256, -82.432729

“For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world such are a few of the slightest pleasures of those independent, passionate, impartial natures which the tongue can but clumsily define” (Baudelaire 9).

27.997255, -82.432729

Feet centered and shoulder-width apart, shift weight onto right foot. Lean forward. Flex hip and quadriceps to lift left foot. Place left foot forward and downward. Transfer weight to left foot. Roll right foot forward onto ball of foot. Flex hip and quadriceps to lift right foot. Place right foot forward and downward. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat. Repeat...

27.997254, -82.432729

27.997253

27.997252

27.997251

27.997250...

I begin this journey like most others, enthusiastic and energized, even a bit overzealous. I ponder the practice of the flâneur taking a pet turtle for a walk and realize that my pace is far quicker. Speed is the enemy of perception. “Walking produces a stretched-out sense of place” (Edensor 77). I pull back into a stroll and drift off for a minute to focus on my gate, “deliberately slowing down and heeding the nuances—requires steady and mindful attention to detail” (Anderson 86). I know that if I extend my feet too far forward and step fully onto my heels, I’ll succumb to foot pain early. A passage I recently read swirls in my head, “American young people are forgetting how to walk” (Montgomery 51). This performance of walking is intense, requiring stamina and endurance. You may say to yourself, “it’s just a walk,” but the average gate requires 1,760 steps per mile. That’s 1,760 times that your heels will absorb your body weight per mile. Walking is gentle repetition, similar to how dripping water carves holes in rock, but your heels aren’t the only things tenderized in the process. You’d think that walking is orderly and rhythmically consistent. Far from it, walking requires flexibility and nimbleness, especially on varying terrain. We step to navigate, but also to compensate, and this unpredictable notion of movement results in arrivals at unforeseen negotiations.

“The walking body weaves a path that is contingent, and accordingly produces contingent notions of place as well as being, partially conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place” (Edensor 70). 22nd Street heading south goes by faster than I anticipate: two schools to the left, a baseball field to the right, a steady stream of sidewalk, and a few roundabouts along the way. I’m not sure why I pass these features with such haste or why I write about it with abjuration. The remaining distance pushes me to forge ahead, left to ponder my preconditioning. Having driven through this neighborhood a few times, I always perceive it as the line between two points, rather than a point between two lines (Deleuze and Guattari). Staring at my feet, concentrating on my steps, I arrive at an ostentatious fountain. Grabbing hold of the pickets, I rest my face against the eight-foot-high fence to watch the water flow. I wonder why this fountain, detained from experience by locked gates, marks with such unavailing celebration the intersection between neighborhood surface streets and elevated lanes of Interstate 4. The water erodes the concrete—this isn’t permanent, and my suspicions are confirmed as I look into the fountain’s history. I locate an article in the *Tampa Bay Times* quoting then City Council member John Dingfelder, “it’s unfortunate

that the things [fountain] were built to start with... In hindsight, it seems like a big waste of money" (Graham). Regardless of the fountain's perceived and stated gratuitousness, there is a connection with the space itself. I offer an instant judgment of aesthetic value, but these randomly observed locations, these physical interruptions in my journey are proprioceptive as well—touching nerves and stimulating responses. This walk is "an exploration of the deserted places of my memory" (De Certeau 107), evoking sensations that transport me to other locations previously experienced.

40.493323, -74.443733

*"The Down Under" across from Monument Square Park fountain.
An amazing punk show, an uprooted Tombstone, shattered glass, and a stolen car.*

40.691862, -73.975612

*The Prison Ship Martyrs Monument.
The 2005 NYC blackout and a 7-mile walk to an empty apartment; she was with someone else.*

40.737913, -73.985883

*Grammercy Park, where the sign says, "Residents only."
I am the penury prohibited from the recreation of the opulent.*

25.763980, -80.256146

*Douglas Entrance - Puerta Del Sol — the gateway fountain.
Streams of opportunity until the well ran dry.*

27.965059, -82.435122

The back roads of Ybor City end at Adamo St., and the sun emerges from the clouds as I walk west headed towards Channelside Dr. The Selmon Expressway follows along Adamo, looming above patches of grass and damp concrete pits filled with swamp fern. The Ybor Channel and shipyard are on the other side of the monstrous canopy:

In contrast to the sea, the city is the striated space par excellence; the sea is a smooth space fundamentally open to striation, and the city is the force of striation that reimparts smooth space, puts it back into operation everywhere, on earth and in the other elements, outside but also inside itself. (Deleuze and Guattari 481)

There is no sidewalk here, just a thin dirt trail running parallel to the road. The

relentless linearity pulls the horizon in while extending the landscape. My stride decreases, and my feet begin to shuffle. Little plumes of dust kick up with each step and settle back down, each grain falling into chaotic order. The trail becomes a sidewalk, becomes a parking lot, becomes a construction zone. I turn south, and the downtown skyscrapers emerge from beyond the elevated roadways.

