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A Downland Index

Angus Carlyle



A hundred successive slow runs on the chalk downs above Brighton, each written up in a hundred words.

“Much of what felt central to this project was captured in its working title, ‘A Slow Runner’—the sense of self-deprecation, the unhurried pace, a literal accounting for physical action. And yet this provisional title, with its emphasis on diarising the moving, breathing body as it runs, eclipsed the significance of the South Downs themselves, location for the eighteen-month exploration of ridges, slopes and clefts, clouds condensing above, winds as force and breath, sun and rain, dawns, dusks and nights that fall, streets and bridges, roads and traffic, cows, bulls, squirrels, bees and birds, crowds outside pubs, walkers, anglers.

‘A Downland Index’ now, then, to better balance the body to its setting, but also to describe the processes of both remembering and writing that generate the hundred narrative texts forming the body of this book, as well as the index that precedes them.”

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