

## Seeking the Sound of Nature

Greetings, musical adventurer. You are about to undertake a quest to find the Sound of Nature. You have thirty minutes to get as close as you can to hearing only natural sounds—and to return to report your findings. This sheet of paper will serve as your guide to escaping human-made noise—or trying to. You have two options: you can seek new locations to escape from human-made noise by following Adventure 1 (below), or you may retrace the steps of another adventurer who found Nature this past summer, by following Adventure 2 (on the stapled sheet).

Pick one of the following:

### **Adventure 1**

You have decided to seek escape from human-made noise pseudo-randomly. You will need the ability to identify where sounds are coming from. Good luck! Follow these instructions for the next 20-30 minutes:

1. Stand still. Listen to the sounds that surround you. Do you hear the sound of conversations? The sound of cars whizzing by? The hum of radiators or air conditioning or fans? The buzzing of electrical equipment? How many different sounds can you pick out? Try to identify and pinpoint the sources of the sounds that you hear. Are all the sources natural?
  - (a) If yes, congratulations! You’ve found Nature! (Or silence.) Stand still and listen to the sounds around you for at least five minutes. If there is still time left, pick a direction and set off to find more sounds.
  - (b) If no, find the direction that the loudest or most pervasive human-made sounds are coming from. Point yourself in the opposite direction, and flee the sound.
2. Run for 10–20 seconds (by the clock, not your heart-beat), or until you reach a wall. If you encounter a door, go through it. If you encounter stairs, go up or down one floor. Do *not* run into people. Do *not* hurt yourself.
3. Repeat (go to step 1)



## Adventure 2

You have decided to retrace the tracks of a past adventurer in seeking Nature. To participate in this adventure you will need outdoor clothing. Good luck!

1. Begin by walking out of the door of our classroom (4-160).
2. Stand still and listen to the noises around you. What do you hear? How many of the sounds are human-made?
3. Turn right, and walk until you see a water-fountain on your left and a staircase to the right.
4. There should be a hallway on your left. Turn left, and begin walking down that hallway. Almost immediately, you should see an Athena cluster on your left (4-167).
5. Enter the Athena cluster (the secret code is the first few digits of  $e = 2.7182818\dots$ ). Stand still and listen to the sounds around you for no more than 30 seconds. What do you hear? Do you hear the fans of the computers? Do you hear people typing on keyboards, or talking? Do you hear the printer? Do you hear anything behind those sounds?
6. Computer fans are very noisy. I don't think we'll find nature there. Exit the Athena cluster and turn left, to continue the direction you were going. Sprint forward until you see a staircase on your right. Forward and slightly to the right, you should see a ramp downwards through open doors. Sprint through the doors, down the ramp, through another set of doors, and forward, until you see a passageway to a library off to your right.
7. Turn right, and enter the library. Libraries are known for quiet, right?
8. Stand still until you can hear sounds other than your breathing and your heartbeat. What do you hear? Is the library silent, or do you hear the hum of moving air or electronic equipment?
9. Exit the library, and walk forward until you can make a right. Turn right, and jog to the end of the hallway. There should be a door leading outside.
10. Ahead of you, you should see a tall building on stilts, separate from the other buildings. Sprint to it, but *do not* go underneath.
11. Walk slowly underneath this building. Listen. Can you hear the wind blowing past your ears? Where is the wind loudest?
12. After you pass underneath this building, you should see a path to your right, that goes between building 66 and East Campus. Turn right, and walk down this path until you reach a road, Ames Street.
13. Cross the street (without getting hit by any cars). Listen to the sounds around you. What do you hear? Do you hear the cars going by?

14. Go forward and up the stairs, and jog towards MIT Medical. Go past the first fork in the path (where you can go straight or make a left). When you reach a (second) fork in the path, take the left/straight fork. As you jog, listen to the sounds around you. What do you hear? Where is it coming from?
15. Enter the revolving doors, walk straight down the black carpeted path to the revolving door at the other end of the room. Before exiting, stop and listen. What do you hear?
16. Exit through the revolving doors. Go down the stairs and turn left. Jog to the first entrance to Kendall Station.
17. Walk down the first set of stairs (there should be another set of stairs down, and a set of stairs up, in front of you). Stop and listen to the sounds around you. Is it quieter down here than inside an Athena cluster?
18. Walk up the stairs in front of you. Cross the street and walk towards the Marriott Hotel. Go in the main entrance. Stand in the lobby and listen. What do you hear?
19. Continue straight through the lobby and out the back doors. You should be on the sidewalk in front of a semi-circle where people drive their cars to drop off luggage. Turn left, and walk out from underneath the overhang.
20. Walk past the entrance(s)/exit(s) of the parking garage on your left. (Don't get hit by cars!) You should see a single door, leading in to the parking garage, on your left slightly past the second entrance/exit.
21. Enter the door to the parking garage. On your left there is a staircase.
22. Go up the staircase. As you walk up, listen to the sounds around you. Do they get softer? Noisier? If you don't hear anything but your footsteps or your heartbeat, pause to catch your breath and to listen carefully.
23. When you can't go up any higher, there should be a door. Go through it. You should see an elevator and a glass wall with a door in it. Stop and listen. Wait for the door to close behind you. What do you hear?
24. Go through the glass door. You have reached your final destination. During the summer, this is a beautiful garden with chirping birds and buzzing bees. Do you hear them? If not, find a place to sit down and listen carefully. What do you hear? Try to imagine what it would sound like with birds and bees flying around you.

Congratulations! You have completed your quest. If you have more than 10 minutes remaining, you can walk back to class. If you have much less, you'd best sprint. If you have far more than 10 minutes remaining after exploring the garden, feel free to undertake Adventure 1 on your way back to the classroom.