

NO SHOW

A manuscript for 5 immersive performances
by Steinunn Knúts Önnudóttir

NO SHOW

Reykjavík 2021

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No Show, or FjarVera in Icelandic was performed in a middle of a pandemic summer 2020 at the Reykjavík Art Festival in 5 homes in different neighbourhoods of the city. The performance was a solitary experience, moving from one zip code in Reykjavík to another, each edition open during one week at a time. The inhabitants were absent during the visits, but an occasional pet was present during some of the performances.

Trust is the sole key this work. It is far from being natural to open your home to total strangers in a middle of a pandemic and even more exceptional to share with them personal stories, thoughts, values and hopes. I am grateful for the generosity and courage of my co-creators that chose to trust me and unknown guest with their homes. I thank Sveinbjörg and her family, María and her folks, Karolina and Ýmir, Björk and her friends and relatives. I also want to thank my own family for allowing me to open up our home, Eiríkur, Hera and Benjamín that I share home with and my sons Benjamín and Ísak that also appeared in the piece. I am forever grateful for the trust I have been shown.

This was a vulnerable process in unprecedented times that touched me profoundly and the experience will stay with me forever. I also want to thank Reykjavík Art Festival for supporting me and producing the work with tender care and responsibility.

This script is only published as a documentation and does not give a comprehensive image of the performances that entail so much more. The actual work is interactive, and the affect is created by a combination of the physical presence of a guest in a stranger's home and the association that emerge in the guests mind when encountering the work.

I have cut out some instructions from the texts about where to find the letters.

The performance is a part of my artistic research project "How Little is Enough? " that I am conducting at Malmö Theatre Academy, and is a part of the Lund University Research School, "Agenda 2030"

Reykjavík January 4th, 2021
Steinunn Knúts Önnudóttir

108, FOSSVOGUR

Entrance

Pink damask scene

Damascus rose

Dear Guest,
Welcome to Búland 28

Here lives:
Sveinbjörg choreographer
Svenni engineer
Diljá an art student
Lísbet secondary school student
Úlfur elementary school student
Bono dog

I have left envelopes for you that contain; a letter, a description of ritual, and tasks that involve observing, contemplating and doing things in my home. Although I guide you through the work, you are the main character and the only spectator of what goes on.

Each space has a certain aroma that represents the character of the space.

This space has the aroma of damask rose.

When you have read a letter and completed the tasks, put the letter back in its place.

The work ends when you hear a knock on the front door in half an hour or as soon as you have read all the letters.

I trust you with my home and hope you enjoy
your time with us.

Yours Sveinbjörg.

Action

Take off your shoes and coat and hang it in the closet.

Guest toilet

Punica granatum
pomegranate

Unlike the bathroom on the ground floor, there is rarely a queue here and you never hear impatient knock on the door. Here you are truly alone with yourself. This is the place where I come closest to being a foreigner in the house as this space is specially designed for you, the guest. We all have our rituals. Some are carved in stone while others are fluid. I have listed some of them down and will share them with you during the visit, first I would like to invite you to perform a ritual.

Ritual I

You are a guest in a family home, and you begin your visit by washing your hands.

Action

Wash your hands.
Look into the mirror.

Observation

Check out your face, lines and colour.

Look deep into your eyes.

Now notice how you feel inside.

Notice your thoughts and expectations for the work.

Contemplation

Think about the meaning of hand cleansing.
What do you need to cleanse?

Kitchen

Melaleuca

Tea Tree

The kitchen is the heart of the house. In the morning or when I get home after work, the first thing I do is to light a candle that is lit while people are in the house. I love spending time in the kitchen cooking and feeding myself and the people around me.

Can I offer you a fruit or a drink? Coffee, tea or mineral water. You can take your drink with you while traveling around the house.

Ritual II

You need to pee. You knock on the bathroom door, call to let your mum know you are there. Then you curl yourself on the corner sofa until the door opens. After peeing and brushing your teeth, you take a seat by the kitchen island and watch cartoons while you eat your cereal. Your dad sits at the dining table and reads the papers.

He asks you to lower the volume.

Action

Clean up after breakfast and wash the dishes.

Observation

Notice the layout of the kitchen.

Contemplation

How is the organization in your life?

Is everything in place?

Dining room

Citrus sinensis

Wild oranges

The dining room gives the frame for family-quality-time. Here we nourish both body and soul. We have each our seat at the table and come at all times of the day to work, draw, study, read, eat and to be a family.

At seven o'clock every night we gather for a family dinner. Then we tell each other stories about the events of the day and together we try to raise Bono who always wants to sit at the table with us. Not everyone is happy when I turn on the TV news, but it is something I grew up with and want to share with my children. Here we practice being part of a community, have conversations and try to understand the world around us.

Ritual III

You are the first to wake up. The house is asleep.
You take a shower and after you have walked the dog you pick
up the newspapers. You spread out at the dining table with
your breakfast and read the newspapers while you drink your
morning coffee.

Action

Check out the vocabulary used to train Bono (on the fridge).

