

**‘Meandering into Meaning’:  
A Teacher’s Reflection on the Pedagogy of  
Wandering**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

I began going for a series of walks during my Arts Education Master's program that permanently changed my view of the act. I came to see this type of reflective walking as Wandering, which I define as walking that becomes pedagogical in its imaginative call to slowness and reflection.

Much of learning seems to be conducted as a hurried affair. This timed approach to learning, and the stresses it brings, is what brought me to the autobiographical examination of the possibilities of wandering as reflection.

I begin with a look at historical connections between walking and thinking. I then discuss my modes of inquiry: narrative, poetic and performative. Next is an embodied textual wandering that places the reader on the journey with me, followed by a conclusion and a look at the texts that inform my perspective as an appendix.

**Keywords:** Wandering; walking; reflection; time; slowness; learning

*To my parents Bradley & Bernadette,*

*who have wandered along each path with me in faith.*

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*wanderer, the road is your  
footsteps, nothing else;  
wanderer, there is no path,  
you lay down a path in walking.  
in walking you lay down a  
path  
and when turning around  
you see the road you'll  
never stop on again.  
wanderer, path there is none,  
only tracks on ocean foam<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Poem by Antonio Machado, from *Proverbios y Cantares* (1930) as translated by F. Varela, (1987, p. 63).

## Chapter 1. Introduction

*He had the feeling of unexplained excitement with which,  
on halfholidays at school,  
he used to start off into the unknown.*

*-Edith Wharton, The Age of Innocence*

I discovered wandering as a student in search of ways of becoming a better teacher. Weeks into my graduate studies in Arts Education at Simon Fraser University, I found myself taking long walks along the streets of downtown Vancouver. I embarked on these walks with no particular plan, no schedule, and no map. At the times of the day when I set out to walk, I had nowhere to be. I was free to roam. It was a freedom that allowed me to enter Kairos<sup>1</sup> time for the first time since becoming a teacher two years prior.

Scholar Karen Meyer writes, “Time takes us to the horizons of past, present, and future in relation to the temporality and finitude of our lives. We reflect, attend and imagine there,” (Meyer, 2010, p. 87). The luxuriously loose sense of time is what made my moments of wandering so precious. I was able to walk, to be away from, as I connected with thoughts and my surroundings.

<sup>1</sup> An Ancient Greek concept defined as “a moment of indeterminate time in which everything happens”. Also, In the New Testament as “the appointed time in the purpose of God” (Wikipedia, 2015). Kairos time is the counterpoint to Chronos time, which is time as determined by seconds, minutes and hours. Wandering takes place outside of Chronos time, falling comfortably within the boundlessness of Kairos.



“Thinking about important ideas needs some nurturing in our classes. It takes time,” educator Joan Wink writes (Wink, 2011, p. 4). Similarly, in their collaborative musings on what they call “passive reflection”<sup>2</sup>, scholars Sean Wiebe, Lynn Fels, Celeste Snowber, Indrani Margolin and John J. Guiney Yallop highlight the role of slowness in reflective thinking. They write, “We remind practitioners and scholars alike that our creative and artful ways in learning need not avoid being slow to find an answer...” (Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 245).

I began to see these walks as not only a suspension of time, but as a form of advocacy for the crucial aspect of time in learning. After noticing a pattern of clarity in my thinking when I returned to my desk to work after long walks, I began to explore the implications that seemingly idle wandering had on my thinking and learning. Author Rebecca Solnit’s words resonated with me: “I sat down one spring day to write about walking and stood up again, because a desk is no place to think on the large scale” (Solnit, 2000, p. 4).

I also realized the potency of these walks as a means of reflection. The suspended sense of time and the magnified sense of space as I covered unexpected distances heightened my focus and permitted me to see the familiar in new ways. As author Rebecca Solnit writes, “A new thought often seems like a feature of the landscape that was there all along, as though thinking were traveling rather than making” (Solnit, 2000, p. 6). I found myself routinely bending down or leaning in for closer a look, something I had rarely done before.

Eventually, I came to see these long walks as a form of kinesthetic reflection<sup>3</sup>. I walked to reflect in motion. As dancer and somatic knowledge scholar Celeste Snowber writes, “In movement my mind slows down enough to truly listen – listen to the bold proclamations and the gentle whispers; the ones within and the whispers without” (Snowber, 2012, p. 53).

<sup>2</sup> The authors define passive reflection as “a practice of extended meditative focus that invites poetic, playful pause, response and responsibility” (Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 245).

<sup>3</sup> By *kinesthetic reflection*, I mean reflection – deep thinking – that takes place in and through motion.

The reflective nature of these walks, coupled with the suspended sense of time and freedom for thinking that they bring are what has led me to term this type of kinesthetic reflection, Wandering. To wander is not only to head out boldly and bravely without a script, walking into the unknown in search of the unknown, it is also to intentionally explore the recesses of one's mind and the ideas that float to the surface without the burden of the premature internal editor, or the fear of feeling foolish. It is how the what has never been becomes.

When I realized the pedagogical potential wandering held, I began to envision it as something that could be used for learners of all ages. I initially conceived of this thesis as a manual for wandering. After a year of thinking, writing, talking with my supervisor and committee, and of course, wandering, I came full circle to where my journey had begun. My thesis then went from being a manual about wandering to the embodiment of wandering. I went from thinking about wandering as a reflection tool for learning for students, to examining the effect of this phenomenon on me as a teacher-learner. I conduct this examination in similar vein to curriculum theorist William F. Pinar, whose autobiographical method of *currence*, "support[s] the systematic study of self-reflexivity within the processes of education" (Pinar, 2004, p. 35).

This work is a wandering expedition across time zones and across oceans. It begins on the Pacific Rim in Vancouver, where I first discovered the pedagogy of wandering through the inadvertent practice of it. My journey then continues, unexpectedly, back home in the Atlantic, in The Bahamas, where the scenes of my wanderings shift from those of an urban landscape to sandy shores.

I have encountered particularly poignant texts along my journey. I was pleasantly surprised to discover the vast array of literature on walking dating back centuries. I have been bolstered by the anecdotes of walking philosophers and the musings of writers who walk as a practice, as well as novelists who have used walking as a trope in their fiction (Coverley, 2012; Solnit, 2000). Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2000) has been of particular interest to me on this journey; so has Merlin Coverley's *The Art of Wandering: The Writer as Walker* (2012).

In his 2001 book, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, scholar Larry Shiner writes of education theory pioneer John Dewey, “He wanted to identify an ‘art’ dimension in everyday activities from sewing and singing to gardening and sports” (Shiner, 2001, p. 264). Similarly, design scholar Yuriko Saito sets out to acknowledge the existence of the “everyday aesthetic” in her 2007 text. She writes, “...Everyday aesthetics makes the aesthetic discourse more truthful to the diverse dimensions of our aesthetic life and enriches its content” (Saito, 2007, p. 5). Such conceptualizations of the aesthetic as something extraordinarily ordinary, accessible, and extant in the daily experience encompass the aesthetic dimension of wandering.

At first glance, wandering appears as not much more than a weightless pastime to clear the head and lighten the heart. Although these elements embedded in wandering, in and of themselves, have tremendous implications for mental health and improving quality of life, they are just the beginning of a series of aesthetic qualities that arise during the act. For to wander is to embody freedom, poetry, inquiry, and imagination. It is also to suspend time and to respond to both internal and external stimuli.

After experiencing the possibilities of wandering for myself, I wondered what other people had learned or experienced through walking throughout history. Centuries of documented thought and experience of the confluence of thought and movement is among what sets kinesthetic reflection apart from stationary reflection, whether seated or lying down. My reading introduced me to philosophers and poets who rhapsodized about the power of the walk. I read of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who walked endlessly, and Søren Kierkegaard, whose oeuvre has been credited with his lifelong walking. “In his journals, [Kierkegaard] insists that he composed all of his works afoot ... Although his extensive walks were perceived as idleness they were in fact the foundation of his prolific work” (Solnit, 2000, p. 24).

I was particularly inspired by the poetry and the walking of William Wordsworth, who with his sister Dorothy, covered countless miles of the European landscape on foot. “If Wordsworth’s extraordinary career as a poet and pedestrian can be captured within a single work, then it is his prodigious feat of textual endurance, ‘The Prelude’ (1850)

published in the year of his death,” writes Coverley, who called the poem, “a walker’s autobiography...” (Coverley, 2012, p. 103).

I was introduced to the flaneur, who sauntered through urban streets, simultaneously blending in with while standing a part from the crowd in the luxury of his leisure time and the intent of his pedestrianism.

“The flaneur was described as a man who walked the streets of the city, ‘as a loiterer, a fritterer away of time.’<sup>4</sup> Flaneurs were idlers or artists, taking in ‘the multifarious sights of the astonishing new urban spectacle constituted their raw material’<sup>5</sup>” (Wilson as quoted by Noel, 1996, p. 311).

In what had become my near daily wandering along the streets of downtown Vancouver, I felt a kinship with the flaneur.

Yet, wandering was something different. I do not feel that the wanderer needs the crowd or the urban landscape for kinesthetic reflection, just a landscape. In this I also came to feel a connection with the Romantic walkers (including Wordsworth) who glorified the tramp into the countryside, who thrived on fresh air and freedom. Writes scholar Joseph Amato, “Romanticism encouraged walkers – in early generations as individuals and in subsequent generations as groups of adventurous tourists – to venture into remote landscapes and forgotten places where they would ramble and explore” (Amato, 2004, p. 102).

The *dérive* of Guy Debord’s psychogeography<sup>6</sup> captured my imagination. Writes Debord of this specific type of walking:

<sup>4</sup> Note in original text: “Wilson, “The Invisible Flaneur,” 62. Much description of the flaneur historically comes from Charles Baudelaire, *The Mirror of Arts: Critical Studies by Charles Baudelaire*. (London: Halden, 19).”

<sup>5</sup> Note in original text: “Ibid. Wilson also makes the point that throughout history, the flaneur must only be male, for males had the liberty to walk on the streets while still remaining ‘respectable.’”

<sup>6</sup> This term was defined in his “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography” by French theorist Guy Debord as “the study of precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviors of individuals” (Debord, 1955).

In a *dérive*, one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations ... and all their usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there (Debord, 1956).

I saw parallels in the value found in this “aimless drift” to that found in the carefree nature of wandering.

Emotional zones that cannot be determined simply by architectural or economic conditions must be revealed by the *dérive*; the results of which may then form the basis of a new cartography characterized by a complete disregard for the traditional and habitual practices of the tourist (Coverley, 2012, p. 193).

Wherever walking played a central role to the thinking-writing-learning process, I followed.

Consequently, this thesis is an invitation to the reader to wander along with me. The journey begins with a discussion of my methods of inquiry. I then re-live my experiences of wandering across oceans through text. The textual journey is divided into three sections: “Walking the City”, “Interlude” and “Walking the Sea”. I write the body of the work in the present tense to place the reader in the moment with me<sup>7</sup>. I chose sites that I felt most intrigued by and relaxed in, as these elements made them conducive to reflection and the ability to let my “thoughts wander aimlessly” as Kierkegaard advises walkers (Coverley, 2012, p. 29). I then bookend the wandering with a “Meander through the Literature”, found in the appendix after the References. I include this meander with the intent of taking the reader along with me on my literary wanderings. I have chosen to make this portion of the journey an appendix in contrast to the main body of the work, which is designed to embody my wandering on foot in its layout.

My textual wanderings are presented in this thesis as a series of fieldnotes. “A fieldnote is like a ‘sketch,’ or an expression of an individual inquiry and can take a variety of forms, such as a written text, a performance, a photograph, a poem, or a piece of

<sup>7</sup> As Scholar Lynn Fels writes, “To write in past tense is to enter into an explanatory voice... To write within presence is to voice exploration possibility absence.” (Fels, 1999, p. 15).

original music,” writes scholar Karen Meyer of the artifacts of Living Inquiry<sup>8</sup> (Meyer, 2010, p. 87). The arrangement of the text on the page is as integral to the wandering process as the experiencing and the writing up of these notes. I sculpt the words on the page, leaving the breathing room of white space between words and sentences. At times, these white spaces expand to entire pages meant to give the reader pause to dwell in the slowness of the journey<sup>9</sup>. Paragraphs take on unusual forms, fragmented and verse-like, referencing the poetic inquiry of the wandering. At the times when the moment called for it, when I found poetry in certain lines, I have arranged the words of others in verse-form as well. The arrangement of the text embodies the physical sensation of wandering through city streets and along the sea shore. It also embodies a slowness inspired by a conversation I had with scholar Celeste Snowber, who said of a book on slowness we had discussed: “I wish it had been written more slowly” (C. Snowber, personal communication, July, 2015). I hoped to have achieved that end in my wandering through these pages.

I have also taken and included photographs in the text as artifacts of my wanderings. Also a type of fieldnote, the photographs accompany textual images where I feel they provide a heightened sense of place on the journey.

Throughout my wanderings I encountered several themes. Frequently, I was struck by how new things seem when I encounter them at walking pace. When I was able to slow down and drift in my thoughts I saw my surroundings in a new light. I became more pensive and more alert to what was going on around me. I became more sensitive. I noticed changes in rhythms of movement. I lived in communion with my surroundings. I saw pathways that I had not noticed before and took them. I spent less time deliberating on which direction to roam, simply taking a direction and absorbing all that it had to offer. Everything seemed like a gift as wandering restored my sense of time and place. I was also struck by how new a familiar neighborhood or beach would seem at wandering pace.

<sup>8</sup> Scholar Karen Meyer describes the Living Inquiry course she developed as: “[concerning] being in the world but also what constitutes our belonging in the world, our worldliness” (Meyer, 2010, p. 86).

<sup>9</sup> As Scholars Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen write in their chapter “Gaping”: “It should not be limited by the linear logic of the past... The work must also be riddled with gaps, spaces and openings that invite the reader to write. White space becomes the site of transaction in which the event of understanding occurs.” (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, Gaping 13)

In this newness, inevitably, lay manifold lessons. I was constantly learning new things about myself and the way I view the learning process.

Another theme that emerged from my wandering is that of looking again. Closely related to the theme of newness, this call to look again, also fed by the meditative pace of wandering, allowed me to see new elements in the things around me. At one point I was floored by the effect of a view in reverse. Surprised by how different a walk felt going in the opposite direction, I pondered the implications of this revelation for looking at old things in new ways, or simply re-tracing one's mental and physical steps.

Looping or walking in a circle was also a theme that surfaced in my wanderings. The circuitous route held lessons of its own as the beginning became the end only to become the beginning again as I wandered. I wandered in regeneration for rejuvenation. Finally, slowness permeated my wanderings. It set the tone and directed the journey. There are times when I noticed an increase in my pace and reflected on this. Even then, I was still going more slowly than I would have been if I had not set aside a timeless time to reflect on my feet. I was still going more slowly than if I had not been wandering.

In recalling a group of time-strapped teachers with whom she had been working, Scholar Ellen Rose writes, "What does it mean when those who presumably play a significant role in shaping children's habits of mind admit that the nature of their work mitigates against the ability to stop and think?" (Rose, 2013, p. viii). Rose's group had felt as if they did not have the time to reflect on their practice. This not uncommon perception of a lack of time for reflection is the crux of my thesis. Wandering is a means by which teachers, who are inevitably learners, can carve the time out of a schedule that seems inflexible to engage in the necessary reflection needed for informed, improved and impactful practice. It is a means of slowing down in a field that can often seem not to offer that option. As novelist Milan Kundera asks, "Why has the pleasure of slowness disappeared?" (Kundera, 1995, p. 3).