I look down and notice a maintenance hole cover depicting a clipper ship. I can't smell the saltwater, but I know I'm in a coastal city, steeped in nautical lore. I've always appreciated maintenance hole cover designs, anything more elaborate than the embossed lettering of "department of public works." When I lived in New York City, ConEd had a design competition to celebrate the millennium. The winning design was an optical illusion depicting a bulging grid. I think back to the first time I saw a millennial maintenance hole cover. "Every present is determined by those [past] images which are synchronic with it. Such images are 'dialectical,' in one sense of the term, when they are negated and preserved in history at once" (Buck-Morss 104). I took a picture of that first millennial maintenance hole, and have not taken another picture of a maintenance hole cover since, until now, until this clipper. I contemplate the maintenance holes as thresholds, the city above and the city below, the boundary between the visible and the invisible. The maintenance hole cover becomes "the sensible thing ... the place where the invisible is captured in the visible" (Merleau-Ponty xli). The invisible in this sense is the signification of the object, what the maintenance hole cover means. Consequently, I am struck by the memories of a time when walking was my primary means of transport.

40.738894, -73.980936

Double pleated wool dress pants, thin wool dress socks, flat-toed Kenneth Cole dress shoes cracking at the seams and delaminating from the soles. Looking five stories down through the fire escape, the dark shadows of naked tree branches fracture the grey and brown snow-covered street below. I leave my dilapidated 450 square foot apartment on 24th and 2nd and make my way to the pristine architecture office where I work. Ten blocks north, a cross-town bus ride to Penn Station, two avenues west, then four more streets north: 1.2 miles of walking each way, 2.4 miles a day.

28.010535, -82.464133

There is a steady flow of people along the Riverwalk. This space is activated into place, functioning as an urban throughway. Baudelaire wrote of the Flâneur as the engaged citizen, a spectator and participant of the street scene, conducting what De Certeau considers a speech act, "walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc. ... the trajectories it 'speaks'" (1984). I wave and say hello to others, fellow walkers, cyclists, and strollers, but few reciprocate, moving in their trajectories—"organless" bodies (Deleuze and Guattari) purposeful, yet

meaningless. I emerge from under one of the street bridges and catch a glimpse of the Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel.

27.946115, -82.459491

“Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own” (Heinlein, 1991). It was almost ten years ago that Giselle and I drove to Tampa from Miami for a conference. We had been dating for just a few months. We exhaled that weekend. I think I love you... I think I love you too.

28.005249, -82.467844

I continue north along the winding Hillsborough River to a rope-bordered sign that reads, “Jean Street Shipyard, established in 1843.” I photograph the sign and venture onto the property, too curious to let it pass. The terrain slopes downward towards the riverbank, clearing as it descends. The vegetation to each side of the clearing hangs over as if to wrap the earth in its arms. On the right sits some newer looking trailers in front of the original building covered in a rusted metal and green algae patina. I glance at a row of boats sitting on stilts, patiently waiting for their owners to perform repairs or simply to be dropped back into their liquid homes. I walk down and am taken aback by what I’ve missed so far—two ship hulls, each over fifty feet in length. They’ve been here long enough to become planters, their keels stabbing the ground, partially buried from the weight of the enormous trees growing from their decks. A man approaches, and I extend my hand and introduce myself. He did not reciprocate and eschewed me out. The feeling of unwelcome presence, of desired absence, indicates my place as a stranger in a strange land. “Get happy, son. Get that old spring into your step and stay on your toes” (Heinlein).

I cross the Hillsborough River along Sligh Avenue and loop through Lowry Park next to the zoo. Green algae cover the wooden slats along the swaying boardwalk—the surface leans to the left, then to the right, but the railings are consistently plumb. The trees to each side, and their roots below, accent the peaks and valleys along the boardwalk as it purposefully adjusts to the terrain. “Rootedness discloses place in a manner that is securing, but it is nevertheless a form of movement” (Rickert 274). The uneven ground livens my steps as I approach the freeway. There are several transient dwellings here, but they seem more than temporary. A man rigs his fishing rod as I briskly slip by to give him space. He asks me for a smoke, and I oblige him. “The denial of places through which homeless bodies may dwell or rest generate a condition of perpetual movement” (Edensor 71), but I am the one who continues, left to wonder if he will ever make it home.