Find your seat and sit down.

Imagine being a participant in the family conversation.

Observation

Look in the mirror and see the person sitting at the table.

Contemplation

What nutrition is on offer in your home?

How are you raised?

Living room

Boawellia ia carteria

Frankincense

Sit in the corner of the corner sofa and read the letter.

Here, in this spot I like to sit. The space is open, bright and spacious. Everything in here has a meaning and is related to something in our stories. Under the table are photo albums that we often browse to recall moments from our past, even Bónó likes to grab them. We think some of the photos are silly, they reflect a time when the world was different.

The works on the walls all have a back story. The Horse is by a Spanish artist Lluç Queralt Baiges. The artwork Svenni gave to me after I had premiered a dance work on mares. The piece combines our passions in life and art. It means so much to both of us.

Ritual IV

You start the day with a shower. You choose an appropriate essential oil to put in your face cream. You give yourself plenty of time to get ready for the day. You fold the clean laundry and fill one washing machine.

You hear the people upstairs talking while you make the bed. When you are alone, you have a cup of coffee and sit down on the sofa with your cup before heading to work.

Everything is perfect.

Observation

Notice the space.

Notice the light.

Notice the smell.

Notice the temperature.

Notice the colours.

Notice the view.

Action

Browse one photo album.

Contemplation

Wow does your context look like?

Where do you like to be?

Study

Citrus Limon

lemon

This is a perfect place to work and concentrate. During the pandemic many e-mails and reports were written here, meetings, ballet lessons, mathematics lessons and exams held here.

Ritual V

It's a school day and you have to go to ballet class. You run up the stairs and into the study. There you turn on the computer and start the class. Ballet Pole.

Your mom has taken her mat out in to the living room, where she is doing Pilates.

You try to recall what your mom pointed out to you over the weekend when she gave you and your sister a class on the grass in the garden.

Action

Lie on the mattress, close your eyes, take three deep breaths,
pull your knees up to your chest - give yourself a good hug.

Straighten yourself and stand up.

Sit down at the table and write down a list of things
you want to learn.

Take the list with you as you go.

Observation

Notice the things that can be categorized as tools in this space.

Contemplation

What tools do you use in your life?

What tools can't you live without?

Mirror

Mentha Piperita

Peppermint

This is where Bono has the best view of the house, here he lies and watches over the house when everyone is asleep or away.

Ritual VI

You've looked after the house all day. You hear a key turned in the door and you pop up. You greet your master, wag your tail and try to tell him everything that happened during the day.

You get a hug and compliments.

Observation

Notice the doors to this place?

Action

Count the exit routes from here.

Contemplation

Do you have an overview of things?

What are the escape routes in your life?

Staircase

Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary

The stairs are the main musical instrument in the house. People run up and down the stairs all the time. The driving force is the search of lost things. The pace is fast or slow, the steps assertive or gentle and someone shouts: Where is Bono's leash? Has anyone seen my jacket?

Ritual VII

You come home from school with your girlfriend. The two of you enter the house laughing and the dog cannot conceal his joy to see you. He flutters around you and tries to lick your faces. You laugh even louder, and you try to make him calm down. You tell your girlfriend. "We got him to calm the family, but if anything, we have become even more tense."

You love this dog.

Action

Try to run down and up the stairs.

Observation

Notice the soundscape you create.

Contemplation

Have you lost anything important in your life?

What do you need to run after?

Bedroom

Lavandula angustifolia

Lavender

The basement is deep and still - here we rest well. Before I go to bed, I drop soothing lavender oil into my palms, rub them together and inhale the scent.

Ritual VIII

You're going to sleep.

You apply soothing oil to your palms and inhale.

Action

Drop one drop of lavender oil on your palm,
rub the palms together and then apply them to your nose.

Inhale the aroma.

Observation

Close your eyes and notice your breath and the affects of the smell on you.

Contemplation

If this house was a body, what part of the body are we in?

Sofa

Pelargonium graveolens

Geranium

Dear Guest,

This is the last letter.

I invite you to find a place in the house where you can sit and read the last ritual.

Soon you will hear a knock at the door and the work will be completed, but you can leave the house sooner if you wish.

We thank you very much for your visit.

Greetings, Sveinbjörg and family.

Ritual IX

You are a house. Inside you, people and animals travel in organic patterns through the veins of your body. There is a constant movement within you that moves between floors and pumps life into you with rhythmic beats and soft strokes.

You have been blessed with the absence of viruses and other uninvited guests.

Your life is a dance piece, and the dance company includes six permanent dancers and numerous guest artists.