Time is the one commodity we struggle to give up. Yet, time is crucial to the learning, reflective and developmental processes of all people. In a world in which time is always running out or flying, we need to know that there are ways that we can have control

over our own time, especially as it relates to our growth and development, and our ability to be better people and better educators.

As a teacher, time was always something I wished I had more of in the classroom. At a time when teachers, learners, and the world at large continue to grapple with the perceived limitations of time, I believe that wandering can provide a meaningful respite. Wandering allows teachers and learners to move away from the stopwatch approach to education that affixes a timed pressure to learning, and too often, eliminates room for reflection. As Wiebe et al. observe, citing the work of scholars Hargreaves and Down:

Updating Hargreaves' (1994) influential study, which shows how the language of schooling closely parallels a post-industrial economy, Down (2009) demonstrates how in the daily practices of classroom teachers there is an unquestioned mantra that 'what is good for business is good for education' (p. 57) (Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 251).

In the following pages, I invite you to wander with me as I discover and examine what lessons lay in this reflection in motion I call wandering.



## **Inquiries**

I embarked on this research with the following question: What is the pedagogy of the kinesthetic reflection of wandering? In order to approach the subject matter with the sensitivity that I believed the pedagogical gift of wandering requires, I selected enactments of inquiry that attended to the nuances, and even the subsequent questions, that were likely to arise while wandering, while moving freely in thought and afoot.

As a result, I explored my research question informed by the practices of Narrative, Poetic and Performative Inquiries. As the sole subject of this reflective journey, I felt that these ways of being in inquiry would allow me to creatively explore and respond to whatever arose throughout the research process. These inquiries would allow me to encounter and to experience the “What if?” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 30).

These modes of being in inquiry have also allowed me to honour wandering as a vehicle for questions that arise; questions which may or may not have immediate answers in the moment. I have come to realize that wandering is not about answering every question, but allowing myself to ask the questions, to let them hang in the air. To realize that all of the answers will not be immediate. The reader will encounter these questions as he or she wanders with me.

I implore readers to not be intimidated by the questions or to feel pressure to answer them. But to simply sit with them, as I have chosen.

## **Narrative Inquiry**

Clandinin, Pushor & Orr (2007) define narrative inquiry as, “The study of experience as story” (p. 22).

... [It] is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study. [p. 477]<sup>10</sup> (p. 22).

<sup>10</sup> Page reference found in the original text: (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006).

Narrative inquiry informed my wandering research process because I knew that I would both tell and understand this journey through story. Indigenous scholar Gregory Cajete writes,

Through story we explain and come to understand ourselves. Story – in creative combination with encounters, experiences, image making, ritual, play, imagination, dream and modeling – forms the basic foundation of all human learning and teaching (Cajete, 1994, p. 68).

Narrative inquiry gave me the opportunity to gain understanding of what I thought was possibly happening as I wandered through writing about the process as I lived it.

Narrative inquiry theorists D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly write:

Following [John] Dewey, the study of education is the study of life – for example, the study of epiphanies, rituals, routines, metaphors, and everyday actions....We learn about education from thinking about life, and we learn about life from thinking about education (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, xxiii).

In writing and then reading what I had written, I experienced wandering in a new and profound way. I wandered on the page and gained insight into what the wandering experience was creating for me. Each time I read a passage I had written about a particular time of wandering, I found something new embodied within. Narrative inquiry gave me another means through which I could fully realize the reflection that this journey entailed. As scholar Vicki Kelly notes in her personal narrative “Aesthetic Ways of Knowing”, “The inquiry is at the same moment the axis around which the process of transformation focused and the investigation became the means, the path traveled” (Kelly, 2001, p. 11).

With its preoccupation with the personal and social conditions of a particular phenomenon (Clandinin et al., 2007), narrative inquiry permitted me to place myself and my own disposition towards wandering and its effects within the bounds of this study. The concern for social conditions allowed me to attend to place as I wandered within different geographical contexts:

... ‘All events take place some place’ (p. 481) ... In narrative inquiry ‘the specificity of the location is crucial. ...Place may change as the inquiry delves into temporality’ (p. 480) and a narrative inquirer needs to think

through the impact of each place on the experience (Connelly and Clandinin as quoted in Clandinin et al, 2007, p. 23).

## Poetic Inquiry

Poetic inquiry informed the research for my inquiry into the pedagogy of wandering because I view the act of wandering itself as poetic. This quality of the poetic in the ambulatory is one that has been identified by writers and poets for centuries. “The speech of walking is rich in all languages and has generated a dazzling array of English verbs of motion,” writes scholar Joseph Amato (Amato, 2004, p. 6).

Author Rebecca Solnit writes of Wordsworth,

In his early twenties, he seems to have set about to systematically fail at every alternative to being a poet and chosen wandering and musing as the preliminaries for realizing his vocation... Most of his poems seemed to have been composed while he walked and spoke aloud, a companion to himself (Solnit, 2000, pp. 106; 113).

And in modern times, the English poet Simon Armitage, who set out to walk the over 200-mile Pennine Way in 2010, had this to say: “Poetry has always wandered” (Armitage, 2013, p. ix).

With these thoughts and the poetic moments that I have encountered while wandering in mind, I inquired poetically while wandering in movement and in writing. In doing so, I found that wandering, both on foot and in the mind, asks the wanderer to acknowledge his or her natural inclination to the poetic (Gibbs, 1994), and to employ that gift through kinesthetic reflection.

In his look at how qualitative researchers Rapport and Hartill use poetic inquiry in ethnographic research, scholar Sean Wiebe asks, “What kinds of researchers are drawn to poetic inquiry? What do they value?” (Wiebe, 2015, p. 156). I answer these questions in my choice of poetic inquiry as insight into what wandering teaches. I am a researcher who values the wide open spaces for reflection and refraction that poetry offers. I value the ability of verse to bend and re-form perspective into something new and unexpected. As arts-based researchers Wiebe et al. observe in their “Poetic Inquiry on Passive

Reflection”, “We dare not tell each other what is; but offer through our shared poetry moments to meet again in wonder and wondering” (Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 252).

“...Poetic inquiry is not directly about what researchers do with a text, but speaks also to the ways we find meaning in living and being...,” writes Wiebe (2015, p. 153). The intertwined nature of poetic inquiry and living is what draws me to this form of research in the pedagogy of wandering. To inquire poetically is to live my inquiry while identifying the poetic in the research and in life. It is as poetic inquiry pioneer Carl Leggo discovered when speaking with a graduate student, to “live poetically” (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers & Leggo, 2009, p. 164).

Scholar James C. Conroy describes the capacity of the “poetic imagination” for openness and wonder.

... I look at how the poetic imagination keeps the possibilities of openness and wonder, when other, more centrist discourses in and around the curriculum, are supplicant to the closure of the senses (Conroy, 2004, p. 139).

It is this capacity that comes to mind when I think of the poetry of wandering, and thus its natural fit within the realm of poetic inquiry. I believe that wandering is a physical manifestation of the poetic imagination: an embodiment of the openness and wonder of which Conroy writes.

## **Performative Inquiry**

Walking is something that has to be performed in action. I could not write about wandering without wandering. I could not reflect on what wandering was doing for my thinking without performing the activity.

Scholar Lynn Fels, in her conceptualization and articulation of performative inquiry, writes, “How do I write this moment into our presence?” (Fels, 1999, p. 10). It is this attending to moment and presence that resonated with me as I researched the pedagogy of wandering. My research required a way of being in inquiry that sought to capture the ephemerality of a moment, of a series of moments. Performative inquiry invites the

researcher to recognize moments realized within action sites of inquiry, through reflective writing, revisiting what matters, while questioning and learning.

Additionally, “Performative Inquiry informs our understanding of issues and relationships and encourages students, educators, and researchers to imagine new ways of engaging in learning and inquiry” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 12). Wandering calls teachers and learners to new ways of approaching time in the busy routine of life. Engaging in a pedagogy of wandering combines imagination and reflection, creating a means by which the necessary thinking about and absorption of one’s experiences and what they mean can be done without hindrance, facilitated by movement.

One of my favorite things about performative inquiry is its permission or open door to the “What if?” (Fels, 1998, 1999 & Fels & Belliveau 2008). Scholars Lynn Fels and George Belliveau invite learners and facilitators along this path in *Exploring Curriculum: Performative Inquiry, Role Drama, and Learning* (2008).

Through the methodology of performative inquiry, I was able to research in action. I was able to learn in the embodied way that we all learn, with all of our senses (Snowber in Malewski & Jaramillo, 2011). As dance scholar Celeste Snowber writes, “There is a secret the body holds. How one accesses imagination, intuition and fresh ways of perceiving lies within the body” (Snowber, 2011, p. 189).

When I wander I walk a poem  
I see in verse, move in metaphor

Ideas become celled things  
with eyes, ears, breath of their own

Step by step I ascend clouds  
of thought suspended endlessly

for my consideration. For my  
dismissal. Or embrace.

Time is my own, to savour,  
to saunter beside meaning befriended.

I have come to love the pavement  
for where it takes me

and what it brings me to:  
It wanders with me, open-ended.

I guard my time to float within  
to think unscripted on my feet

My cell phone clock becomes a relic,  
forgotten in my messenger bag

as messages wait for me, find me  
wherever I roam.

I round a familiar corner  
into another world. In this world

power lines and street signs  
utter sounds louder than car horns

They say to look again

They say to look anew

## **Chapter 2. Walking the City**



**March 31, 2014**

As of late,

my journey has taken me across bridges.

My “Bridge Study” as I have come to call it is five percent metaphorical.

The remainder is as literal as the pale Vancouver sun on my face and the delicate breezes of False Creek.

I have taken to walking.

Awakening each morning in joy and gratitude, I am charged to get up,  
go out and explore.

Despite the fact that I have set a writing schedule for myself,

I nudge the schedule,  
with its pre-set pages-to-be-completed aside,

and instead find myself at the West Campus Road bus stop.

I board the 135 Burrard Station bus with an urban trail in mind...

The Cambie Bridge evokes slowness, a fine wine that I have always imbibed.

I inhale deeply

see clearly.

On the Cambie

I encounter the sacred as I contemplate.

I revel in the juxtaposition of the still, steely blue waters below with the jagged city skyline.

The view provides an unexpected harmony between nature and skyscrapers.

I walk along her limbs

in prayer.

Cambie's slowness, her six-limbed sprawl, challenges time the way true reflection does. Suddenly there is no need for a watch, as I come into the "fresh listening" of which somatic knowledge scholar Celeste Snowber writes (Richmond & Snowber, 2009, p. 3). This is the slowness that I need for deep learning – learning that becomes embodied.

A/r/tographer Rita L. Irwin, too, hovers on the slowness of reflection: "I need to stop and notice the extraordinary in the ordinary. I need to notice the opportunities in my day for aesthetic revelation" (Irwin, 2006, p. 77).

Even at times when the tempo of the moment speeds up, we may be called to the slowness of reflection.



The Granville Bridge speaks to me in other ways.

Her precarious crossings

arrest my attention

as cars in turn whiz

and whisper by,

I stand at the edge

of her first crossing

awake to my role as pedestrian

amid a frenzy of vehicles.

All clear,

I take the first step,

skitter across the painted path,

as wheels replace feet

moments later.

I arbitrarily tread on one pedestrian crossing after another,

finding my way

to the other side.

*I am* forced to think of time

and timing.

When do I move forward      take the leap      make the crossing?

When do I stand still

and wait?

I need to trust the slowness of the process      the need for pause.

I need to give myself the time to find my way,

to find the lesson in the lesson.

I need to believe that I will see what there is to see.

Do students already know this?

Have we schooled away their internal compasses?



higher than I had expected.

The Lion's Gate Bridge takes me

At over 100 metres,

one glance

through the bars of the head-high railing leaves me spectacularly  
dizzy.

Can I complete this crossing?

I teeter across this beguiling tightrope

my dizziness morphs into full-blown nausea...

... terror courses through my body

as I pause

to weigh the value of the journey.

*My breath* hangs in the air. I am hinged on the "stop moment" of which scholar Lynn Fels alerts us too in performative inquiry. She writes, "Philosopher David Appelbaum calls such a moment ... 'a stop' – a moment of risk, a moment of opportunity" (Fels, 2009).

... I continue my trek across the Lion's Gate.

I have already covered more ground

than I have ahead of me...

I inhale

deeply.

I embrace my fear.

I

am the acrobat

who is terrified

of heights...

*And I learn that the value of a journey is, sometimes, simply taking the journey. The crossroads, the point of decision-making or testing, sharpens my critical thinking skills in ways more memorable than any written test.*

I face my own apprehensions, my own fears of the unknown or the known that have always been with me.

The value of the journey is learning that who I am at the end is not the person I was at the beginning.



The Burrard Bridge

reverberates with tradition.

Adorned by decorative arches,

she looks

the part

of history.

She spans a shorter distance than her neighbours

and possesses a charm

apart from the other bridges.

Even the boats

bobbing below her trusses seem to complement her placid air.

I walk across her,

swathed in the security of tradition.

*I take* comfort in the dependability of tradition. Even as I wander into the new I am returned to old passages and artifacts. These past gifts are foundations that I can build on. They are the home in which I will always know what is cooking on the stove and what treasures are hidden in which rooms. The past is a place to start. Tradition is a place of reassuring return in beginning anew.

**Oct. 8, 2014**

I take the long way home from Nester's.

It just feels like the right thing to do.

On the way I notice a swirl of colors on a tree.

They are beautiful.

Leaves of red, green and yellow.

Candy in an unexpected place.

Further along the path

a series of trees blush neon pink for fall.

I have never noticed them before.

*How often* does this blindness to what is happen? How often have I been a tourist in a familiar landscape, noticing things for the first time that I have walked past, ignorant of their presence, for weeks and months?

I do not know, but I want these instances to become fewer and fewer. I want the presence of what I fail to see, "to tug on my sleeve, like a child calling me to attention"<sup>11</sup> to what I fail to hear.

<sup>11</sup> Lynn. Fels, personal communication, Dec. 2015. See also, Fels, L. (2012). "Collecting Data through Performative Inquiry: A Tug on the Sleeve". *Youth Theatre Journal*, 26 (1). 50–60.

I want to be “wide awake” while walking, while living in the presence of (Greene, 1995, p. 4).

I do not want my surroundings and the lessons embedded within to dull before my eyes as I rush blindly past to the next task.

What else have I missed?

**Oct. 11, 2014** I walk in the rain this morning.

I have always dreamed of walking in the rain.

In fact, I remember watching a girl do this very thing  
back in high school one afternoon:

*I stand at the window in our upstairs classroom and watch her walk down the hill  
to the dorms, straightened hair, uniform and all.*

*She looks so free.*

*I wonder what she learned from that walk,*

*in that walk.*

I think of author Rebecca Solnit's words in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, "It was the kid's walk in the rain that constituted the real education..."

"but wandering in a book or a computer takes place within more constricted and less sensual parameters" (Solnit, 2000, p. 10).

I follow in my classmate's water-logged steps this morning and head with my umbrella, rubber boots and raincoat down the mountain.

I want to walk as far as my legs will take me.

I

descend the mountain onto Burnaby Mountain Parkway.