Concrete interrupts the boardwalk under the bridge. An embankment to my left leans to the underside of the preformed roadway slabs above. A stack of unwrapped but cured cement bags on my right holds back the river—the columns underneath lean upwards, not a single one perpendicular to the next.

40.493722, -74.447632

Preformed concrete slabs, tensioned steel, tilt-up concrete, poured-in-place foundation walls, reinforced concrete columns. I used these terms daily working at an architecture firm in New Brunswick, NJ. I lost my license after passing out behind the wheel of the flower delivery truck I used to drive. I ran a red light and clipped the rear right quarter panel of a Nissan Maxima. I woke up and swerved just in time to miss the rear door. A young child was sitting in the back seat. The driver, the child's mother, leaped out of the car and started screaming at me. I asked if her child was all right, and she turned away to check on him. My license was suspended until I was medically cleared to drive. A few EKG, EEG, and Tilt-Table Tests later I was diagnosed with Vasovagal Syncope, which led to losing my driver's license indefinitely.

28.021205, -82.451837

A pattern emerges as I gaze across the river—the columns appear woven together. The bridge rumbles and vibrates in harmonic frequency with the traffic above, but the river below seems to flow in dissonance to everything else. The water itself, not the bank nor the bed, not the bridge nor the path, is the only thing that belongs here, unaware as it moves on, and so do I. On the other side is more asphalt. The parking lot spreads from the road to the river, covering everything from boundary to border.

Fueled by myths and Native American folklore, Sulphur Springs was once renowned for its mystical healing properties. The springs became a popular tourist destination and now show the unfortunate signs of environmental abuse. Walking up to the springs along Curiosity Creek, I feel detached and in need of reprieve. There has been a steady flow between periods of oppressive urbanization. The quaint side streets and soft grass meadows surrounded by trees and streams have been the only respites. I come upon the springs surrounded by concrete and directly adjacent to another road, Nebraska Ave. The history here is one of disastrous consequences. I wonder if Tampa is a place that “has never learned the art of growing old by playing on its pasts” (De Certeau 91). An invidious looking fence corrals the springs, warning visitors to avoid contact with the water. The springs were closed in 1986 due to “high fecal coliform bacterial counts,” and a chlorinated pool was built on the property. Next to the pool is a mural depicting Florida wildlife—both are ugly reminders of our atrocious behavior towards nature. Used up and defaced by mockery.

Across the way is the Springs Theater. I try and take a picture, but I am too far away from this side of the street. I begin to approach and stumble off the curb,

yet to realize where I am. As soon as I am transported through a green space, I am ejected back onto sidewalks with no buffer to the street. I slide the zoom feature and snap the picture. Taking pictures captures a specific location along the route, fixing the conversation to a particular place. "Every photograph is merely a trace left by the disappearance of everything else" (Baudrillard 87). The walk's flow hails me to continue, leaving the space of the picture behind; I disappear with every step.

Rubber tires hum on the asphalt in my left ear and the river flows steadily in my right ear as I walk south on Nebraska Ave. I turn again into a side street (E. Patterson St.). I've become uninterested in sidewalks and take the opportunity to walk in the middle of the street, perhaps an unconscious act of protest against mechanical locomotion. A tree stands in the middle of the road, sequestered in asphalt, finely groomed for vertical clearance, and minimally landscaped around. The tree is accompanied by yellow and black reflective signs warning oncoming cars of the potential calamity - stoic in preventing a collision with nature. Is this a product of environmental conservation, historical significance, or property rights? The trees came first, but were there houses before the road? A car approaches; the oak leaves rustle in the wind, a thousand little hands clapping. I wait for the vehicle to pass, take a picture, and continue walking down the middle of the street.

At the end of Park Drive, I slip into the 22nd Street Park. I can't help but think of "naming practices." The terrain undulates, and these minimal bumps feel extraordinary compared to the relentless horizontality of the road. The ground is damp, and the little valleys are muddy. I am tempted to take off my shoes and cool my feet.