101, CITY CENTRE

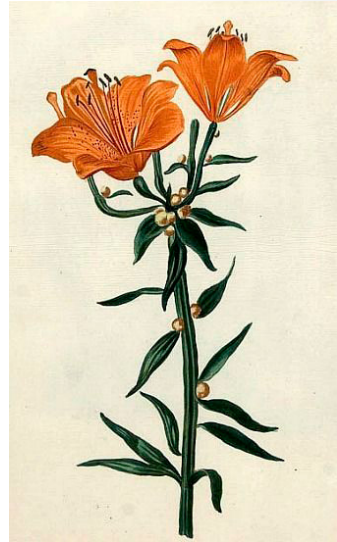
Entree

Lilium bulbiferum

Fire Lily

Dear guest,
Welcome to Klapparástígur

In this house live:
Steinunn theatre maker
Eiríkur Smári philosopher
Hera hairdressing student
Benjamín music student
Bellatrix cat
Gleymmérei cat
(Benjamín philosophy student)
(Ísak salesman and engineer student)



I have left envelopes for you that contain; a letter, a description of ritual, and tasks that involve observing, contemplating and doing things in my home. Although I guide you through the work, you are the main character and the only spectator of what goes on.

In each room there is a flower that characterizes the space.

In this room it is Fire Lily

When you have read the letter and solved the tasks, please put the envelope where you found it. The performance is over when the doorbell rings in half an hour or when you have read the letters and are ready to go.

I trust you with my home and I hope you enjoy the stay.

Best wishes, Steinunn.

Ritual I

You are a guest in an unfamiliar house.

You bow deeply for the hosts, their lives, lifestyle and values.

Action

Take your shoes off and hang your coat on a hanger.

Stand in front of the mirror and bow three times.

Once for the house

Once for the people living in the house

Once for yourself

Observation

Observe your reflection.

Notice your body posture.

Pay attention to the colour of your skin, hair and eyes.

Notice your feelings, thoughts and expectations for
the performance.

Contemplation

What does it mean to you – bowing to another person?

Has anyone bowed before you recently?

Staircase

Taraxacum officinale

Dandelion



The stairs are like a bottle neck or a centrifuge. They are both steep and they swirl. People travel in different pace up and down the stairs and the soundscape they make reveal their state of mind. We never dwell here, here we are either coming from a place or going to place.

Ritual II

You have been waiting for people in the house to wake up.

You are given food as soon as the first person wakes and now you want some fresh air. You use the opportunity when someone is fetching the newspapers downstairs. You walk slowly down the stairs since you are obese and clumsy for a cat.

The door is opened, and you walk out the door. You are able to open doors, but it does not enter your mind to close any doors behind you.

Action

Play the stairs like they were an instrument by walking in different tempo up and down.

Observation

Pay attention to repetition in this space.

Contemplation

What meaning does repetition have in your life?

What is repeated?

Kitchen

Allium schoenoprasum

Chives



The kitchen is the centre of the house. We all love cooking.

We like to prepare food from scratch, we like to explore and experiment - we never waste food.

We use a lot of spices, we conserve, ferment, salt, dry, boil and freeze. We eat together every day but sometimes we are too lazy to cook so we eat out at one of the many restaurants in the neighbourhood. We take turns in cooking and on Sundays we invite members of the family not living in the house for a family dinner. Sometimes people join via the internet.

Can I offer you a drink?

Coffee, tea, sparkling water?

You can take the drink with you on your journey around the house.

Ritual III

You wake up to two very hungry cats. They follow you into the bathroom and are tangled to your feet until you feed them.

You put the kettle on and do your stretches while the water is boiling. When you have poured boiling water over the oats, you pick up the newspaper and let the cats out. You read the Icelandic papers by the kitchen table while you eat.

After making coffee you sit on the sofa and you scan the international media online, before you enter your working day.

Action

Do the dirty dishes.

Observation

Pay attention to the fermentation that is taking place in the kitchen.

Contemplation

Do you let things ferment?

What means do you have for preserving things?

Do you leave things dirty?



Dining table

Banksia

The dining table is the gathering place of the family. Here we serve to each other what we have prepared and what we want to present. I have made all our dining ware, it is organically shaped, random and imperfect like the lives of all of us. But there is a heart in it and what was broken has been repaired. We reveal all our sides in this lively company which can be challenging at times.

What we have learned is that you never take important decisions on an empty stomach.

Ritual IV

You are alone in an apartment in central Europe far away from family and friends. It is in a middle of a pandemic and your flat mates have gone to their loved ones and you are all alone for the first time in your life. It is Sunday and you are going to meet your family on your smartphone. The entire family appears on your tiny screen, even the cats and the dog. They seem so near but at the same time very distant.

The chat dissolves when you start to experiment with new filters in the social media app, now you all have long ears and big eyes, and suddenly everyone turns into a potato.

Action

Sit in your own seat and try to imagine how it is to be in a conversation with the family.

Observation

Pay attention to exotic elements in the environment.

Contemplation

How is your context?

What are your different sides and what role do you
have within your family?



Living room

Rosa independence

Orange Rose

The paintings on the walls and the objects in here all connect to our stories and some things have always been with me. The green lamp, my parents bought in Denmark when they lived there before I was born. I have inherited a lot of things from my parents, not only things but also mind set, customs and values. Here I have art on the walls, books in shelves and a stereo system. This is what makes a home to me.