The rich colours of the fall leaves,

strike me first.

They are beautiful in the rain.

Plastered to the path, they light my way in the foggy gray of the morning.

Cars whiz by from time to time,

interrupting the conversation of my feet with the pavement.

I am reminded of Rebecca Solnit's words:

“Walking,

ideally,

is a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned,

as though they were three characters finally in conversation together,

three notes suddenly making a chord” (Solnit, 2000, p. 5).

Why do cars drive so fast in the rain here?

I think of the ways of knowing that being born and raised in a rainy climate like Vancouver's bring.

I am used

to rain

that comes

in blessed bursts

for finite periods of time,

before giving way to inevitable sunshine

at home in The Bahamas.

Here, it rains patiently and persistently for hours,

colouring the day a soothing and cozy gray.

Walking beneath these drops is meditative.

*I convince* myself not to stop to take notes while walking. The temptation is strong, but on consideration, I decide that note-taking might be a hindrance to the education of walking itself.

When I am walking I need to be walking and listening for what the walking brings and looking for what the walking reveals and feeling for what the walking has to offer.



The words will come later.



As philosopher Frédéric Gros writes, “Think while walking, walk while thinking, and let writing be but the light pause, as the body on a walk rests in contemplation of wide open spaces” (Gros, 2014, p. 20).

I walk until my feet, in my violet boots, become sore.

It is a problem I anticipate any time I walk a long distance.

I have incorrigibly flat feet that always remind me of my ambulatory

limitations

whenever I run or walk farther than they are prepared to carry me

without pain.

I

have walked through the pain in the past.

I do this now.

The dull needle jabs in the center of my soles begin their assault somewhere near Hythe Avenue and Boundary Road.

I have been walking for over an hour though I am unsure precisely how long.

I have also decided not to look at the time or to measure my pace, even though I carry the little silver detached face of my watch in the front pocket of my satchel.

Solnit's words about walking and time drift into my memory:

“We talked about the more stately sense of time one has afoot and on public transit, where things must be planned and scheduled beforehand, rather than rushed through at the last minute, and about the sense of place that can only be gained on foot”  
(Solnit, 2000, p. 9).

I do not mind the pain.

In a curious way,

pain pushes me forward.

Solnit: “Walking returns the body to its original limits again,

to something supple, sensitive, and vulnerable...”

(Solnit, 2000, p. 29).

**Oct. 18, 2014**

I take the Waterfront route today.

It is not as I imagined it,

but filled with little gems along the way.

Like the way a man shushes at and whispers to his young son, "Not so loud",

as we early morning strollers walk

in meditation along the marina's edge.

The quiet of the morning along the water is incredible.

It is as if I were no longer in a bustling metropolis,

but at some shore-side retreat, walking barefoot in the sand.

Bare feet would have been nice.

Instead,

I am in my heavy rain boots, fearful of pervasive puddles and mud.

The boots prove not to be a hindrance, though.

I continue my walk,

picking up bits of the conversations that swirl past me while awash in my own memories.

What won't a long walk do?

Gros echoes:

“...there is the suspensive freedom that comes by walking...”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> (Gros, 2014, p. 3).

I saunter toward Stanley Park,

focusing now, on the fashion show of fall leaves on the trees around me.

Red, gold and brown speckled leaves dangle in the sunlight and pattern the boardwalk

in celebration of the season.

I stop to pick a leaf from a tree, wondering for a moment

if it is okay to disturb its equanimity.

I do not seem to attract any attention in plucking a single leaf from a low-hanging  
bough.

A couple jogs past as I work, chatting happily in tandem with each other.

I and my leaf continue on our way.

I walk along the bend of the marina, past the Westin Hotel,

and absorb a view of the harbour that I have never before seen.

*I come* to this place over and over again. The place of “never have”.

Wandering brings a newness that I cannot escape, would not want to escape.

I am constantly seeing the new in the familiar. The microscopic is magnified. The  
once inconsequential suddenly monumental.

As scholar E. Lisa Panayotidis writes:

“My once described aimless wandering  
revealed itself to be a deeper form of provocative wondering about my work and  
place

in this particular space and at this historical and cultural juncture”

(Panayotidis, 2009).

From this angle, the red cranes of the container port

loom large in the harbour, just past Canada Place.

They remind me of home.

I do not venture into Stanley Park today.

Instead, I plod up Denman, into the West Side.

The tranquil sounds of sea birds and lapping waves  
give way to Saturday morning traffic.

My pace quickens.

I hike uphill as if late for an appointment.

Just moments before

I had ambled along in the morning sunlight

of the pier.

*Rushing* as habit; rushing because others are rushing: This is not something new. I have found myself inadvertently going with the flow before in other areas.

What is lost when I just go along with what is going on around me?

There are times when falling in sync with my surroundings is good.

Yet, there are other times when I am called to question whether this rhythm is the right fit for me. As Scholar Maxine Greene writes:

“All depends upon a breaking free, a leap and then a question. I would like to claim that this is how learning happens and that the educative task is to create situations in which the young are moved to begin to ask, in all the tones of voice there are, ‘why?’” (Greene, 1995, p. 6).

How do I stop myself from blending into dissonant rhythms?

What new possibilities come into being

by remaining open to newness

by giving myself time?

My own time.



I continue up Denman,

past its restaurants and charming street corners,

to Beach Avenue.

Gray waters of English Bay on the South,

mountain range of condominium towers to the North,

I meander along the sidewalk,

my heightened pace along Denman

mysteriously changed

to the leisurely waterfront stroll of

the harbour

I take time to see

leaves plastered on a sidewalk

tranquil sheets of gray water

Oh!

I thought the path would lead me onto the Burrard Bridge,

but I find myself approaching her great bearings.

I will walk beneath her instead.

I stroll, looking up into her stone and steel underbelly,

emerge near Hornby Street, and head north to Pacific Boulevard.

My feet have reached that third level of pain. I need to preserve what's left

for the next journey.

The ache grows. I nearly limp.

*There is* so much more to see, more to wander into,

but I am humbled by my physical limitations. My sore feet mark my boundary

for the day.

They are my slowness, my pause, my opportunity to absorb the messages of the course that I have just

travelled.

I am “growing in [my] understanding that conceptual clarity emerges over time...”  
(Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 242).

***I tell myself while walking not to stop to write.***

***I want to be in the moment.***

***I want to be present.***

***I want to walk for walking sake.***

**Oct. 20, 2014** Woke up this morning with irrepressible urge to walk. Wanted to wait until Saturday for long walks, and have that be the thing to look forward to all week; don't think I can wait...

Memories of walks past continue to float upward

"They make me feel I should be doing what they're doing. I should be out there walking... not sitting about reading" (Nicholson, 2008, p. 26).

I realize that I have always wandered...

*How often* do I do something with the feeling that it is the first time, only to remember, while doing it, that I have done this thing before?

I began my questing walks in Vancouver during my Master's degree courses, floating in the freedom of wandering without time constraints. I drifted throughout downtown with no memory of the walks I had taken years before in other cities and towns, in other countries.

Yet, now, as I write of these wanderings, the memories of those walks return to me.

I have wandered my whole life.

On foot

By plane

On boats

In dreams...

**Oct. 25, 2014**

I set out for my long walk this morning on Cambie Street.

When the rippling waters of False Creek overtake traffic lights and skyscrapers,

my feet insist that I slow down

in humble acknowledgement.

I walk along a particular portion of the sea wall for the first time.

My city-stalk pace comes to a halt.

A clump of spiky berries dangles from a nearby tree.

I inspect them for a moment. Their textured look intrigues me.

I have never seen berries like these before.

I reach out, touch one with the tip of my forefinger,

I feel the ripple of the dull protrusions of its surface.

I stand,

frozen within a moment;

the world

minimized to a small tree branch,

an unusual berry,

an intimate encounter.

*Again I* come to newness, and what newness brings to the feast of learning. I am thrilled by something so miniscule. Transfixed at the sight of such unusual looking berries growing on a bush. I am surprised by surprise.

Maxine Greene writes,

If I and other teachers truly want to provoke our students to break through the limits of the conventional and the taken for granted, we ourselves have to experience breaks with what has been established in our own lives; we have to keep arousing ourselves to begin again (Greene, 1995, p. 109).

My encounter with surprise becomes a way of beginning again. I wonder what else will surprise me. I am reminded of all there is to learn as learner and teacher.

Wandering pulls me out of auto-pilot.



When the moment releases me from its grip,

I glide along the sea wall at wonder-pace,

in search of other secrets.

A tree or two away, another clump of Neverland berries:

Miniscule, a stunning shade of royal purple.

I linger with them for a while,

touched by the double sighting of things new.

I eventually find one of what seems to be three entrances to the Cambie Bridge.

I choose the spiral walk-up, and swirl my way onto the main bridge.

A walk along the Cambie Bridge has a reverie all of its own.

The chilly morning air grazes my face.

Even the sooty gray of the overcast sky is silver as I saunter across the bridge.

As I walk along the Cambie's spine,

discarded food takes on artful contours.

Handfuls of someone's curried rice dinner lay scattered on  
the pedestrian path.

Yellow grains glow like tiny points of light against gravel,

embedded into the environment like jewels on a crown.

It is hard to leave the Cambie Bridge,

but I have to,

eventually.

It is amazing what turning a corner, or crossing a street you never cross can reveal.

Ethereal as always,

the bridge,

with her call to slowness,

her ability to distill the morning to a moment,

constitutes an aesthetic experience.

*I experience* the embodiment of the “everyday aesthetic” of which design educator Yuriko Saito speaks (2007). She writes:

Attention to everyday aesthetics is necessary not only for giving a more faithful account of our rich aesthetic life with diverse dimensions but also for raising consciousness for the profound consequences our everyday aesthetic attitudes and responses invoke (Saito, 2007, p. 8).

**Oct. 20, 2014 1:42 p.m.**

When I feel free, I want to go walking

I walk to celebrate

I walk to contemplate

I walk to discover

**Apr. 25, 2015** After months of somehow not having the time to wander intentionally, I throw caution to the wind, and go wandering.

It is wonderful.

Last evening,

I played with the idea of just wandering around campus and the park area, but

this morning

I have to go further.

I walk the western side of campus.

Everywhere is so dewy and green.

The gentle,

downward slope of the hill carries me past the woods.

Lodged above a piece of driftwood, on the side of the hill, is a mangled bicycle.



I take a cell-phone shot of what has become a metal sculpture

framed by forest.

I take more photographs – of leaves peppered in dew drops, a pile of spotted pebbles...

I am stopped<sup>13</sup>

Something seems different.

I spin in slow motion

take in the panoramic view of roadway, shrubbery and mossy trunks arrowed toward the clouds.

Now

I see what is different.

The trees on either side, while towering above,

seem also to arch toward each other.

They create a cove-like feeling on this side of the road.

I bathe in the wonder of the leafy, emerald overhang,

then continue down the sidewalk slowly.

*I am* moved by the difference that another view can make. I simply turned around, looked at the path I had been walking on for the past few minutes from another angle, and

<sup>13</sup> Here, I experience the “stop” moment integral to performative inquiry as explained by scholar Lynn Fels, quoted on p. 22. Identified by philosopher David Appelbaum, the stop moment calls us to new recognition.

had somehow entered another world of vision. Is it this easy to see things anew, from a different view? I am struck by how easy it is to see things from another view, to have a new perspective sneak up on me when I am least expecting it.

How much more effective can a new perspective be when we are least expecting it? What happens when we wander through our ideas with a willingness to turn around, to think about them from another angle?

I had not expected anything new in the moment, but now everything is new.

The snap of twigs draws my gaze deeper into the forest.

I search the slim tree trunks for the source of the racket.

A flash of yellow catches my eye.

The culprit appears to be a golden retriever.

“Maggie!” calls a woman’s voice in the distance, as the dog burrows deeper into the brush.

I continue on,

charmed by the sight of a dog in the woods.

the call of a woman’s voice

in care.



*I am* pleasantly surprised by the unexpected in the woods. A dog. The awareness of the presence of someone, something else makes me perk up and listen. I go from looking at the trees and the leaves and the sky to hearing things with a sharpness that I take for granted when I am not wandering. The snapping twigs snap me into a state of alertness, not one of fear, but one of curiosity. I want to know what is happening. What new thing will emerge from my hearing of this sound when I think that I am alone on the path? The sight of the dog and his companion's voice suddenly bring me into community. I am not alone...

I step

onto the pedestrian crossing at the roundabout

and head back towards campus.

Here,

blades of new grass shoot above the feathery grass seed

blanketing the ground.

A truce between the wild and the domesticated,

the sidewalk unfolds to reveal rhododendron bushes alit with fuchsia blossoms alongside uncultivated bush and aging pines.

The main buildings of the campus loom in the near distance,

and the next pedestrian crossing leads me

toward the tunnel bus stop...

...Almost an hour later, downtown,

I saunter south on Howe Street

drifting towards the Granville Bridge.

I avoid roadwork on Howe above Robson,

and swing east toward Granville Street.

After nine on a Saturday morning the typically busy street

is blessedly quiet.

I take in the vintage brick of the old buildings

and flashy signage of theatres and pubs along the way.

The slight rise of the Granville Bridge winks ahead—

a promised watery interlude in the midst of the city.

I love crossing bridges.

*I have* gained a special appreciation for the meditative pace that a trek over a body of water allows. The breeze always seems to blow refreshingly along the path, as pleasant puffs of cloud above welcome the pedestrian to this liminal space<sup>14</sup>. Companions criss-crossing my journey –pounding the pavement or pushing pedals – smile at me. The helium-filled feeling is intoxicating.

When I walk the bridge

I am in limbo,

considering what I have left and

what I am entering into...

<sup>14</sup> The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines the word liminal as “of, relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase, or condition.” The bridge becomes a liminal space in its role as connector. On the bridge I am neither here nor there; no longer in the place that I had previously occupied before crossing, nor yet arrived at the place to which the bridge is taking me.

The Granville Bridge is a lingering thought.

To cross her busy lanes while wandering is to do so cautiously

slowly.

Just before exiting the bridge,

I find myself drawn,

to lines that intersect above – electricity-powered bus cables.

The cables form an elevated grid throughout the city;

the latticework pattern of their lines

has always delighted me.

On foot, I see the cables

for the geometric aesthetic  
that they add to my walk.



I photograph them,  
wanting to capture the vision  
in the moment,

I see the cables high above my head anew, and suddenly, in my wandering, I see lines everywhere: in the trees, in the limbs of my fellow pedestrians, in the lanes of flowing traffic. I am mesmerized by my nascent sensitivity to this plethora of lines that draws its presence all around me.

“... It takes only a moment’s reflection to recognize that lines are everywhere. As walking, talking and gesticulating creatures, human beings generate lines wherever they go,” anthropologist Tim Ingold writes of lines as a means to so many actions as a “field of inquiry” (Ingold, 2007, p. 1).

The lines that frame my walk mirror the line my feet draw in story, in inquiry. I hear scholar Lynn Fels’ words to a friend on a nocturnal stroll: “Do you see how our footsteps have changed the landscape?” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 27).

The lines I make as I wander clear paths in my thinking and learning and growing.

Beckoned forward by the lines around me,

I continue along 6<sup>th</sup>

to the Cambie Bridge.

I

always

cross

the Cambie

in a dream.

She just may be my favorite bridge in Vancouver.

