

## John Luther Adams □ – Lines Made by Walking (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)

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*Lines Made By Walking (2019)* 1 I - Up The Mountain 8:01 2 II - Along The Ridges 10:10 3 III - Down The Mountain 12:17 *untouched (2016)* 4 I - Rising 8:03 5 II - Crossing 8:14 6 III - Falling 8:15 The JACK Quartet: Cello – Jay Campbell Viola – John Pickford Violin – Austin Wulliman, Christopher Otto

Composer John Luther Adams writes music of environmental inspiration, often of quite a direct sort. One might wonder how it translates to the medium of the string quartet, often thought of as abstract, but the format focuses the mind on the slightly shifting phases and intervals that are the meat of Adams' minimalist style. The first work here, *Lines Made by Walking*, is explicitly programmatic: it depicts scenes from a hike and thus consists of (musical) lines made by walking. It is, however, as spare in its mode of expression as any other minimalist composition, with falling musical figures in all three movements that flatten out a bit as the hiker reaches a ridgeline in the middle movement. The second work, *untouched*, has the more abstract movement titles "Rising," "Crossing," and "Falling"; the work explores open string sonorities and harmonics. In its slow evolutions, it is of a piece with *Lines Made by Walking*, and the listener without guidance might not guess which piece had a specific nature program. The JACK Quartet conveys the monumental quality of Adams' music well, and listeners who enjoy the string quartets of Philip Glass will likely take naturally to this pair. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

Adams writes about "Lines": "I've always been a walker. For much of my life I walked the mountains and tundra of Alaska. More recently it's been the Mexican desert, the altiplano, quebradas, and mountain ridges of Chile, and the hills and canyons of Montana. Making my way across these landscapes at three miles an hour, I began to imagine music coming directly

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out of the contours of the land."

The composer writes about "untouched": "I stood on the tundra, holding a small Aeolian harp on top of my head, dancing with the wind, turning like a weathervane. Music seemed to flow out of the sky—across the strings, down through my body, and into the earth. From that beginning, I've discovered a broad harmonic and melodic palette derived from superimposing the harmonic series on itself at different intervals". ---discogs.com

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