This is our social space, here we entertain each other and invite family and friends. We drink tea in the evenings and play games, preferable with dice. Dice games are based on luck and a dash of strategi. Most of all it brings out joy and laughter.

Ritual V

You have been in town, socializing with pedestrians, receiving a lot of attention and affection. You climb skilfully up the trunk of the Whitebeam and jump lightly on to a branch leading to the terrace. You place your self at the window to the living room and observe the family from outside. The dog is there.

They are playing a game and the mood changes from concentration to outbursts of laughter, applause and deep conversations. You wait until the dog leaves and then you call out to your family to let you in.

Observation

Observe the space.

Pay attention to the light.

Notice the colours.

Pay attention to the smell.

Notice the temperature and textures.

Action

Roll the dice and try to get six alike.

Contemplation

What role does luck have in your life?

Are you satisfied with your lot?

Terrace

Helianthus
Sunflower



I do my stretches on the stair to the terrace door. I got a heal spur a few years back and now I need to stretch my soles – this is the best place for that. While stretching I observe the movements outside, the branches that move in the wind, the people passing by, the clouds travelling in the sky. Here I can sometimes feel like in the countryside, when suddenly there is total calm in midst of the busy urban soundscape and the only sound you can hear is the birds singing from the branches of the Whitebeam.

On the wall to the right are artworks by my sister that has left this world. When I look at them, I am filled with gratitude for all the gifts that I have received and I think about what I have lost and what remains, what was and what is.

Ritual VI

You are kneading sourdough from a starter that was refreshed early this morning, the starter goes back many years and is refreshed every time you bake bread. You kneed for a long time until the dough is smooth and elastic. You place it in the refrigerator. You will bake two loafs for lunch tomorrow. The entire house is asleep, it is calm. You do your stretches and watch the last few people on their way home after a night on the town. You see branches moving slowly in the evening breeze. Everything is perfectly imperfect and the way it should be. You sit down in a green chair and think nothing, do nothing and time stands still.

Action

Take hold of the door handle and stand on your toes on the step, let the heels sink and raise yourself on the toes, let the heels sink again.

Repeat several times.

Observation

Observe what moves on the outside.

Contemplation

When does your time stand still?

What have you lost and what gifts have you been given in your
life?

What could you not live without?

Room

Florum varietate

Mixed Flowers



This is the room of the young people of the home. Here the future is planned, this is a place of learning and creation.

Ritual VII

You wake up hearing your in-laws chatting in the living room.

You hear the city waking up outside the window. You think about whether you saved the last version of the song you were working on yesterday. You open your computer and see that the last saved version is from just before you went to sleep. You are relieved. You dress, say hello to your in-laws and go for your morning coffee at your workplace, the coffee shop across the street.

Observation

Observe all the things you can make music from in this room.

Action

Sit by the desk and make a list of things you want to do
in the future.

Take the list with you when you leave.

Contemplation

What do you think about when you think about the future?

Bathroom

Campanula rotundifolia
Bluebell



The sink was made for me by Hiro, my Japanese master in pottery. On its journey across the globe the sink broke in pieces, but I repaired it with gold as I had learned in Japan. They call it Kintsugi. A lot of things brake during a lifetime and a lot of these things have such a value that they deserve to be mended. The repair does not need to be concealed because the beauty lies exactly in the care that goes into the process of reparation. Gold is both beautiful and strong.

Ritual VIII

You wake up and take a shower. You take it easy and listen to your favourite podcast about interesting crime stories from another continent, another world. You feel like you know the presenters, people that have been part of your life for a long time. You apply face cream and make up and do your hair. Before you finish, your mother knocks on the door, and you let her in to have a quick pee.

Action

Wash your hands.

Observation

Observe your face.

Look deep into your eyes.

Pay attention to the lines in your face.

Contemplation

What do you need to wash away?

What have you had to repair in your life?

Study

Solidago altissima
Goldenrod



Here is good to relax and enjoy being free from any duties. This space is the memory room of the family. Here we can recollect who we are and where we come from, through books, photographs, old drawings and paintings. Here the family albums are stored. This is a place where we create references and common ground, here we seek entertainment and education from books and screens. This room is dedicated to the mother, that lifts the burden of our shoulder, that soothes and comforts.

Ritual IX

You are just divorced and find yourself on a crossroad. You are folding and arranging your cloths in a room where your mother repairs broken things. You think about how you can repair what has been broken in your life while you fold and arrange, fold and arrange.

Observation

Observe your hands, both sides.

Action

Embrace yourself firmly and sincerely.

Contemplation

Who cares for you?

Whom do you care for?

Bedroom

Lavandula Angustifolia
Lavender



Dear guest,
This is the last letter.
Soon the doorbell will ring, and the piece is over.
This is a place of rest and revitalization.
When you have read the last ritual, I invite you to recharge by
sitting on the pillow and ring the buddha bell that I bought in
a tiny store in Kyoto.
You can leave the house as soon as you have found peace or
when the doorbell rings.

Thanks for the visit, we wish you all the best

Steinunn and family

Ritual X

You are a house.