Although she snakes across the same body of water as  
the Granville – False Creek – my wanderings across the Cambie always seem

more tranquil.

Perhaps the traffic moves a bit slower here.

Or maybe it's the full view of the calming curve of  
the creek.

Kayaks lined with ambitious rowers

dig their oars into the onyx waters

in relaxed determination.

I revel in the slowness that the walk across the bridge demands,

and oh! I notice something new.

A peninsula of pathway

on the southern side of the creek

dressed up like a chorus girl.

A burst of tropical colours announce

a floral sidewalk drawing

I did not see last fall.

I take a photograph...

*Hours later, when I have returned home, I look at the photograph before naming it, "Looking", and see that I have caught a lone observer beside the drawing, bending over the mossy rocks that lead into the creek and peering in. What does he see in the waters? What do I see in seeing him, not then, but later, physically removed from the scene?*



The Cambie Bridge

eases into Nelson Street,  
a feat that disorients me every time.

When I disembark at any point along Hastings between Homer and Burrard,  
I know, based on my knowledge of the city's layout,  
that to walk away from the Waterfront – behind me on Hastings – is to head south.  
To go in the direction that I have just come from is to go east

and to go in the opposite direction is, of course, to bank west.

The water and the mountains that loom behind are north.

So why is it

that whenever I float off of the Cambie Bridge onto Nelson – an east-west street  
– I feel as if I am heading north?

My body defies the directional indicator of the street signs,

and for a few chilling moments, I don't know which to trust.

Today is no different as I read the Nelson Street sign

and try to convince myself to change directions to find my way  
north.

I walk tentatively to Hamilton,

which at the very least, I know

is where I'll find the Vancouver Public Library; I have two books to return.

*When do* I trust my body to lead the way? Should I? Have I been doing so all along?

When I follow my map knowledge to Hamilton,

I stumble upon something new.

Before Hamilton becomes Hamilton it is Mainland, a street in the heart of Yaletown.

I cross from Mainland into Hamilton to greet

a waterfall

of stairs.

I follow their invitation through a dirt path between two red brick apartment buildings lined by small trees.

For a moment I am in a serene sliver of a park with benches inviting pedestrians to sit and absorb the moment.

I spot the main road of Robson a few meters ahead

and am re-oriented and reassured.

I am just a few blocks south of Hastings,

my Vancouver compass.

I cross Robson along the broken line of the pedestrian crossing

to the north side of Hamilton to return my  
books.

Inside the library, I linger at literary-pace.

My thoughts

reverently      slow

in a building erected

to immortalized ideas.

Minutes later

I emerge to continue my wander.

I walk

on the newly lain sidewalk of the still-under-construction Telus building.

The various stages are part of the cityscape for me

as I travel to and from the library.

What will Georgia and Smithe be like once the building is finally finished?

What will the shed layers of scaffolding and retreating construction crews reveal?

Will people remember the many months that the building's shifting facade hid behind wooden panels concealed from the view of the public?

Will the surrounding area feel different?

I continue along Georgia to Granville,

ending my loop a street away from

where I started.

*In the forest* time holds a different meaning—long moments, flexible, elastic. Breath is measured. I maintain my pace and am constantly in awe of the colours, the textures, the sounds.

In the city, breathless, I move in and out of varying speeds. I am an embodied reflection of my surroundings. I am my surroundings...



**Apr. 27, 2015** I go wandering in my boots today. It is Vancouver-raining so I cannot leave them behind.

I had been oscillating  
between wandering today

and waiting until the weekend.

I have found that just to read about walking is to acquire an itch in the soles of my feet. I have been reading *The Art of Walking: A Field Guide* (2012), and can barely contain the desire to jump up and go. I wait

until

today...

I trek up Commercial Drive from the bus stop at Hastings,  
passing soggy pieces of garbage  
strewn about the sidewalk along the way.

My trail is the gray light of this rainy day

as I pass weathered apartment buildings and shops.

I remember the way the mist looked as the bus drove down the mountain  
and onto Hastings.

Scolding myself for insisting on wandering on such a foggy day,

I had forgotten how different the view could be from one point  
to the next,

from mountain top

to city street.

Here on Commercial, the view is crisp, clear of the misty veil.

*I am* reminded not to forget these simple lessons. Or this simple lesson of setting  
out on a journey with the understanding that I will not know the endpoint, the point of  
discovery, until I make the journey. So often I am tempted to know the ending before  
beginning, to put off or skip entirely what I think I already know. This experience reminds  
me that I cannot be sure of what awaits on the other side of the road of discovery if I do  
not travel it. Even if for the one thousandth time...

I walk a few short blocks to Georgia Street.

The city grid is one of mystery.

Streets converge into one another without warning—  
some disappear for a block or two,

only to reappear suddenly like the other side of a split personality.

The unpredictability continues with the character of a street

from one end to the other.

A street lined by glass towers and marquees in the downtown area

gradually reveals its homier quality in the residential district.

Brightly coloured homes and community gardens replace

the busyness

of a few blocks ago.

Georgia Street is the epitome of this shift.

I walk alongside small lawns crowded by spring blossoms,

only to give way to fenced in metal warehouses. I drift past the chain-link facades of the buildings,

to the intersection at Clark Drive.

Eighteen-wheelers rumble down the broad avenue,

carrying their loads to and from the sea north of me.

The long low blast of their horns rattle me

as I measure the moments until I can dart across the lanes to the other side.

A fellow pedestrian,

a man with a baseball cap and beard,



beats me to the crossing,

after a truck growls by.

I wait

until I can see no vehicles coming in either direction

and skip across on the balls of my  
feet.

Safely across the chasm, I see another shift in the chameleon's colours.

Georgia Street is now a school district,

with the meticulously laid brick of a gothic-looking, multi-storied elementary  
school building

rising above the trees and houses around it...

**June 8, 2015** I go for a walk this evening, after realizing that I had been writing about walking for most of the afternoon, while folded into my desk chair. I needed to do what I had been spending so much time trying to think creatively about.

Funny how the thought to go for a walk occurred to me,

as I sat writing.

I had become somehow

desensitized to the embodiment of walking

and the exhalation it can be for the body

after sitting down for long periods.

There I was, rhapsodizing about the power of walking, more specifically, wandering, and I had not gotten up to use my legs to go a distance of more than the few feet within my room

in hours.

I had to lift walking from the text on the screen again.

I had to go outside.

**June 9, 2015** Today

I saunter along the outdoor walkway of Blusson and Saywell Halls toward the AQ.

I walked this way before,

but have never

noticed the view of the mountains to the southwest through the arches of the AQ.

I am struck

by the sudden sight of mountains

that have always loomed in the distance,

but that I have never before

noticed.

I have to take a photo.

My cell phone camera captures everything

but the hazy outline of the mountains in the distance.

This does not matter.

Whenever I look at this picture,

I will remember when mountains

snuck up on me...

**Sept. 2, 2015**

Today I go wandering for the first time in months.

The sun emerges from the clouds

for the first time today.

I arrive

at the foot of the Burrard Bridge faster than I anticipate.

I remember walking from the bridge to Fourth Street months before  
and feeling as if I would never arrive.

*What* a difference perspective makes. I go from thinking that something is difficult, almost unmanageable, to barely being able to remember that feeling in relation to a particular activity only a few months later. I believe that this is the work of time combined with perspective. I need time to gain perspective. I need perspective to appreciate time....

I walk across the bridge feeling

weightless.

The sun continues to warm the afternoon.

I stroll past other amblers while gazing at the water below.

I arrive

on the other side

thinking that this is what I have been missing:

That feeling of weightlessness,

of endless possibilities.

*I have* been so caught up in the things that I have had to do for the past year that I have forgotten to walk while writing about walking. I had become “too busy” to reflect.

Weeks ago, an acquaintance chided me about not walking when I admitted that I had not been taking as many walks as I would have liked. The truth is that I have hardly done any walking since the beginning of the year. At that time I walked prodigiously. I miss it.

Feeling that I simply had too much to do

I did everything but wander.



Yet wandering is

how I breathe

rest

think.

**Sept. 21, 2015 8:32 pm**

*I am* reminded of the constant struggle to return to embodied thinking through movement.

I am sitting here now slightly frustrated and a bit blocked in my writing. Then, while taking notes, I read Snowber's article on dance and movement and what motion does for thinking...

and I remember what I am writing about.

Why I am always called to remember that what I am writing about is not some unreachable ideal?

Why do I have to constantly remember to get up from the desk and go for a walk?

What is this resistance to remembering to walk?

Is it rooted in how we are schooled to think while sitting still?

Even as I contemplate kinesthetic thinking,

I find myself sitting for longer than I ought to.

I am reminded of author Rebecca Solnit's words:

"I sat down one spring day to write about walking

and stood up again,

because a desk is no place to think on the large scale"

(Solnit, 2001, p. 4).

**Sept. 30, 2015**

I never meant to get lost today.

I set out to wander across the Cambie Bridge because it has been so long since I have crossed it.

The thought occurred to me on Tuesday afternoon, when I rode over the bridge on the Number 17 bus.

I made plans to return before the week was out and traverse the bridge the way it was meant to be crossed – on foot.

A

stroll

along

the water or

on quiet streets suddenly morphs into a “purposeful” hike down a sidewalk, usually in sync with other pedestrians dressed for work.

I march towards the bridge from Eighth Avenue,

then, on a whim,

enter the bridge from the side closest to Granville Island.

I try consciously to slow my pace,

remembering that I have nothing to do and nowhere to go but where the road leads.

I am wandering.

I slow

down for a few steps,

but begin to speed up again unintentionally.

It is not until my pace quickens that I realize that

I am doing it again...

speeding without cause.

*So often* I find myself doing this in life, in teaching and learning. Adapting to the pace around me, whether or not it is conducive to the learning process.

I continue to discover a slowness in wandering

unlike any other learning experience that I have had.

As I disembark the bus, and drift from the center

to the watery edges of downtown Vancouver, my pace

adopts the languor of the waters that enclose the urban flow.

Initially sped up by the surging traffic, my footsteps sync

themselves with the emerging environment of the

Waterfront, the Creek, the Beach...

Last week

I wandered over the Burrard

Bridge.

Sans plan or plot, my favorite

way to travel, I walked from Fourth &

Vine to Burrard, absorbing the tepid rays of

the day's reticent sun.



Unexpected

as the light that parted the clouds,

the path to the bridge unfolded before me,

beckoning me to wander.

I had forgotten what a bridge could do.

*I learn* anew what slowness can do when I

allow myself to be submerged in its call.

Rebecca Solnit writes,

“I

like walking

because

it

is

slow,

and I suspect that the mind,

like the feet,

works at about three miles an hour.

If this is so, then modern life is moving faster  
than the speed of thought,

or thoughtfulness” (Solnit, 2000, p. 10).

The slowness that wandering calls us to,

the reduced pace that it embodies,

is an element of its “everyday aesthetic” (Saito, 2007). Wandering allows  
us

to savour time,

not to be enslaved by it, as we appreciate

the “thoughts divulged at walking pace...”

(Coverley quoting Minshull, 2012, p. 213)

Wandering is slowness

time

embodiment

of reflection

of thought

of learning,

and connections

that become a critical

pedagogy that is truly one’s own.



Poet Renee Norman writes, “When we express matters, we use more than words. Meaning also resides in the body, the emotions, in the place that in all of us is neither cognition nor intellect, but a sensory centre we inhabit at birth...” (Norman, 2009).

The kinesthetic reflection that is wandering calls us to this place of bodily meaning  
and meaning-making.

Wandering allows me to acknowledge that thought also arises  
from a physical and sensual place. I learn more about myself, my  
thought processes through movement. I experience the world and  
uncover new layers of thought  
in stride.

Author Joseph Amato writes,

“Beyond fostering health, walking allows the feet to lead the mind and heart;  
it gives back our body and senses. With a fixed rhythm and established breathing,  
it releases the walker from his or her normally interrupted,

if not conflict-filled, consciousness

and provides an altered state of mind for prayer, reflection,  
or simply talking to oneself” (Amato, 2004, p. 276).

In writing of dance, and movement in general,

Scholar Celeste Snowber uncovers similar capacities.

She writes:

“Movement has the capacity to touch us physically and emotionally at our roots, provoking the deepest emotions, from love to fear to joy to abandon”

(Snowber, 2012, p. 56).

“Movement and dance are not just ways to illustrate ideas but a way of grappling more deeply with the complexity of ways students can critically think, sift, perceive, and eventually come to fresh understanding of whatever subject they are studying”

(Snowber, 2012, p. 56 - 57).

In wandering

I waft

through wonderings

unwrapped

rapt in feeling

I think in sight

move in metaphor.





As Snowber attests:

“This isn’t knowledge that can just be told or read about;

it must be experienced”

(Snowber, 2012, p. 55).

But there are times when I forget to be embodied,

forget that my thoughts need legs...

Yet, even the words of this work

come

slowly

And I must wait

for them

All of my prodigious walks have taken place elsewhere, away from home.

This will change when I return to The Bahamas next Friday.

## **Chapter 3. Interlude**

**Oct. 12, 2015**

Wandering home

I am learning

to learn

with care<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *The ethics of care in education is the subject of renowned education philosopher Nell Noddings' work (2003, 2005). Additionally, scholar Lynn Fels closes emails with the phrase "with care", a term I find inspiring and responsive.*

Wandering is teaching me  
to listen, look, touch, be present  
with care



Wandering home

my attention is brought again to time.

I have lost three hours along the cross-continental way.

The hours are a dubious loss; I have lived most of my life on Eastern time, and in moving to Vancouver in 2013, never did get used to those three extra hours that Pacific time gifts.

I have spent the past two years waking up at three, four, five o'clock to eat breakfast getting ready in my mind for school.

Now that I am home,

almost completely home (just an island away from where I was born),

I get up in the morning to type thoughts that keep me from slumber,  
and see on the bottom right hand corner of my screen that it is 12:01 am.

It cannot be midnight. It feels as if I have been sleeping for hours after my series of flights back East

and down South.

My mind settles into place, and I remember that I am home – almost home – so it could actually be three o' clock. My computer must not have made the automatic adjustment to Eastern time.

It does not intuitively know the time.

It lingers

even as I count the hours.

Not knowing what time it is brings with it a certain uncertainty.

A questioning of what to do now, where to go.

Wandering home

I wonder

what has wandering taught me

about the teacher that I am?

To teach with care

To attend to time

To linger

in the moments that are.

To honour the fact that I and my students need time

Time

to inhale concepts

exhale meaning

Time to stand still

Some-

times

Sometimes

not to know

the time

What stones will I pick up as I wander home?

How will this return to the beginning complete my journey to the educator I have become – this educator who wants to teach teachers to teach with care?

In the wandering

I am learning to listen.

I remember overhearing a babysitter from my childhood trying to explain that someone had “learned” her to dance. “Learned you?” asked the person with whom she was speaking. “Don’t you mean taught you?” “No. He learned me,” the babysitter answered. He didn’t teach her, not intentionally, she explained. She had learned from watching, from experiencing, from absorbing the moment...

Wandering is learning me to listen

to experience

to absorb the moment

Wandering on foot

in writing

Is learning me to be still

To learn

Still

**Oct. 13, 2015 1:49 am**

I had forgotten that I have been wandering for quite some time.

Wandering in my dreams

I wake up remembering the time I spent in New York City with my friend from university in 2002. We had travelled to the city together from Montreal, but had decided to go our separate ways each morning.