37.099940, -118.510372

I'm about to become a father. Aware of the monumental shift in responsibilities that awaits my life, I head north into the Sierra Nevada Mountains, alone. My wife's last words to me before I left were, "be careful honey, come back to us." From a bluff above the turquoise blue glacial lake, I organize my daypack in the shadow of Temple Crag, preparing to ascend to Palisade Glacier. At the end of Sam Mack Meadow, I decided to free climb the granite rock face, and halfway up, I realize that I'm beyond a safe descending height. Her voice echoes in my ears, "be careful honey, come back to us." I clear three ridgelines before arriving at the glacier base, a small lake surrounded by crusted snow. Warmed by the high-altitude sun, cooled by the mild weather and soft breeze, I stretch out on a flat rock and fall asleep. Her voice awakens me, "be careful honey, come back to us." On the way down, I take an alternate route trying to stay on manageable terrain. I follow the water, the path of least resistance, and come to a crevasse. The waterfall has long since dried up, and I descend underneath enormous boulders jammed between the walls. "Be careful honey, come back to us." When I arrive at the meadow, my minimalist shoes have gouged into my heels. The stream is crystal clear, and I take off my shoes and cool my feet.

28.022341, -82.435202

I push on, knowing that there are still miles to go. The process of sensing these places is subsiding to the urgency of completing the walk. The pace effaces the place. I cross Rowlett Park Drive in a hurry. This section of the road does not have a marked crosswalk.

40.504511, -74.454937

*The lady driving the Nissan Maxima sued the flower shop. Although she claimed disabilities, she was later video recorded by a private investigator doing calisthenics in her living room. A few months after the lawsuit was dropped, I went out on a first date with a girl named Meg. We decided to watch *Scream* instead of *Titanic*, a near-fatal choice on my part. As she parked across the street, I flipped up my hoodie and jogged towards her Volkswagen Rabbit convertible. I looked both ways. I swear, I did. I felt something following me as I crossed the street diagonally. I turned in time to read "Lincoln Continental" before the bumper clipped my legs and flipped my rag-dolled body over the car. I was launched so abruptly into motion that the thud of hitting the asphalt behind the car was a stretched-out moment in time.*

It felt as if seconds had passed before I began to slide.

It felt like acceleration as my jacket tore against the pavement.

It felt as if the driver had thrown the car in reverse, running me over, again.

At the hospital, I receive care for my injuries and questions about my sanity. The officer stopped short of accusing me of attempting suicide.

28.022341, -82.435202

Traveling south, along railroad tracks, the gravel pierces through the soles of my minimalist shoes. I measure my steps to land on the railroad ties, stepping forward, looking down, all the while yearning to see more than my alternating feet. I turn south on 30th street next to a building surrounded by two rows of chain-link fence and spiral barbed wire, another place marked by prohibited entry. I move past, no longer interested in exploring areas that forbid interaction. Whatever is under lock and key can remain in its desolate exclusion. I estimate that I am a few miles from the car, and I succumb to an old habit—never stepping on a crack. My walk becomes a mild skip stretching out a bit more or recoiling back a hair. I reach the corner of 30th Street and Hillsborough Avenue. I see the Fun Lan sign feeling every muscle strain to extend and contract. My legs are not rubbery;

they are stone, the opposite of fresh. I arrive at my car and head home to ruminate on the experience.

As I finish writing this piece, I look back upon the journey. Walking the Green ARTery, reading books and articles about walking, mobile research methods, auto/ethnography, and reflexivity, and browsing numerous websites about Tampa's history have brought me to a greater understanding of the relationship between self and place. Leaving one place and moving to another means leaving certain "things" behind and perhaps acquiring new ones. These things may be activities such as fishing, which is dependent on proximity to water, or camping, which requires a particular climate. Even modes of transportation change depending on the costs of automobile ownership, the public transportation infrastructure available to residents, or the overall public perception of walking or cycling as a viable means of city navigation. But ultimately, it may very well be my "sense" of place, how I come to know the city, and in what ways my previous experiences may be recalled that subsequently influence my notions of identity. Here, the import of reflexivity in any research that positions the self within a particular environment emerges. The limits of language denote the limits of our world. Similarly, our movement limits our world—constructed boundaries, and therefore spaces beyond that are yet to be traversed.

The journey is this—to focus on how we can conduct ethnographic research through phenomenological experiences. Walking moves between periods of mindful, present thought work and the more leisurely drifting of thoughts allowing us to arrive at interpretations marked by intentionality and chance. Perception is key to this particular type of research, promoting an environmental consciousness that intersects the symbolic and the real. Walking connects one place to another and sews together the remnants of the past found throughout the terrain with the insight produced during the time spent traversing it. Engaging between person and place reveals a notion that indicated alignment more than disparity. While the public act of walking enables movement within and through locations, the locations move the private thoughts through time. Reflections provoked by spaces that resemble others and feelings that remind me of past experiences constitute interpretations of the present space. This sense of place then includes how we move and interact with space as we drift through it. However, the drift is also a mental journey that constitutes how we perceive space and ourselves within it. These notions shape how we communicate within the space and about it with others—making our private recollections public.

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