Inside of you people and animals move in an organic patten
through the veins of your body. The movement moves
between floors and pump live into your heart with repetitive
beats and soft strokes.

Your life is like a ceramic bowl that was broken but is now
repaired with gold. You are a vessel for a fermenting mass that
is in constant transformation.

Action

Sit on the pillow with crossed legs or the way you like.

Ring the bell.

Close your eyes and imagine that you are inside of the body of
the house.

Observation

Pay attention to your breath.

Contemplation

Where does your energy come from?

What does revitalisation mean to you?

111, BREIÐHOLT

Entrance

Ocean breeze

Dear guest,

Welcome to Asparfell

I live on the 4th floor in apartment 4C

I have left envelopes for you that contain; a letter, a description of ritual, and tasks that involve observing, contemplating and doing things in my home. Although I guide you through the work, you are the main character and the only spectator of what goes on.

I collect inspiring words and phrases and on each envelope I have placed a word or a sentence that I think is characteristic to that space. With this letter you have the word Oceanbreeze. The work ends when you hear the doorbell rings in half an hour or as soon as you have read all the letters.

Greetings María

Ritual I

You are a house. Inside of you time passes, days, months and years. There is a constant flow of movement through your body, in and out - up and down, that pumps oxygen into your heart. You open your doors to people whether they come or go. You protect your people from weather and winds and your life is dedicated to their service.

Observation

Look at the names on the letterboxes.
Imagine where the people behind the names are in this very
moment.

Contemplation

To whom do you open your doors?

Action

Ring the bell for apartment 4C and imagine how the bell sounds inside the flat.

If there is no answer, open the door with your key and take the elevator to the fourth floor.

Hall

Returning health

Welcome to my home. My name is Maria, and I am 65 years old a former nurse. Here I live, but my children and grandchildren also call this their home even though they do not live with me. They are:

Hákon son

Ashleigh daughter in law

Sunneva daughter

Diddi grandson

Emma granddaughter

Bjartur grandson

This apartment is our sanctuary. Here I can care for my family and this is a place where my children can seek shelter for themselves, their children and their belongings. This is a safe place. I control what happens here and I only invite people inside who are in their right mind.

I trust you with my home and I hope that you can enjoy your stay.

Best María

Ritual II

You are excited about your stayover at your grandmother's, it is almost a month since last time. You find that a very long time. You go straight to the closet in the hallway and open it. Here you find the grandma-toys, that you also own, most of them are old but they work. You think to your self that Grandma never throws anything away unless it does not work.

You call out to your mother saying: "Grandma, you know what, I have three homes; one with my father, one with my mother and the third one is here with you."

Action

Take of your shoes and hang your coat in the closet.
Sit on the chair and close your eyes and slow down your
breath.

Observation

Pay attention to the sounds in the flat.

Observe your emotions, your thoughts and your expectations
to the experience.

Contemplation

Do you hear time pass?

How does time sound?

Bathroom

My inner Lady troll

I do not spend much time in the bathroom, instead I go to the local swimming pool. I was nine years old when I first visited a swimming pool and immediately something clicked inside of me, I love the water. In spite of my fibromyalgia and arthritis I move a lot; swim and walk. Motion has shaped me from my early childhood in the farm where I grew up. But in this bathroom, there is not much motion.

Ritual III

You are in motion. You are not alone, there is one like you here. You swim, you know nothing else. You swim in circles, one circle after the other. You are not thinking of time, you are not thinking about destination, you do not think, you swim.

Suddenly you see something move at a distance and something inside of you draws you closer to the surface. You see a grain falling towards you and you hurry to catch it, and then another and another. You are full. Everything is as it should be, and you continue to swim in a water you cannot see.

Action

Wash your hands.

Observation

Observe your face.

Look into your eyes, deep.

Contemplation

What do you keep inside?

What do you let out?

What defines you?

Kitchen

Weather message

The kitchen has multiple function for me, it is a place of creation.

I enjoy cooking and especially baking. When my children visit, I cook for them and prepare everything before they come.

When my grandchildren visit, I bake a chocolate cake that they love. I do not want guests to assist me in the kitchen and not at all that they do the dishes. When I have visitors, I want us to talk together and that we do in the living room. As a child I was taught that there is a right place and time for everything.

The kitchen table is used for painting and drawing with the grandchildren and for my self I have installed an easel to start painting again after a long pause. I am not a kind of cute Granma that is all rosy and pampers her grandchildren. I think they like that about me. I leave them in peace.

Here I make soaps that last for ever and I also cast candles from leftovers. I do not waste anything, and I use everything to the fullest. I am not a fashion fascist and I think it is OK that things are used and collected from different directions, and all kinds, just that they are not broken or dysfunctional.

Ritual IV

You are with your grandmother. The first thing you do is find your favourite soft animal from the bedroom closet. Then you ask your grandma to read the book for you. Your grandmother sits down with you and tells you that the book is lost. Your entire universe collapses and you loose control. She searches for it once more and finds it. Then she tells you that she does not like that story anymore. You say "all right, lets find another one ". From then on that is the story you want to hear again and again.