We each wanted to see different things:

she to drift in and out of museums

and me

to simply drift.

My first time in the city, I was content to walk around Greenwich Village without map or guide, just to get a feel for the place.

Even then,

I wandered into the sense of a place I had only walked vicariously in movies

and novels.

My thoughts wander to time again. It is difficult to write as my computer clock  
tells a fib.

It insists on holding on to the three hours that I have left behind an ocean ago.

I am struck by a need to re-set the time, to turn the dial forward to reflect

my new state of mind. Who am I at three hours ahead? What do I

lose in the three hours of an opposite

coast?

I never did adjust to Pacific time...

“What seems certain to anyone who has lived in different parts of the world,  
or even travelled extensively, is that cultural attitudes to time can have  
far-reaching implications for the ways we live, for forms of sensibility,  
and for the tenor and textures of experience” (Hoffman, 2009, p 9).

I restore the time to match my  
place. It is nearly two a.m. Already, a new day on this side; saying goodnight to the final  
hours of another in the West.



What am I  
obliged to do for  
time

Do I owe time  
my allegiance

Can I scatter time  
to the winds  
turn my back on its  
implications

Can I wander in time

I cannot treat wandering and physicality as peripheral to my learning,

I learn,

as I struggle to find the time to wander,

the motivation, once I begin

to wander on the page.

As scholar Celeste Snowber writes,

“Movement is knitted into the fabric of our beings...

“The lived body is the felt body where we make connections to the multiple sensations around and within us.

“No matter what we are teaching when the curriculum is embodied we come to a deeper understanding of concepts, ideas, or, new ways of thinking” (Snowber, 2012, pp. 53, 55 – 56).

I set out to write about wandering,

to explore the pedagogy of what has been so intuitive all of these years,

and find

that I forget to do the very thing of which I write.

Though it is not so much that I truly

forget,

than that I feel I no longer have

the time.



I have serious work to do.



I have a self-imposed deadline. I have suppressed my need to wander on foot. But my feet tell me that the exploration is not over. Author Rebecca Solnit writes,

It is the movement as well as the sights going by that seems to make things happen in the mind, and this is what makes walking ambiguous and endlessly fertile: it is both means and end, travel and destination (Solnit, 2000, p. 6).





This inquiry demands the poetic

tumbles out in verse

I feel the beat

with each metre

I walk

I wander into meaning



I have given up attempting to write in a linear way.

I have never wandered in a straight line.

I realize that I have long taken Kierkegaard's advice:

“When you go for a walk

let your thoughts wander aimlessly,

snooping about, experimenting

with first one thing and then another”

(Kierkegaard in Coverley, 2012, p. 29).

Sometimes

you have to wander

home

This return home reinforces my need for the interruption that I had felt I needed. I needed to wander anew.

Home has become the new,

as I come back eight months later, to hear what the wanderings of

another location

will bring.

Wandering informs the teacher that I am.

It calls my attention to slowness.

It gives me a shelf on which to rest time so that I may feel that I  
am learning.

I no longer see waking up hours before dawn as a burden

but a wandering of its own

As words fall into place

dreams layer meaning

I get up to wander on screen because I must.

I am abandoning the practice of waiting until the sun rises

to write what writes me throughout the night.

As Scholar Lynn Fels writes, “Such moments may be

beacons of light that pull us out of sleep

in the hours before dawn” (Fels, 2014).

Wandering home

the ocean and the sunset

speak to me of new stories

This evening I wander along the coast by car with my family.

The ocean unfolds along the roadside like an enormous sheet of glass, lit by a neon sun. I try to slow

the moment down with my cellphone camera, taking one blurry photo after another.

In the smeared horizon of the photos I see

glimmers of the essence of home.



I awake for the third morning at home long before dawn.

This time it is not my thoughts that awaken me, calling me to the screen. I get up and wander in these words in inquiry, searching for the lesson of the day. What will I gather for the journey ahead today?

What gifts does today bring?

Today, I am going all the way home.

Today, I am wandering to the island of my birth.

I am willing to be astonished

(Rishma Dunlop in Fels, 2014)



## **Chapter 4. Walking the Sea**

**Oct. 16, 2015** I feel the resistance of the powder soft sand against my sneakers  
and make the decision  
to go barefoot next time.

This time, I will see what resistance teaches me as I wander  
in research for the first time along the sandy shores of home.  
I smell the salt of the ocean in the air before I see the bands of blue green and  
indigo.

I drift further away from where I have parked my car and enter the beach.  
Faced with my first decision,

I consider whether to go east or west on this familiar beach.

I am surprised.

It takes me a while to decide.

And so I stand on the shore,  
surprised again by the cool and steady breeze even  
as the sun shines above like a klieg light on an old film set.

I gaze toward the east,

knowing the path that lay ahead. I have typically automatically headed in that  
direction in the past.

I have not tramped eastward on this beach in years.

I do not know what lies beyond what I can see of the shoreline from

where I stand.

I make my decision and head into the unknown.

*I stand* at a crossroads of sorts on the beach and find myself thinking consciously for the first time ever on a beach about which way to go.

I had been going west for years until now. It had never been a question about which direction I should take because west was the obvious choice. It has been the path of least resistance, the one that I am less likely to meet other people on while exercising, which is what I am normally doing when I am on this beach. Yet, this morning the obvious choice becomes a question, which leads to an act of conscious decision making – one of Appelbaum’s stop moments<sup>16</sup> – and curiosity.

How can I apply this moment to my life as a teacher? Why do I do things the way that I do as a teacher?

I come to this question as a teacher who has not occupied a classroom as a teacher for two years. Before that, I had taught for two years. I hesitate to write the word “only” because any experience as a teacher is experience worth noting. It is experience fraught with lessons and laughter and love. Those two years are what have brought me here, to this sandy crossroad. They have heavily informed the way I think about education and the lessons I see all around me. They may have informed the decision I make to go east this morning.

Scholar Ellen Rose writes, “Reflection unfolds slowly, in its own good time, during periods of stillness seized from the bustle and busyness of everyday life” (Rose, 2013, p. 3). As a teacher, I too, need to ask questions. I need to question myself and everything

<sup>16</sup> See p. 23, note 5 on p. 50 for definition of the stop moment.

around me. I need to make conscious decisions about the way I approach a topic, a student.

I am reading and writing my way into understanding.

I write to research to search.

I read to research to understand.

In reading what I have written, “the path I have lain down in walking”, I gain new insights. (Machado trans. by Varela in Thompson, 1987, pp. 48-64).

I learn.

I remind myself to wander first.

Edit later.

The breeze pulls me as I amble along the sands.

I walk in the dry and stubborn soft sand up the shore, plying its resistance, listening for its lessons.

I watch the waves as they wash against the hard-packed wet sand; their reliable rhythm becomes the music of my walk.

The sea stretches to the blue line of the horizon on my right.

On my left, the untamed beauty of coco plum bushes and coconut trees complete the picture frame. I feel as if I am in a scene from Robinson Crusoe.



I am mesmerized by the smallest leaf. The rippled pattern in the sand calls me to wonder.

*Scholar Alexandra J. Gillis writes:*

Quickly given formulas, terms and definitions replace questing openness and the loss of awe, wonder and a sense of mystery, especially as students progress through the higher grade levels and into post-secondary education. This is a problem that haunts educators (Gillis, 2015, p. 9).

Here, while wandering, my sense of awe, of wonder and mystery is restored. This restoration is something not just the learner, but the teacher that I am, needs like air for breathing.

Wonder reminds me as a teacher not to take anything for granted. Not the world around me. Not the lessons I have yet to learn, the paths I have yet to walk. Not the students sitting in front of me and their ability to re-awaken wonder in me and to show me the world through their eyes.

Wonder makes me a good teacher.

Wonder allows for open ended questions, for open ended learning.

As scholar Kieran Egan writes,



Imagination is too often seen as something peripheral to the core of education... To bring knowledge to life in students' minds we must introduce it to students in the context of the human hopes, fears, and passions in which it finds its fullest meaning. The best tool for doing this is the imagination (Egan, 2005, xii).

I bend to touch ripples of sand,

wanting to feel their texture,

wanting to connect with all of my senses.

The beach broadens down the shore.

The swath of sand up the path widens      little pools of water form just  
before the ocean begins.

Nests of dried brown seaweed repose nearby.

Tiny Casurina pine cones and needles lay scattered in a  
message along the shore.

The smallest details command my attention.

*Attention to detail* is what sharpens me as a teacher. This attention reminds me to look closely, always. At everything.

What do I miss when I fail to look closely?

Attention to detail is a form of reflection. Sensitivity to detail suggests an ability to recognize that there is more present than an initial glance may reveal.

I want to be a teacher who remembers to pay attention to the details. The details in a lesson, in a classroom setting, in a student's face.

What reveals itself when I take a closer look?

When I look from a new angle?

What does this attention to detail tell me about myself

where (or who or how) I need to be?

I reflect on golden stalks of sea grass arced towards the azure sky.

A smiling couple passes by me. Everything seems to smile on this sunny day.

The waves. The weather.

I marvel at the thick green bush opposite the ocean

and wonder how it is that I cannot remember the lushness of the scene in all of my past walks along this shore.

I spot an enormous tree buried within the bushes.

It too stands out as something new to the beach,

to me.

*I need* newness in teaching, in reflection. I believe the ability to experience something new, the sensitivity to the new, and the sense of the as-yet-to-be-discovered is an important part of education. After all, learning has an inbuilt newness to it. To learn something is to discover something new – new, if only, to the learner.

As a teacher in constant reflection on my practice, on my own learning as well as that of my students, I am pleasantly obliged to acknowledge the new. To be captivated by it. To celebrate it. Even if it is only new to me.

I walk a bit further  
then turn around  
just before reaching the resort area.  
I am hit  
with a new and unexpected view of the  
coastline.  
The line of trees that I had left behind towers ahead of me  
like the sails of a great ship.  
What has been behind me on this long walk  
has now become  
the way forward.  
What I see going back or ahead is not what I saw  
while I was walking in the opposite direction

along the same path.

*The ability* to recognize newness keeps me surprised. Seeing something new in a lesson that I have taught multiple times is what will make me a better teacher today than I was yesterday.

Is it even possible not to see something new the second time around?

Can I walk the same path more than once and not notice something I missed the first, second or even third time around?

What do I learn when I retrace my steps?

That every day is new.

Every experience a call to imagine anew.

Every student

a completely different person with individual needs.

As scholar Lynn Fels writes, “It is only now in turning around that we may understand the journey” (Fels, 2010, p. 11).

Fels:

“In each encounter we and those we encounter ‘come to the table with gifts’<sup>17</sup>—  
our experience,  
our narratives, who we are,  
what we know, our curiosities, our longings to become visible, to be acknowledged,  
our desire to speak and listen  
to a multiplicity of languages that recognizes who we are,  
a willingness to welcome what we have to offer, even as what we seek  
to offer remains as yet unnamed.

Some of us are resistant, clinging to what we know;  
others are open, willing to welcome that which they have not yet imagined.

All of us stand at the threshold that invites new possible beginnings”

(Fels, 2010, pp. 10 -11).

<sup>17</sup> Fels’ text includes the following note: “Dr. Karen Meyer, University of British Columbia, whose work and friendship have been pivotal in my own scholarship and understanding of what it means to be an educator, has spoken about greeting new graduate students into their doctoral programs, reminding them that they have come already with experience, knowledge, valuable information and questions, offering ‘gifts’, as she calls them, gifts they can bring to the academy, so that we may all benefit and learn from each other. Her recognition of a reciprocity of expertise of those living in practice has been a great lesson to me, a reaffirmation of the learning that comes to us through thoughtful and meaningful experience in relationship with others” (Fels, 2010, p. 14).

I walk back with a sense of newness.

Surprised by the fact that I can still be

surprised

by a beach that I have known all of my life.

The waves begin a quiet retreat.

They steadily recede where they once splashed further

and further up the shore.

My left foot

does not escape

their playfulness.

Water fills my shoe and I pull away.

Why do I do this?

I will leave my shoes behind

next time.

**Oct. 19 2015** Today my travels take me to Taino Beach.

So familiar from my childhood,

the beach echoes with memories

of playing for hours on holidays.

This morning the sea breeze blows reliably against my face

and the sun winks at me, its warmth toned

down on this cool morning.

I pad across soft grains of sand,

feeling the cushiony resistance of sand against shoe.

I have forgotten my half-hearted promise to leave my shoes behind after the last wander.

The feeling of sand between my toes is neither new nor unwelcome.

I have grown up with sand between my toes.

But I resist.

I do not want to walk the beach

barefooted.

Why not?

I am already dressed in my walking gear – a T-shirt and stretch pants.

I am not opposed to the feeling of sand on my feet,

but I do not want to break form.

Wearing shoes as I wander has become my habit.

*How often* do habits stop me from discovering something new? How often do habits prevent me from learning a new way of doing things or realizing that I never really benefitted from the old way?

I have heard so much about good and bad habits that I have failed to realize that sometimes what seem like neutral habits can be the most debilitating of all. Doing something like clockwork because it has always occurred like clockwork prevents me from seeing the actual time.

I do not want to teach like clockwork.

I do not want to be so familiar, so comfortable that I resist discovery. I resist feeling.

I make a temporary peace with the decision to remain shod

then take a few steps towards the ocean.

I breathe in the breeze,

absorb the sound of the waves

and the golden flecks of sun that flicker on the water's surface  
towards the east.

I am again confronted with the decision to choose a direction.

I have chosen this beach for today's site of inquiry

because there was something in particular that I wanted to see.  
But as I stand on the shores,



tugged in each direction by the beauty of the Casurina-lined coast,

I am no longer sure which way to go.

*Is an* educator allowed to be uncertain?

To express that uncertainty to learners, to self?

And if educators are not allowed to come face to face with this uncertainty and call it by name, are they being true to their learners, themselves?

How can I always have all of the answers all of the time? How can I become comfortable with the unknown? How can the unknown lead me into deeper reflection about what it means to be an educator, a learner, a person?

All I have now

are a series of wheres

whats

hows

And I am at peace

I am pulled eastward.

I amble towards the distant rock wall jutting out into the ocean.

The waves hang back on this part of the shore.

I walk on the wet sand

without flooding my shoes.

My feet sink into the spongy sand.

I scan dried pine needles and ribbons of seaweed that  
ornament the ground.

A trio of birds hop across the shore.

They hover near water's edge

as wary of getting their feet wet as I am.

A bird hops into the fingernail-deep pool dug by a wave caressing the shore.

I learn something new – that tiny birds are unafraid of wet claws,

of the unexpected.

What appears to be a mossy piece of coral

pokes out of the saturated sand, a tarnished jewel.

The little things poach my attention.

Strips of dried pine needles and tiny cones splatter the sand canvas.

Arranged by waves in curious  
curves and dots,

they guide me down the beach.

I look from sea to shore  
at the shrubs crowded amid the trees.



The spectrum of green and sun-scorched brown dazzles me.

A piece of driftwood carves its way into my vision.

Blanched into a spectacle,

the wood arcs protectively around the dried husk of a coconut.

The scene is strewn with brown pine needles,

framed for the observation of the viewer

with the time to wander.

*It is amazing what I see when I have the time to see it. When time is no longer something to kill or steal, when it belongs to no one but myself, I can soak in it. Linger in it. Wade in it. Subdue it.*

In fact, when I arrive at a place of contemplation time is not an adversary or even a measure, but simply an entity to distinguish dawn from dusk.

