

I like to walk around the city. Since I moved here four years ago, I have wanted to find out what lies beyond each street or park. Not knowing about the adjacent areas makes me slightly nervous. Things could be really cooking over there, and if I don't walk over and find out, I could be missing something good. In the meantime, Toronto has become a very intimate place for me. The people begin to look familiar and friendly. It seems natural to stand in the middle of a Portuguese festival in Trinity-Bellwoods, or watch a Peruvian celebration from the slopes of the Christie Pits, or walk with 3,000 Koreans at dawn along Bloor to Yonge after a World Cup victory.

It's a late Sunday afternoon when I leave my house on Dupont at Spadina - the sun is going down in the west. It looks like it's setting right on Landsowne Street. That's a good name for a sun to set on. Next to my house is a gigantic LCBO. People from small, compact European countries would find it amazing and endless, or perhaps obscene. There is a guy who stands in front of the store all the time asking for money. I usually don't give him anything, but he knows I live nearby and he always says "Have a nice day" and I say something like "What's going on?" but I mush up the words so it all sounds like one incomprehensible word but I nod and look him in the eye too and he seems okay with that. Sometimes he's on my porch looking through stuff.

I turn left onto Davenport, go under the tracks and then head to the right and take Poplar Plains. It's all uphill here, climbing the shores of ancient Lake Iroquois. At this point the streets get wonderfully disorganized. I take a short detour up Glen Edyth drive. I only just discovered it on a winter afternoon this year, when the trees were still bare affording fine views. Glen Edyth climbs up high, rapidly, with only a steel crash barrier on one side keeping the Saabs and Audis from tumbling into the ravine below. Up at the top you can see a cross section of midtown Toronto - the Four Seasons Hotel, Manulife Centre - all from a weird, unexpected angle. Directly below are trees and houses spreading towards Avenue Road. When nobody is around but a few tradespeople working on a couple of lonely homes, I feel like the only person in the city, and it's all laid out in front of me like a damp Currier & Ives lithograph. Nobody seems to live in these big houses, but they're always being fixed up.

I walk back down - Glen Edyth has no outlet at the top (but there really should be a pedestrian passage over to Casa Loma) and I walk around to Russell Hill road. I don't know anybody on this street. There are modest mansions and immodest ones. I secretly covet the immodest ones because some of them are perched high above the road and have grand lawns in front lending them a Great Gatsby look. The electronic gates let me know I'm not invited. The rich are different, and all that. But on sunny Sunday afternoons at around 5p.m. I can stand there on the sidewalk as long as I want and watch, just like Benjamin Braddock did when he was spying on Mrs. Robinson and daughter in *The Graduate*. I wasn't stalking anything but real estate though, and instead of Simon and Garfunkel I was listening to Glenn Gould's "Goldberg Variations" on my headphones.

It's not a long walk over to Sir Winston Churchill Park, which starts at the corner of Spadina and St. Clair, but has secret entrances around its periphery, including the one I took from Russell Hill road. It looks like a regular park with dramatic hills, but it's actually a giant reservoir covered in grass. The designer dogs of Forest Hill can be seen at all hours playing, pissing, fetching and shitting just a few feet above the city's potable water reserves. I like to stand at the edge of the reservoir and look

south. You can survey the entire city from this position. To the right and below is the Spadina Road Bridge, passing over the ravine I often walk through. Near the base of the bridge you can find the Spadina subway escape hatch. It was through this passage that the victims of the 1995 subway crash escaped the superheated tunnels. It's quiet now, but sometimes I like to stand next to it and listen to the subway rush by somewhere deep inside and feel the warm air blow through the grates. I like knowing that underneath all this nature there is an electric railway running, keeping the city alive and well.

Since the park only has a thin layer of absorbent soil above the concrete of the reservoir, it's often a mucky place to walk, and it takes a while to get up to St. Clair Avenue. I walk west to the Loblaws to use the public washrooms where a person can pee without fear of arrest. This is the mothership of all Loblaws: a glass and steel Star Trek spaceport on some utopian forested planet. Inside there is a board that lists all the events that happen there - from Pilates to Salsa Cooking to Passover Primavera lessons or something. On this particular Sunday, there is a children's birthday party taking place in a glassed-in zoo-like room on the second floor. The moms all look fresh and white and wear crisp shirts and some talk on cell phones in the corners. Some of the dads are bored while others are really into the celebration and hold on to their toddlers and try to get them engaged in whatever the woman in the Loblaws uniform was doing at the front.

After watching for a bit, I leave and walk to the east towards Avenue Road. Glenn Gould Park, on the northwest corner, has a nice copper statue of Peter Pan that has turned green and dripped down staining the ground. I continue east to Gould's old apartment building at 110 St. Clair West. The Park Lane is a fine art deco structure. They used to say you could hear him plunking away in his penthouse from the sidewalk where I'm standing. I wonder if he played the Bach I'm listening to now. I have his 1981 recording on, the one he did the year before he died. You can hear him breathing and grunting throughout the recording. Maybe they could hear his grunts down here, too? In the liner notes to his more famous 1955 recording of the Goldberg Variations Gould wrote: "It is, in short, music which observes neither end nor beginning, music with neither real climax nor real resolution, music which, like Baudelaire's lovers, 'rests lightly on the wings of the unchecked wind.'" That's a lot like walking in Toronto.

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