Action

Look out of the window and imagine that you sit on the chair
on the balcony.

Observation

Pay attention to the things that move outside.

Contemplation

When does the live of a person become a story?

What story creates a story?

Living room

Knitting fix, Text fix, Speech fix

The living room is the centre of the home. Here I invite guests to freshly baked cakes and coffee. Here I sit and listen to sound books, knit and in the evenings, I watch television. This is the gathering place of my core-family that I love, and I feel responsible for. There is always one person absent and we remember her in silence, a drawing of her hangs on the wall and will stay there forever.

When I am in a state of distress, I have a need to create rather than lie down. In this room I have gone through many setbacks and from these a whole collection of strange looking woollen sweaters have been created. When I knit, I sit in one of my grandparent's silver wedding anniversary armchair from 1935 that I inherited. I have a photo of me as a girl, sitting in one of the chairs in my childhood home. My home is different from my childhood home, that was open for visitors 24 hours all year round.

In this house I choose my guests, and you are one of them. Sometimes I invite my girlfriends for coffee and then we get all excited about the injustices of the world and forget that we are mothers and grandmothers and use foul language about the ones that we think have violated our rights. Inside of me is a young and angry revolutionary that is fuelled by justice and experiences a sacred moment when The Internationale is played on the radio on May 1st.

Ritual V

You have just finished work; you are tired after a busy day with energetic kids. You long for a good rest. In stead of heading home you decide to go to your mothers. You had promised to water the flowers when she is away. You let yourself in and go straight to your room where you feed your fish. When you have watered the flowers and rinsed the fish tank you turn on the TV and you sit down on your old armchair with the little tiger in your lap, both items you inherited. In the late hours you decide to sleep over in your old bed to spare you the drive to your flat. Here is cosy and safe.

Observation

Observe the space.

Pay attention to the light.

Pay attention to the pictures.

Pay attention to the scent.

Action

Sit comfortably where you want and rock back and forth.

Contemplation

What methods do you have to deal with setbacks?

Whom do you want to have close to you?

Dining table

Boat waves

This table I use every day, but my computer is usually at the end of the table by the window. Here I check my email, Facebook and Messenger. I also do my online banking here and my private household accounting. I take good care of my economy and I always know what I can afford. The photograph on the wall shows the view from my childhood home to Flateyri in Öndarfjörður, that I think must be the most photographed fjord in the whole country. It is beautiful, almost too beautiful. When my family gathers here once a month for dinner, I pack my office and lay the table for dinner, like now. People bring something to drink but I cook for everyone. While we eat, we talk about everything and nothing, most often in English since my daughter in law does not speak Icelandic.

Ritual VI

You are at your mothers for dinner. You sit in your seat and you feel good surrounded by your people. You are the centre of attention with your magnetic energy and story telling skills. When you start talking about movies and computer games, the children move to the guest room to play and your mother withdraws to the kitchen where she listens in on your conversation while doing the dishes. She does not know anything about films or gaming.

When you are about to leave your mother asks if you can take one of your boxes from the storage. You hope you can find place in your flat for the things in it.

You feel like your whole live is stored in cardboard boxes.

Action

Sit in your seat, pour your drink into the glass and have a sip.
Imagine yourself in a conversation with the family.

Observation

Look at the picture of Önundarfjord.

Contemplation

How many photographs can you take of a beautiful object?

What moments are worth capturing?

Room

Equal fish are best tailed

This is the space of my children and grandchildren. Here they can come when they need rest or privacy. Many of my relatives have neurological disorders, ADHD or autism. I have cared for and supported many relatives that have suffered, sometimes at my own cost. With time I have learned to honour my own boundaries and protect my own piece of mind and health without losing the ability to care for the one closest to me. I am a parental support for my grandson, that has autism. He stays with me one weekend each month. He is very square, wants to have everything in strict order and needs a clear framework. I also, want a clear framework and I want to have free time regularly. This I can control. When I have more than one guest, I sleep on a mattress in the living room. It feels a bit like camping.

Ritual VII

You are on your monthly visit to your grandmother. You go straight into your room with the bag that was packed for you. You sit on the bed and scan the entire room to confirm that everything is in its place. You go out to the hall and call to your grandma. "Where is the chocolate cake? "Your grandma smiles and says: "It is in the living room, come on, let's have a bite. "

Action

Sit on the bed and hold your hands on your head
and breath slowly.

Observation

Notice the movements in the fish tank.

Contemplation

Do you always honour your boundaries?

Bedroom

Good scent heals the head

Dear guest,

This is the last letter.

Soon the doorbell will ring, and the piece is over.

This is my bedroom and I think it is much too big. I have had many homes with many different people in different times. I need to move regularly to keep me in motion and to have space to change. Now I need a smaller bedroom and a different flat that serves me as I am today. Cardboard boxes and moving objects and people around are a natural part of my life. One of these boxes I store in my drawer. This box is full of words and sentences that I have collected. During your visit I have shared with you things about my self and you have been given tasks and contemplations. Now I would appreciate if you would like to leave one or two contemplations with me. Maybe I can put these words into my box and moved them with me to my next home.