Time works with me, flows with me when I flow in it. The need to chop it into blocks that govern my life becomes a whimper, far from the roar it once was.

*“When did you last see someone just gazing out the window on a train?”*

(Honoré, 2004, p. 11).

A crab hole punctures wet sand

and childhood memories,

a navel on the smooth belly of the beach.

Further down,

more drift wood.

This time the wood is a snare, entangling a creamy peach and pink  
conch shell within its dried limbs.

A pile of discarded conch shells sits on the

ridge raised above the shore.

Their salty ocean odour announces their presence

before I see the pinks of their insides gleaming in muted sunlight.

Flies buzz above. I do not need a closer look.

Raised tree roots form a small cave on the ridge between the road and the sea

I peek into the little root cave

and am satisfied with my journey.

I turn around and walk back,

seeing the path in reverse

seeing the path anew.



Oct. 21, 15 I tramp across a bed of pine needles shaded by a Casurina-canopy,

a parting in the mini forest.

A sliver of sandy beach beckons.

The familiar bands of pale blue, aquamarine and indigo glisten in the sunlight.

It is warm.

I edge toward the beach

but am stopped by a single green baby pine tree.

Spindly,

it stands slightly apart from the others in this tiny forest.

*The singular* always calls me to reflection.

The lone anything makes me stop and think and wonder. Is it because it stands out? Does it seem vulnerable? As if in need of a friend? Or does the thing that stands alone seem fiercely independent, sturdy and strong? Can a single thing be both things at the same time?

Learners are vulnerable in our care: They are fragile, trusting. They come with all who they are – talents, hopes, fears, ambitions – trusting that we will take care of their emotions. But oftentimes it is easy to forget that I also come with all of these things. I, too, am vulnerable.

And in need of the time and space to recognize my own vulnerability, and to honour it. I need to honour that I get tired. That I need to be replenished.

Scholar Rita Irwin writes:

I imagine an excursion into an important, yet often neglected, pedagogy of self. Educators usually focus their care on others; yet if they wish to truly care for others, it is vitally important for them to care for themselves first (Irwin, 2006, p. 75).

I need to feed my own curiosity on a daily basis. I need to re-fuel, to re imagine. I need to know that it is okay to be vulnerable.

To remember this is to empathize with my learners, but also with everyone else around me, and with myself.

Who can I turn to for help and support?



On the loose dry sands,

I stand and gaze at the sea,

arrested by its beauty.

The beaches may vary

but their impact remains the same.

I stop and stare at the ocean before wandering along the shore.

I bring myself to move towards the water  
and walk beside a trail

of ocean-smoothed stones that twinkle in the sunlight.

They bead the tightly-packed wet sand like an infinite necklace.

I follow their wavering line along the sand.

The beach is shorter than I realize.

What loomed large in my childhood is now a short walk to  
the jetty and the canal separating one beach from another.

I walk through a part in the rocks and stand on a sandbar.

How is it that I can do this?

I remember the rocks being so tightly packed and the water level so high that all one ever saw were waves crashing against their jagged edges.

Now

I am walking through the loose formation of rocks  
and onto a sandbar that dips gently into shallow  
water before dropping off into deeper hues of blue.

I spin around for a panoramic view.

Slowly.

One

frame

at

a

time

I ingest the ocean in its rainbow of greens and blues.

The sky blends into the rich scene, punctuated by puffs of clouds. The crescent of beach hedged by the Casurina forest completes my spin.

I am transfixed.

Moments later I walk backwards,

to my starting point.

The spanking sound of little waves  
lap against the shore and the smaller rocks near the jetty.

I revel in the sound for a while,

observe its source.

I savour the elements that come together

to create its rhythm.

*I love* the way that rhythms remind me that I am not alone in a place or in the world.  
They are the embodiment of collaboration.

The sand contains

another message for me.

A claw-like tree branch rests

beside a footprint,

a sculpture sitting in the sand.

I leave the shore,

timelessness

and return to my car.

I get into the driver's seat and look down to find

hitch hikers,

tiny burrs that have clung to the cuffs of my pants

somewhere along the way.



**Oct. 23, 2015**

I sit on the sea wall

separating me from the blue green tide,

then lower myself onto the wet bed of sand.

I am barefooted at last.

The sand is a carpet.

It yields ever so slightly to the pressure of my soles.

I look out towards the ocean, pushed  
against the horizon in low tide

ripples of waves lap against the banks of beach.

The sun smiles.

The wind blows a steady rhythm that welcomes me.

I move instinctively toward the east, a counterpoint to my past westward  
leanings.

Now,

I follow the sun.

I push forward in the direction of the  
unknown.

Microscopic mounds of sand sculpt the shore into a story.

I kneel down to feel the texture        soft    powdery.

I have never seen anything like it before.

*I am invigorated by the new.*

I want never to lose the sense of the new. To do so would be to lose the spark that is needed to ignite learning.

Here is my learning then—to celebrate the newness of each day, each morning, each time I or one of my students arrives at a stop moment, a moment of recognition, a moment of renewed possibilities. I need to embrace each new day, and to be rejuvenated enough to recognize it when it appears before me.

The curve of the coast

unfolds before me

on this eastward drift.

Nestled within the sandy banks, rock pools fill

and empty

with the to and fro motion of the tide.

I walk into the formation.

My feet touch water

first time

since I have stepped onto shore.

The coolness shocks me

on this warm sunny day.

I wade in further and step

stone

by

stone

feeling for smooth surfaces free of slippery moss.

My feet hesitate over the heads of the submerged rocks.

What do the mossy rocks feel like?

I lift a foot gingerly above the nearest bearded rock and explore.



*“...she and the landscape explore each other...”*

(Linds in Hocking et al, 2001, p. xvi).

Scholar Warren Linds writes,

Our senses suffer as a result of the overwhelming stimuli in our world. We start to feel little of what we touch, listen to little of what we hear, see little of what we look at (Linds in Hocking et al, 2001, p. 20).

How often do I use more than my eyes or ears to explore a concept, a phenomenon, to experience a thing up close?

How might I and my students, in concert with other educators, become aware of all of our senses and the gifts of understanding that they offer?

Soft feathery a shag carpet conditioned by briny waters.

Soothing.

I glide across the rocks,

mossy and smooth, into a bar of sand.

The temperature

shifts on dry sand.

Warmth penetrates the exposed bed.



Its surface gleams in  
places

like a mirror

reflecting the brilliance of the sun above.

I have never passed this way before.

Further along, the sand plays in patterns,

wavy, rippling in small ridges that massage my feet as I move.

The ridges flatten in other spots to form fish-shaped outlines in the dampened sand.

In some places, the sand is a wrinkle-free sheet,

spread along the shore for picnicking.

My feet sink into a spot      the sand is clay,  
an exfoliating mud bath for my wriggling toes.  
I pull my feet from the cool pudding  
and walk on solid ground.

I cannot believe that I have never been this way before.

*Can I write again as if for the first time?*

Initially, I resist revisiting this sentence. This realization that I had not journeyed this way before. Even as I sit here typing after midnight on a balmy night at home.

I can remember the things this line brought me to reflect on. I was struck by the newness of the realization that I had not traveled a course that had been so familiar in the fact that I had never taken it. I realized that I had taken a particular direction of the beach that had been there all along, but that I had never walked. How often have I done this in life... in my writing?

How often have I neglected to turn my head in another direction for another view?

The beach stretches further up the shore to a chorus of Casurina trees.

I weave

in and out of

thumbnail-shallow pools of water and swaths of damp, glistening sand.

The grains are therapy. Rushing waves, an unforgettable soundtrack for sensuous reflection.

I complete

the curve of the beach and trek up a small mound of sand and rock  
into the neighbouring secluded cove.

There is no one here but me.

The tide spills into the cove's open mouth, drowning its secrets. I am motionless.

Echoes. Listening for remnants.

I am at the edge of the world.

an ancient crescent  
punctuated by a cove bearing the secrets  
of the original inhabitants of this coast.

I turn around to face the view I had left behind.

Ever new, the beach stretches before me in colours bleached by the sun

infinite shades of green and blue.

transparent pools of water

I face the sun

slow motion

now pale glass, green, shielded from hyper white light.

Ocean salt air wafting into my nostrils.

I am slow enough

to see a lone pebble

carried by the tide

**Oct. 28, 2015** The sky is overcast.

Translucent blues of both sky and sea blend together on this sunless morning.

I cross blades of grass

mingled with sand and vines across the shore.

The sea lies a few feet

beyond a fork in my path. I go west towards a sunless sky.

A first time in this compass direction in my beach wanderings.

Without the sun as a guide,

the west is more visible.

I walk along a sandy trail that

someone else has cleared.

Lined on all sides by seaside shrubbery,

the trail unearths green treasures.

A bush with long slender leaves of greenish silver

quivers in the wind

like a sea anemone.



Moments later, the sunless sea expands

before me.

The wind whips across my face and body

as I blend into the scene. The tide is high. The waves higher.

A thick band of seaweed tumbles beneath the surface of the sea

near the shore,

darkening the water closest to the sand.

Cottony clouds cloak the sky.

The path that brought me to the ocean

circles

back

on itself

and so I follow it,

heading east at first before arriving at the beginning.

*“Half the walk is but retracing our steps”* (Thoreau, 1851-60)

What is it about walking in circles?

Is it that you inevitably end up at the beginning, which is the end, which is the beginning?

Perhaps to walk in a circle is to remember that so much of our lives and learning happen in cycles. We learn the same things over and over again, each time ending at the beginning only to begin again. But what happens when we begin again?

I believe that we begin anew. The cycle, the circle, is never the same each time. Learning becomes layered and more complex with each loop, each spiral scaffolding new learning, new possibilities...

To wander in a circle is to recognize that I have never passed this way before. Not this time. Not in this moment. Thus, to wonder, what this new cycle will teach me? What will I learn during this rotation, because of this rotation?

I retrace my steps

westward, along the trail.

Little cream-coloured beads of a familiar bush

beam up at me.

Baby coco plums.

I lean in for a closer look, imagining them ripened when they will be twice as big.

I walk with ease across the wet sand.

My sneakers work with the sand. My footsteps sink in just enough to anchor me before propelling me

on to the next step.

I do not fight the wet sand today; I glide across it.

The muscles of my legs welcome the slight

push

and pull

of each step.

I walk faster than before.

Is it because this beach is the most remote of the five that I have wandered on thus far?

I thought carefully about wandering

along this beach before driving out this morning.

I knew that the chances of seeing anyone else around on a weekday were slim.

Curiosity won.

I wanted to experience this shore as a site of wandering.

Intersecting

lines

of dried pine needles and strips of seaweed

crawl along the shore as far as I can see.

The dark clumps of desiccated seaweed are almost menacing

on this gray morning.

I look over my shoulder

towards the stretch of beach

that now bears my sodden footsteps.

Why am I doing this?

Looking back?

On my previous wanderings

I saw the view in reverse

only after drifting ahead and arriving at a stopping point – a jetty, a cove, the end of the curve along the shore.

Now I move haltingly forward,

glancing backwards, with every step.

I expected this beach to be deserted at this time of the day and week.

I have encountered one other person so far.

A man preparing the deck of a restaurant for later in the evening, maybe.

Since then it has been me and the ocean

and everything in between.

Warmth seeps into my skin from the ocean-side

though the wind feels cool along the shore.

I look up

and see light pooling in the sea.

The sun feels its way through pillows of clouds.

Light, pale, glows along rippling waves.

I come to a point that feels terminal.

The beach snakes further west

but I cannot stop looking over my shoulder.

Could I wander too far?

*How do I know if I have gone too far? What does it mean to go too far? The issue of danger arises for me when considering this venture. Are there things that are to be left unknown, untouched? Certainly there are things that are unknowable in a moment. There are times when you and I are called to come to peace with not knowing, with a cloudy understanding of something. But what about the element of danger in the knowing?*

What does this mean for me as an educator?

Am I willing to say that I am comfortable with the unknown, the unknowable? I believe that I am. Are others ready to hear an educator say this?

The notion of wandering too far makes me think of our natural limits. At a particular point I stop. This point may feel more pronounced in an area that I know is secluded or remote, but it exists wherever I wander. I always come to a point when I realize that I have gone far enough, for the day, for the moment. Maybe I may never pass this juncture again. Or it will be awhile.

Maybe I will return tomorrow but I have received all I need for today.

I think wandering brings me into knowing what is needed for the moment, in the moment, and being satisfied with not knowing. Natural boundaries. It is okay to be aware of one's own boundaries.

up

I walk            the shore towards the street

and follow a sandy path on the grassy area

between the street and the beach.

My route is circular today,

foreshadowed by the earlier circle I had walked before.

I walk a bit slower now.

Is it because I can see the road?

I pass another silver green tree.

This tree holds the living and the dead.

Some of the slender leaves have dried up into a gray beard.

The dried leaves droop in  
decay where they once danced in delight.

They are surprisingly soft,

like felt,

even in their withered state.



**Oct. 30, 2015** I step onto the soft sands of the beach

and have no reason to look toward the east.

I am walking west today.

I have returned to Coral Beach,

and I am walking in the opposite direction of my last time here.

I am slow this morning.

The sun plays peekaboo in the clouds.

There is no breeze.

Just the sound of the waves crashing against the shore.

Barefooted,

I walk into what remains of the waves

as they wash against the shore.

They rush onto the saturated sand

only to retreat,

leaving sea foam

smooth surface

behind.

The water looks tantalizing, even without  
the sun.

I wade a bit further

remain ankle deep,

mesmerized by the ripples of sand below the water.

I regret that I have not brought a towel.

I plod on through the shallow water.

Before long, I am rewarded with the sight of a coconut husk

half-sunken into the sand.



I search for more treasures.

I drag my

legs through water,

feel the sound of waves.

I look out at the sea,

dimly lit

with the sun in retreat,

the water in shadows.

The brilliant blues and greens, overcast as the sky,

now darker versions of themselves.

The waves rock toward the shore,  
crash onto the sand.

Sound pushes my overworked legs forward.

Further on,

the sun revives me again,

a reservoir of light in the center

of darkened waters

ahead.

Seconds later

clouds part to reveal full-on light,

morning sun.

The water changes colour.

sea green and aquamarine and indigo.

The sand brightens.

Its pallor gone with the brilliance of sun rays.

I see broken bits of sea shells

scattered a line

in wiggly along the shore.

I squint at the sand

and appreciate the specks of pink

I usually do not notice

when I look at the shore.

A branchless trunk towers above the bushes,

like a monument amid its green neighbours.

Low bushes become a forest of Casurinas,

trails riddled throughout the clump of trees.

One path looms large,

laid down in sand where others are carpeted in dried needles.

## Chapter 5. Re-circling

*“Don’t rush the writing....writing is inquiry”*

*-Dr. Lynn Fels*

The above advice of my supervisor brings my wandering on the page to a momentary pause. I have changed costume, and walking shoes. I now wander through this text as reader.

I see things, new.

I see the things that have brought me to wandering in the first place.

And I see what rests in the blank spaces, the stops that are an inevitable part of reflection.

“Now it is time to listen to what [the text] is telling you, what new learnings it invites....”

(L. Fels, personal communication, Dec. 5, 2015).

Here, I retrace my steps along the journey, tying what I learn in wandering on foot, to what emerges in the wandering of my reading. I respond to the lines using performative

font <sup>18</sup>. I converse with the text in discovery of what it offers. I conclude with found poetry of themes I encounter again and again in my wanderings.

I am constantly brought back to the beginning:

“I discovered wandering as a student in search of ways of becoming a better teacher.” (p. 2)

*I have found the time to think creatively, to reflect. Wandering slows me down to encounter the new. I look again. I circle back in awe of my surroundings and all they have to teach me.*

“To wander is ... to explore the recesses of one’s mind ...

It is how the what has never been becomes.” (p. 4)

*Wandering suspends time, heightens sensitivity, slows me, revives me. Wandering gives me freedom to think unburdened, unedited. Wandering reveals the new...*

<sup>18</sup> Soundscape scholar Eric Weiden uses the term “performative font” to describe use of varying font types and sizes to communicate distinct sounds and emotions within text. Weiden references Fels’ “performative play” with text to evoke reflective response in readers (Weiden, 2014, p. 9). In this case, I italicize portions of the conclusion to reflect my dialogue with the text.

“My thesis then went from being a manual  
about wandering to the embodiment of wandering.” (p. 4)

*I could not avoid wandering. Even at times when I thought I could sit and write about walking for hours without actually getting up to wander. I spent months coming back to the realization that I have to wander. I have to embody the practice. Then the research began to embody the practice, as my recollections wandered on the page. Words meandered through the white spaces of the screen. They found their own places. They created a map with meaning of its own.*

“...wandering is not about answering every question...” (p. 11)

*I set out to wander as research with the mindset of “What If?” (Fels & Belliveau, 2008). What I have encountered remains open to interpretation. Each reader, each wanderer, may form understandings of his or her own. The questions that hover in the narrative, in the poetry, reflect the open-endedness of wandering. The quest is in the questioning.*

“When I wander/Time is my own to savour” (p. 17)

*Wandering grants me the priceless gift of time in the present-day. As author Carl Honoré writes, “In this media-drenched, data-rich, channel-surfing, computer-gaming age, we have lost the art of doing nothing, of shutting out the background noise and distractions, of slowing down and simply being alone with our thoughts” (Honoré, 2004, p. 11).*

“I stand at the edge” (p. 21)

*In slowness, I am sensitized to place, and its orienting role in the pedagogy of wandering. I hear the traffic sounds downtown, the leaves rustling in the forest, the waves lapping on the beach. And I listen... Wiebe et al. write “...deep thinking is not independent of a person’s experience of space and place” (Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 248).*

“They are my slowness...” (p. 39)

*My body, my feet, tell me when I have had enough. Sometimes curiosity pushes me further than I think I can go. At other times, I am forced to listen to my legs, to know the lesson in honouring what the body can do... in slowing down and absorbing what the body has already done.*

“I did everything but wander.” (p. 72)

*Author Rebecca Solnit writes,*

*Because thinking is generally thought of as doing nothing in a production-oriented culture, and doing nothing is hard to do. It’s best done by disguising it as doing something, and the something closest to doing nothing is walking (Solnit, 2000, p. 5).*

*...I discover a vehicle for thought in the pedagogical lesson of wandering.*

“... [I] forget that my thoughts need legs”... (p. 87)



*It would be interesting to examine the mechanical aspects of how movement facilitates thought. A recent study by Stanford University Researchers Marily Opezzo and Daniel L. Schwartz found that,*

*Creative thinking improves while a person is walking and shortly thereafter...The study found that walking indoors or outdoors similarly boosted creative inspiration. The act of walking itself, and not the environment, was the main factor. Across the board, creativity levels were consistently and significantly higher for those walking compared to those sitting (Wong, 2014).*

"I struggle to find the time to wander" (p. 102)

*Wandering as a pedagogy may be valuable for rejuvenation for teachers who may often feel pressured and harried while juggling all they have to do.*

"What is this resistance to remembering to walk?" (p. 80)

*I tussle with habits. I fight the forgetting of the body and its need to stretch to move to be heard.*

*Scholar Celeste Snowber writes,*

*Much of our relating in the world is experienced through our body, yet seldom do we take this as a serious place of study. But we understand viscerally the language of gesture, posture, and nuances of bodily expression (Snowber in Bagley & Cancienne, 2002, p. 22).*

*I learn and re-learn to unschool<sup>19</sup> myself from what it means to think, to write.*

*Writing means walking.*

*Thinking means moving.*

“...I too, need to ask questions” (p. 121-22)

*I am simultaneously teacher and learner, in wandering, in life. I begin this textual journey a student in a Master’s program. I wander in my position as pupil while in Vancouver. Yet I return home reminded that I am a teacher. My encounters at home bring me to reflect on what kind of teacher I have become, will be, when I trade places in the classroom once again.*

<sup>19</sup> I use this term to speak to the ways in which we learn, in the institutionalized setting of schools, to think exclusively of “concentrating” or “working hard” as sitting at a desk. Snowber speaks to this issue in her article “Let the Body Out” in the following words: “You, of course, like everyone else, learned to ‘pay attention’ by sitting still...” (Snowber in Malewski & Jaramillo, 2011, p. 190).

“...I have never passed this way before.” (p. 153)

“I always come to a point when I realize that I have gone far enough, for the day,  
for the moment.

Maybe I may never pass this juncture again.

Or it will be awhile” (p. 157)

*What has wandering taught me?*

*What is the pedagogy of the kinesthetic reflection of wandering?*

The words of arts-based researchers Wiebe, Fels, Snowber, Indrani and Guiney Yallop reverberate:

“We dare not tell each other what is...” (Wiebe et al., 2015, p. 252)



## Postscript

Here I am.

In the uncharted territory of wandering, I have found a praxis for life. I have meandered into a way of being

with myself    with students    within the world

that opens me to fresh learning,

to presence.

*I have never passed this way before.*

I entered this road as a student, and as a teacher, on a quest for suspended time. I found reflection in motion. I wandered in time and space into questions that have birthed a new way of being.

*I have never been this way before.*

The road ahead dissolves into the distance...



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## Appendix A.

### Meander through the Literature

The following is a walk through the literature that has been a companion during my reflective journey through wandering. I extend this invitation to the reader in the hope of remaining true to my own wandering experience, which was significantly enriched by the offerings of authors who have traveled similar paths. The meander includes a look at works on the act of walking itself, the phenomenon of embodiment, and the research sensitivities of performative, poetic and narrative inquiry.

Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001) is a review of writings about walking over several centuries. In addition to taking a critical look at the accounts of walkers of the distant and not so distant past, "Wanderlust" also classifies the accounts into categories like walking literature and nature essays. The classification proves useful in identifying the author's purpose for walking, at least as interpreted by Solnit. The text also includes a look at walking in relation to place and space as written by walkers in nature and in the city.

The work is clearly defined as a critical examination of writings on walking. Its significance lies in its broad scope and careful consideration of different types of writings about walking. Its critical look at what various writings about walking over the centuries have communicated, for example from whose lens is it written and the socio-historical context for the writing, make it relevant.

Solnit's stance is both critical and interpretive. The perspectives on each work she mentions are clearly her own and reflect her own views of the writing of the authors. While the vast majority of her references are to works that praise the power of walking, she does include an objection from German satirist Max Beerbohm to the notion of walking as conducive to thinking. Solnit writes of Beerbohm, "He claims that walking is not at all conducive to thinking because though 'the body is going out because the mere fact of its doing so is a sure indication of nobility, probity, and rugged grandeur,' the mind refuses to accompany it" (Solnit, 2001, p. 121 – 122).

The book gives us a lens from which to critically review walking accounts. It gives a critical framework for looking at walking accounts, while also referring us to a historical body of walking accounts and providing us with a rich and categorized list of further reading.

Merlin Coverley looks at the forms walking has taken within western society from the time of ancient Greece to the present day in his book, *The Art of Wandering: The Writer as Walker* (2012). The author examines trends and mines walking literature to produce a wide survey of the literature, including a look at works of lesser known "walker/writers" (Coverley, 2012).

He clearly establishes the cultural significance of walking in the west, particularly to the walker/writer and walker/philosopher by drawing on a wide body of work reflecting the importance of walking to the lives and creativity of dozens of writers and philosophers.

The scope of the text entails walking as aesthetic, political, imaginary and experimental. Coverley demonstrates the historical significance the walk as a vehicle for thought and inspiration, as well as a contemporary resurgence of its popularity.

Interpretive and critical, Coverley's work synthesizes the works of writers who walked as well as those of their biographers and critics to provide new interpretations of how walking has influenced the creativity of the walker/writers he features.

This book contributes to an understanding of the walker as writer and the role that walking has played in the lives of writers who walked famously through its extensive study of such western writers. Its strength lies in its look at works of fiction and non-fiction by men and women, as well as writings about the writers in question for further analysis, thus shedding light on how the writers themselves see walking in their lives and in the lives of their characters. On the other hand, it offers no perspective on walking literature outside of western cultures.

*The Art of Wandering* provides a useful framework for examining the act of walking in literature. It firmly establishes connections among walking, writing, thinking and creativity through its examples of the lives of the writers for whom the experience of these connections was most certainly the case.

In *A Philosophy of Walking* (2014), author Frédéric Gros turns the act of walking about like a prism, reflecting its many sides. We see walking as a generative act, as a way of being, as a way of knowing. Gros begins by telling us what it is not: "Walking is not a sport," reads the title of the first chapter and the first line of the text (Gros, 2014, p. 1). Subsequently, we learn what philosophers, activists, pilgrims, flâneurs, and pleasure and solace-seekers have found in the walk. A collection of vignettes about walkers and walking, the text combines the stories of those who walked with notes on the sensory and psychological experiences of walking, primarily in nature.

To its philosophical and historical perspective, *A Philosophy of Walking* adds a somatic thread that underscores the knowing embodied in the act. Gros weaves thoughts about freedoms, slowness, solitudes, and energy that arise while walking throughout the text, reminding us of the dual movement that takes place through walking – that of the physical and the psychological. The book is useful for practice in its offering of these dualistic experiences of walking. In its exploration of walking and all of its implications, the text provides another layer of understanding to the experience of the walk as a liberating suspender of time.

Joseph Amato's *On Foot: A History of Walking* (2004) examines how contemporary Western society arrived at its current attitudes toward walking. From ancient times to the present, Amato looks at the reasons why we walk and the manner in which we walk. He asks, "What do we make of walking and this new humankind, which in the last two centuries sits, rides, and drives ever more, walks less, and walks more by choice than ever before in its entire history?" (p. 2).

In his examination of the evolution of attitudes toward walking, Amato looks at the nineteenth century Romantic period in Europe. He pauses on moments in history such as

these, when walking as a necessity changed markedly to walking as an artistic and exploratory ideal. He observes, "Romanticism encouraged walkers – in early generations as individuals and in subsequent generations as groups of adventurous tourists – to venture into remote landscapes and forgotten places where they would ramble and explore" (p. 102). Amato also notes the improvements in the enforcement of law and order in that led to a heightened sense of safety for walking in the countryside.

The author's historical survey of walking comes inevitably to the role that transportation has played in altering the reasons for and way in which people now walk. "With private vehicles and mass transportation available, people like nineteenth-century romantic walkers and travelers now ride to the places they choose to walk" (p. 256).

Amato references a wide range of historical accounts on movement and society in Europe and North America over a span of several centuries. His inclusion of the walking lives of writers and philosophers, and references to works of fiction, add rich detail to the text. While he provides a varied look at walking in Europe and North America, it would have also been interesting to note aspects of a history of walking in non-Western cultures as well.

This book contributes to the knowledge of present attitudes toward walking, particularly in the geographical areas on which it focuses. Amato provides a sequential look at the course of events that took Western society from walking out of necessity to walking by choice in an age where riding is often the default form of transport. Such knowledge of how walking came to become a matter of choice is useful for my research, which centers on walking by choice. Amato's discussion of the Romantic walkers and their views on walking as a form of artistic inspiration and endeavour is also useful for my look at walking as reflection and conducive to free thought.

Photographer Rita L. Irwin walks readers through the significance of a "pedagogy of self" in her "Walking to Create an Aesthetic and Spiritual Currere" (2006), an article found in *Visual Arts Research*. Irwin, who conceptualized photography as action research and ongoing reflexivity, discovers an avenue for self care and creative rejuvenation as an educator through the practice of walking (p. 78). In her walking currere, the author encounters three experiences on which she reflects: freedom, transformation and flow.

Irwin recalls a walk across her University of British Columbia campus, during which she is moved to contemplation and creativity. Inspired by the natural environment, she is captivated by and thus photographs a series of maple leaves. She later makes paintings based on the images. "The images were evocative, sacred, sublime, beautiful, relational, spiritual and emotional" she writes (p. 76). Irwin uses a phenomenological framework to discuss the pedagogy of the walk for heightened aesthetic and personal awareness using the works of several philosophers and education theorists.

A strength of the article is its exploration of etymology and further references to the evolution of meaning of key terms. Irwin takes a particular look at the Latin word currere, which means to run the course, and discusses what it has come to mean in modern times through the work of curriculum theorists. "More recently, currere has become known as an autobiographical genre of curriculum theorizing, a genre that addresses an existential nature of education (see also Abbs, 2003; Pinar et al., 1995)" (p. 77).

Irwin's article contributes to an understanding of walking as a means of reflection. In this autobiographical narrative, we see the generative power of walking in the realm of creativity and personal replenishment. "Walking, taking photographs and creating art can all be exercises in seeking aesthetic and spiritual contemplation by looking attentively and gazing with heightened awareness", she writes (p. 80). Irwin's findings in relation to contemplation and heightened awareness through walking assist in providing further theoretical basis for reflection through movement in my wandering research.

In *Unfolding Bodymind: Exploring Possibility through Education* (2001), editors Brent Hocking, Johnna Haskell and Warren Linds present the works of various educators on learning as experienced through the body and mind conceived as one entity. The volume consists of the philosophically underpinned narratives of these educators, who take the reader to spaces of learning as varied as drama and diving instruction classes.

As laid out in their introduction, the editors go beyond the surface of what it means to not separate the mind from the body through the works presented. The concept of the bodymind as outlined in the title is inspired by experiential education pioneer John Dewey, who hyphenated the term in 1929. "[B]ody-mind simply designates what actually takes place when a living body is implicated in situations of discourse, communication and participation..." (Dewey as quoted in Hocking et al., 2001, p. xvii).

The narratives demonstrate the knowing that comes through experiencing that the bodymind term encapsulates. The variety of experiences presented, including that of an educator with cerebral palsy who describes the way of knowing that his embodied experiences entail, strengthens the book. The narratives discuss embodied experiences and the ensuing learning and reflection from the perspective of the senses, as well as different types of bodies. The experiences and learning of the body on land or beneath the sea also add depth to the consideration of the topic.

This book provides a framework for understanding the integration of the body and the mind in learning. It not only gives a theoretical backdrop for the bodymind phenomenon, drawing on a variety of philosophical and arts-based inquiries, but it also shows how the bodymind experiences the world and the resulting learning. And in doing so furthers my understanding of the ability to experience learning through movement, particularly in my wandering research.

In "Dance as a Way of Knowing" (2012), an article found in *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, dance scholar Celeste Snowber discusses the body as a place of knowledge. Using dance as a vehicle for this knowledge, Snowber explains dance as a form of understanding and inquiry across disciplines. She writes, "Dance accesses many kinds of knowledge beyond kinesthetic intelligence, including visual, tactile, mental, cognitive and emotional intelligence" (p. 57).