I want to thank you for your visit

Take good care.

María

Ritual VIII

You are listening to a woman speaking on the radio. She is both clever and witty. She says something brilliant. You hurry to find a pen and write the sentence on a piece of paper that you take to the bedroom. In your drawer you find the box where you keep your treasure that you have collected through your whole life. You put your new item into the collection and before you close the box you take up an older note and read out loud what is written there. You smile.

Action

Write a sentence or a special word on a piece of paper for the
host's collection.

Leave the note behind when you leave.

Observation

Pay attention to temperatures, textures and softness.

Both inside of you and in the room.

Contemplation

What treasures do you keep in your drawer?

What objects do you move with you between houses, homes
and lives?

101, VESTURBÆR (WEST-TOWN)

Entrance

Universe



Dear guest,

Welcome to Framnesvegur

I have left envelopes for you that contain; a letter, a description of ritual, and tasks that involve observing, contemplating and doing things in my home. Although I guide you through the work, you are the main character and the only spectator of what goes on.

I am a collector by nature, and I have been collecting post-cards. With each letter is a special postcard I have chosen for you.

When you have read the letter and solved the tasks, please put the envelope where you found it. The performance is over when you hear a knock on the door, in half an hour or when you have read the letters and are ready to go.

People from different parts of the country and the world occupy this house, they have come to live in Reykjavik for a shorter or longer period. I come from Poland and have lived in Iceland for 20 years.

Before I invite you into my home, I ask you to make two stops on your way up to the top floor where I live.

I hope you enjoy the stay.

Karolina

Ritual I

You are a guest in an unfamiliar house.

You enter through a door from one universe to another.

You wipe your feet.

Action

Wipe your feet on the mat saying
"Heima er best" (Home is best).

Observation

Pay attention to your feelings, thoughts and expectations for the performance.

Reflection

If Home is best, what is the measure?

Better than what?

What do you need to wipe of before entering this world?

Landing

Transformation



The stairs are a place of transit, up or down, a passage between two states. I belong to a generation in Poland that is sometimes called the Transformation generation. I was a witness to how capitalism merged from communism. It was hard on people when the state wasn't there anymore to take care of everyone. The communist regime had taken care of people's livelihood in all ways. It was a hard but necessary change. I myself have lived in constant transformation and taken independent decisions in every step of my journey, one of them was to move to Iceland. Every day I walk up and down these stairs. Here is no one to elevate me or cease me down. I carry my own weight and take the steps by my self.

Ritual II

You are always ready to support your masters by taking all their weight on their way up and down your steps. Few people stay with you since your role is to support people in transit.

You do not have an opinion about which way is better,
up or down.

Action

Bend your knees slightly, like you were slowly collapsing.

Feel how the force of gravity pulls you down.

Resist the pull and rise up again.

Observation

Observe your weight.

Reflection

Is there anyone in your life that elevates you?



Entrée

Life

Welcome to my home,
My name is Karolina, 40 years old, an art historian and a guide
and I live here with my son Ýmir a 16-year-old high school
student.

Our home is tiny and highly organized. We have the space
we need for necessities and nothing beyond. I am a collector
in nature and the decision to move into a 30 square meter
apartment was a deliberate decision that called for minimal
lifestyle. I choose the things in here carefully and try to
constrain the collector in me. Since moving in, I have gradually
started to collect small things that do not demand space, like
postcards.

My home is very different from my childhood home but one
thing I have learn from my mother is to have the home tidy
and clean, especially the floor. It needs to be comfortable to
walk barefoot around the home.

I trust you with my home and I hope you enjoy walking
barefoot on my floor.

Greetings Karolina

Ritual III

It is quarter to seven and you wake up from the sound of daybreak. You rise and walk barefoot into the kitchen and pour water into a glass, you cut a slice of lemon and squeeze it into the water. You drink your water while you wait for the coffee to brew. You open the balcony door and check the temperature and look up into the sky. Then you sit down in the comfy chair and drink your coffee in peace while you observe the clouds travel across the sky.

Action

Take off your shoes and socks and place them carefully in the shoe shelves.

Walk barefoot on the shiny floor.

Observation

Pay attention to the sensation in you soles when they touch the floor.

Reflection

How much space do you need?

What things could you not live without?



Bathroom

Love

When I had lived for five years in Iceland my parents sought shelter in Iceland after my father had exposed a scheme of corruption in our hometown and was exiled by dishonest politicians. My parents had to leave their home, my childhood home, and were not allowed to take anything with them. My home in Reykjavík transformed temporarily to a refugee camp and I had to walk between official institutions to secure their residential and work permit. It became a long and tiresome process. Today they have lived in Iceland for 15 years and run a business here. This flat is a gift of love and appreciation from my father for the help I gave them. I bought the flat in a bad condition four years ago and my father renovated it for me with great attention to all details. The floor is heated exactly where you stand in front of the mirror and while brushing my teeth, I do not only feel the heat in my feet but also in my heart.