Snowber, who has done pioneering work in somatic knowledge in the academy, calls this knowledge through the body "body pedagogy". As she writes, "We teach with and through our bodies... And integrate movement as a way for students to make friends with their bodies" (p. 55).

The author uses a phenomenological lens to explain ways in which students learn through the body. She references dance scholars and education theorists to underscore her assertions. The author's arts-based research disposition is also evidenced by her incorporation of personal narrative and poetic inquiry. Her exploration of embodied knowing is as multi-faceted as the knowledge through movement of which she writes. In her poem "The Body Knows", the reader is encouraged to "dance your questions – /what you know and don't know" (p. 58).

"Dance as a Way of Knowing" contributes to the understanding of the body as a sphere of learning. Snowber sheds light on how dancing bodies ask and answer questions in the course of the educative process in ways that have been overlooked and underestimated. She reminds us that an organic understanding of the potency of the body in motion is often a forgotten artifact of childhood (p. 55). The article, in its examination of body knowledge through dance, advocates a return to this memory of motion.

Snowber's work provides a sound basis for the existence and relevance of body knowledge. Her study of learning in and through movement are particularly instrumental to my research in and through wandering.

"Let the Body Out: A Love Letter to the Academy from the BODY", examines recurring themes in dance scholar Celeste Snowber's work on somatic knowledge through the voice of none other than the body itself. Written as a chapter in *Epistemologies of Ignorance in Education* (2011), a volume edited by Erik Malewski and Nathalia Jaramillo, "Let the Body Out" introduces the body as agent rather than object. Snowber implores on behalf of the body, "What does your body know? What does your body remember?" (p. 191).

This love letter addresses the needs of the body, primarily for movement, and the crucial nature of attending to these needs. Snowber reminds the reader of the automatic ways in which he or she may have attended to the body's needs in childhood through spontaneous dance and movement. She also speaks to the paradox of the body as a site for pain and beauty. She writes, "We are invited into deep vulnerability and it is in this place that worlds can open up to us" (p. 197).

This phenomenological, arts-based inquiry is strengthened by its personal appeal from the body to other bodies. We hear the "embodied voice" of the body itself (p. 195) as it expresses its need to be honoured for all its functions in the living and learning process. "The body does not want to be bracketed, or just be utilized as a semi-colon. The body wants to be a comma, constantly breaking up every little intention and action..." (p. 196).

"Let the Body Out" contributes to our understanding of the body as an entity with teaching, learning and expressive capacities, especially in need of attending to in educational settings. It reminds us of the dire need for movement in education and academic settings. The letter holds particular significance for my research on wandering as a form of kinesthetic reflection in its advocacy for listening to the body – both to what it needs and what it leads one to.



In “Bodydance: Enfleshing Soulful Inquiry through Improvisation”, dance scholar Celeste Snowber discusses the dance and performative inquiry process of her research. Found in the book *Dancing the Data*, edited by Carl Bagley and Mary Beth Cancienne, Snowber’s article speaks from the body and of the wisdom of the body. The author meets the challenge of putting the physical into words in describing a process that begs to be witnessed and performed.

Snowber, a dancer and a writer, explains her process of honoring and accessing “body data” in order to create the body narratives she dances through improvisation. “... We constantly receive body data, visual data, auditory data, and tactile data”, she writes. “... There is an assault on the senses that we have often learned to tune out” (p. 22). This arts-based researcher’s process also gives voice to what she describes as the multiplicity of all that she is. “These dances continue to integrate my multiple lives, roles, and ways of knowing” (p. 29).

The article references the works of other arts-based researchers, as well as phenomenological curriculum and feminist theorists. Snowber draws on these works to support her theory of the generative and transformative nature of improvisational dance inquiry. The article’s strength lies in its translation of bodily experience to text, as well as its explanation of the dance inquiry process.

Snowber’s work contributes to our understanding of the body as a site of inquiry and a place through which we can conduct research. This article also speaks to ways of comprehending how we may view the ways in which the multiplicity of our lives informs our research and ways of being. “Bodydance” provides further theoretical underpinning for the knowledge to be gained through movement and attending to the body that greatly serves my research into the kinesthetic reflection of wandering.

Carl Honoré’s *In Praise of Slowness: How a Worldwide Movement is Challenging the Cult of Speed* (2004) gives readers a vision of life at a slower pace. The author looks at several movements across a variety of categories that embrace slowness as an ethos, contrasting this approach to the sped-up pace of modern life. Stories of the positive effects of a slow approach to food production, city development and schooling, among other areas of life, lead the author to conclude that a slow way of living is really about balance.

Honoré takes a look at attitudes toward time management throughout history. He writes, “In the nineteenth century, people resisted the pressure to accelerate in ways familiar to us today... Painters and poets, writers and craftsmen looked for ways to preserve the aesthetics of slowness in the machine age” (p. 14). The author then examines various movements and organizations based on slowness in Europe, North America and Japan.

The examination of slow movements in three differing geographical areas is one of the book’s strengths. Additionally, the investigation of the slow approach to the diverse areas explored in the text also adds to Honoré’s argument. The reader sees the effects of slowness at work in a number of arenas around the world, contributing to an understanding of the slow approach in action, as opposed to mere theory. The book’s empirical

observations of the effects of slowness buoy my research into the benefits of slowing down and savouring the moment through wandering as kinesthetic reflection.

Through her doctoral dissertation, “In the wind clothes dance on a line: performative inquiry – a (re)search methodology : possibilities...” (1999), scholar Lynn Fels introduces performative inquiry as research and educative tool. Fels conceptualizes performative inquiry as a form of embodied learning in which students, teachers and researchers come to understanding by doing. Central to the work are themes of presence, absence, responsiveness and the unknown. As the author asks in a question that follows the reader as the text unfolds, “How do I write this moment into our presence?” (p. 10).

Fels brings the reader into the presence of the work, of the possibilities of performative inquiry, in a series of vignettes she terms flights, landscapes and skyscapes. We see students, and the researcher herself, come to new awareness in science and civics classes in which role dramas replace static readings of textbooks. The work’s phenomenological and philosophical stances come through in such offerings as philosopher David Appelbaum’s “stop” moment, which Fels presents as a key moment of recognition of learning in the performative inquiry process.

The researcher presents her work from an arts-based perspective, combining performative inquiry most notably with poetic inquiry. Readers are written into the presence of the moments experienced by the students they encounter through poetic writing and understanding. Fels intermixes verse with prose in a format that sets the scene as well as allows readers to experience the possibilities of the inquiry for themselves. This weaving of worlds and understandings then places the reader in the position to echo Fels’ question: “How do I respond?” (p. 35).

“In the wind clothes dance...” is useful in its demonstrative nature. It exemplifies performative inquiry, showing the reader the possibilities in active exploration of educational concepts. The strength of the work lies in its evocative presentation through performative and poetic inquiry. It successfully embodies the concepts it introduces and discusses. Consequently, Fels’ dissertation serves as a meaningful guide for my research through wandering in its embodiment of learning through doing, and its honouring of the learning that occurs in the said and the unsaid, the presences and the absences.

The significance of recognition and responsibility in education emerge in Lynn Fels’, “Coming into Presence: The Unfolding of a Moment” (2010). In this article, found in the *Journal of Educational Controversy*, the arts-based researcher brings the reader into a moment of recognition during a high school production that leads her to explore the question of personal responsibility in the presence of the new. In witnessing the vulnerability of a student as he sings a solo during the production, the author first recognizes the in-between space that the teenager occupies in the changes in his voice. She then poetically explores what it means to witness this student’s becoming, on stage, at this stage of his life, as part of the audience. “How do we as audience, as witnesses, as educators, now respond?” (p. 2).

Fels then takes us on a journey to response through references to the works of various philosophers, educators and poets. She incorporates Maxine Greene's notion of "wide-awakeness", David Appelbaum's "stops", and Hannah Arendt's "natality" in drawing a map to a responsiveness to the presence of others through Jacques Derrida's concept of "hospitality". These philosophical musings converge to present a possibility of personal responsibility in witnessing the becoming of others. Although Fels acknowledges that this is not a task without risk. She writes, "In these cautionary times, I hesitate to open the door of my abode to persistent knocking by strangers, fearing unwelcome responsibility, fearing the not yet known..." (p. 5).

This article is significant in its ability to adjust the lens of the educator. The reader is brought into a performative moment, an act indicative of Fels' research methodology of performative inquiry. In the present of this moment, Fels focuses the attention on, first the soloist – the student, then calls the attention of the reader to the second actor in the scene – the lone audience member, the witness. Once the second actor comes into focus, the reader is faced with considering the role of this actor. As the text unfolds, we see that this role of responsibility and hospitality is a profound one that speaks to the entire educative process.

"Coming into Presence..." assists with my understanding and exploration of the wandering process in its demonstration of how a relatively small, performative act can have universal implications. The experience of a single actor, a single audience member, becomes a surrogate for any experience, and the accompanying call to response, throughout the learning process.

"Do you see how our footsteps have changed the landscape?" These words in Lynn Fels and George Belliveau's *Exploring Curriculum: Performative Inquiry, Role Drama, and Learning* reflect the wide-open meaning that I continue to find in my research on wandering (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 27). Fragments of a conversation remembered by Fels from a walk with a friend on a snowy night, the words echo the power of the walk, the open implications of wandering that I study. As a whole, Fels and Belliveau's text provide a definition, theoretical framework, and practical application guide for performative inquiry – a methodology conceptualized by Fels for her 1999 doctoral thesis. The text also looks at performative inquiry as a research tool for both students and teachers.

A methodology that brings inquirers into the research as they perform in order to probe, performative inquiry encompasses a variety of dramatic forms and can be used in the classroom as a teaching tool as well as in research. Theoretically, performative inquiry embodies elements of complexity theory, as well as psychological and developmental theories, including Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. In fact, Fels and Belliveau propose the addition of performative-imaginative intelligence to Gardner's list (Fels & Belliveau, 2008, p. 22).

The text is relevant in its precise explanation of performative inquiry as a mode of research and its application in teaching, learning, and research. It also presents performative inquiry as a creative and kinesthetic addition to the variety of inquiries that have arisen in qualitative research over the past two and a half decades. The authors give practical examples of how to use performative inquiry, specifically in the form of role drama. It also provides a theoretical framework for and a greater understanding of the learning that takes

place in performative inquiry, which is one of the modes of inquiry through which I have chosen to explore the act of wandering.

Authors D. Jean Clandinin and F. Michael Connelly outline narrative inquiry through examples in their book, *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. Clandinin and Connelly detail how they came to narrative inquiry as researchers through their personal experiences in the field of education research. They begin their journey heavily influenced by Dewey's perspective of "examining experience as key to education" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, xiii). The significance of the text is its clear explanation of narrative inquiry as a research method that allows for understanding research phenomena and participants beyond the quantifiable.

In their demonstration of what narrative inquiry looks like in action, the authors present and examine the work of scholars in a variety of disciplines, such as anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Mary Catherine Bateson, and philosophers Mark Johnson and Alisdair MacIntyre. Through this we see the versatility of narrative inquiry. Clandinin and Connelly make clear their intention not to define narrative but to exemplify what narrative inquirers do (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 49). As they explain, "We are interested in inquiry terms and the spaces these terms create for inquiry. We are interested in exploring how these terms define and bound narrative inquiries..." (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 49).

Their outlining of these boundaries includes a look at collecting information in the field to translating that data into research material. They also provide valuable knowledge about narrative inquiry as methodology by highlighting what they call "persistent concerns" in chapter ten. In this chapter they examine aspects of the ethics and anonymity issues that come into play when using narrative inquiry.

This text contributes to our understanding of what narrative inquiry is and its uses by showing how it looks and how it has been used in different fields. It gives shape and definition to narrative inquiry while demonstrating how it can be applied in the field. It also shows how to take field notes and convert them to research texts. The text further gives a theoretical framework to narrative inquiry, providing a basis for understanding, explanation and working within the medium. It also gives me a model for using narrative inquiry in my research. It shows me how this can look and gives me valuable resources to refer to in other fields in which narrative inquiry has been used. Finally, it alerts me to concerns that arise when using the methodology and keeps me mindful of these things as I conduct my research.

"Through this writing and sharing of poetry we are curious, lingering between the lines of each other's work, wondering what recognitions will be evoked" (p. 248). These words of arts-based researchers Sean Wiebe, Lynn Fels, Celeste Snowber, Indrani Margolin and John J. Guiney Yallop, embody the practice of passive reflection explored in "A Poetic Inquiry on Passive Reflection: A Summer Day in Breeze" (2015). Written as a chapter in *Creating Together: Participatory, Community-Based and Collaborative Arts Practices and Scholarship across Canada*, this piece uses poetry and collaborative poetic understanding to demonstrate passive reflection as defined by the authors. They write, "... passive

reflection ... is a practice of extended meditative focus that invites poetic, playful pause, response, and responsibility” (p. 245).

The inquiry takes the authors to themes of slowness and presence as the reflections and poetry of each responds to the others with a series of realizations about the relevance of passivity in a production-oriented educational culture. “Thinking of school classrooms, we question the commonness and banality of employing the phrase ‘active reflection,’ and we resist the productive and duty-bound adjective, which makes thinking ‘actionable’ toward an articulated outcome or task goal” (p. 245).

The authors draw on the foundational works of poetic inquirers like Carl Leggo, Pauline Sameshima and Monica Prendergast in their inquiry, as well as those of various education theorists and aesthetic philosophers. The chapter is strengthened by its collaborative nature. Each poetic inquirer adds a valuable layer of meaning to the stonework of the inquiry. Additionally, the authors create in a way that allows the reader to inquire poetically along with them while reading. The poetry allows for pauses in the overall text that invite new understanding.

“A Summer Day in Breeze” provides a creative look at an alternative form of reflection. The chapter presents the possibilities of an open-ended reflection – a passive reflection – that places equal weight on the lingering questions. The piece is highly useful to my research on wandering as a form of reflection that welcomes and privileges such lingering.

Maxine Greene’s *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change* proposes a channel to alternatives to traditional forms of education through the lens of imagination. Greene presents the case for a need for alternatives due to the diversity of learner perspectives and backgrounds and a recognition of the “multiple lived worlds” of individuals (Greene, 1995). She uses literary works and her experiences with reading as an entry point to imagination as a tool for shaping alternatives to the traditional education system, citing lines from an array of novels and poems that have guided her to new perspectives. The discussion of imagination as a tool sharpened by experiences with literary works is underpinned by the philosophical framework of the text, which references the works of Foucault and Merleau-Ponty, among others.

The significance of the work is established through its acknowledgement of a need for expansion of education perspectives and possibilities. In making the case for arriving at a “better state of things” through imagination, Greene gives poignant examples of the problems that existed at the writing of the text, and though twenty years later, continue to exist (Greene, 1995, p. 1).

Among other things, the text functions as a guide to critical pedagogy through its use of imagination as a means of re-creating. The call to imagine anew requires the naming of a thing, an issue, a problem, as Greene writes (Greene, 1995, p. 111). It further requires reflection and critical examination of what is happening, what needs to be amended and ways to go about making amendments. Imagination as a tool of critical pedagogy as outlined by Greene proves valuable to the development of a pedagogy of wandering.