Ritual IV

You wake up when your mother knocks lightly on your door. You are going to work. You brush your teeth standing on the warm spot on the floor and look into the mirror.

You go into the kitchen and take a banana, oat milk, peanut butter, ice and a few more good things and put them into the blender. You taste the smoothie and are pleased with the outcome. You pour the drink into one big glass for yourself and a smaller one for your mother to taste. When you call goodbye, your mother comes and puts money into your palm to buy lunch. You run down the stairs and out into the day.

Action

Wash your hands and look your self in the eyes.

Observation

Notice to the lines in your face.

Notice to the colour of your skin.

Notice to the colour of your eyes.

Notice to the colour of your hair.

Reflection

Have you ever had to escape from a place?

Kitchen

Belonging



The kitchen serves me well, I have everything within reach to make simple food for the two of us. I sometimes feel like in Paris or Kraków when working in the kitchen, because the neighbours are right in my face. I like that feeling. I like being surrounded by life and movement. One downside is that my neighbour sometimes leaves the house and forgets to turn off the alarm in the bedroom that faces the kitchen. Fortunately, my father made sure that the windows are tight and do not let too much disturbance in.

I am in good contact with my neighbours, in my house, in my street and in my neighbourhood. Here people take care of each other and once a year we prepare dinner and eat together by a long table outside at Borgarstígur. I feel like I belong to this community and I participate in communal activities as much as I can.

My best friend also comes from Poland and she is a writer. She lives in Hálsasveit which is my second home in the countryside and this home is her second home in the city. When she is here, she cooks for her 8-year-old daughter. They are a part of my self-chosen family.

Ritual V

You are in your second home in the city. Your daughter is still sleeping in the bedroom and your friend is moving the mattress that fills the living room floor. You look at this at your home even though you do not own a single thing in here. You compliment your friend for how tidy she is, and you laugh at how you both resemble your mothers in so many ways. You both agree that neatness is a good inheritance. You make coffee and offer your host before you wake up your daughter.

Observation

Pay attention to the organization in the kitchen.

Pay attention to colours in the kitchen.

Action

Have a glass of water with lemon.
You can take the glass with you on your journey
through the flat.

Reflection

Who are close to you?

What community do you belong to?

Do you have a self chosen family?



Dining table

Mother tongue

I am not much into cooking, but I make simple food every day for the two of us, that we eat here at the table. I really enjoy sitting here with my son, eating, chatting and planning something exciting. His father's family are gourmet people that introduce exotic flavours to him, and my mother invites us regularly to a traditional polish food.

On my 40th birthday this summer my mother gave to me a handwritten book with 100 polish recipes which took her three weeks to write. My best friend also just wrote a book. She writes in both Icelandic and polish and the book will be the first published book written in Icelandic by a polish person. That book is not about food.

Language is an important tool, the key to belonging. I speak Icelandic with Polish accent and Polish with Icelandic accent. I do not call myself Icelfander even though I feel that I belong here, I call myself Polish even though I do not belong there. When I have guests, I serve drinks and maybe some light snacks and we disperse organically around the flat. A lot of my friends are smokers, so the balcony is a popular place and I often find my self in the doorway keeping the conversation going.

It is a polish custom to leave one empty chair at the Christmas table for a stranger.

In our home there is always an empty chair for unexpected guests despite the small space.

Ritual VI

You put the headphones in the ears and run down and out to the sea. You enjoy the wind in your face while you let the music filter through your system and the energy from the sea and the mountains recharge you. You love this country. It was love at first sight. You are bursting with energy when you return home, and you continue moving to the music on the living room floor. You dance and dance, forgetting time and space.

Action

Sit in your chair at the table.

Imagine yourself in a conversation with the family.

Observation

Look at the shells and stones.

Notice their form.

Pay attention to their colour.

Consider their origin.

Reflection

Is there space for unexpected guests in your life?



Living room

Refuge

The corner of the sofa is my refuge. Here I curl together with a book or a computer and dive into entertainment, education or work. Sometimes I cover my self with a blanket and then I feel completely safe. I have surrounded myself with things that are important to me and one of those things are books. Books were not a part of my childhood. Now I have my own library with books on geology, art and history. I love travelling and have been a guide for many years. During the pandemic, when the tourist industry collapsed, I had a long-awaited rest from constant service to tourists.

Now I want to travel myself and visit all the places in Iceland I have not yet seen.

The photographs to the right of the bathroom door are from a two-month trip that I made with my son. We travelled through Europe, visiting all our friends living in different parts of the continent. I am an Icelandic citizen and have an Icelandic passport like my son. When I am travelling abroad, I can truly say that I am Icelandic.

The photos remind me of our important relationship and our sweet togetherness. The memories of my nation are not so sweet and in Iceland I feel that I am released from this heavy burden. Here I decide for my self what I choose to remember.

Ritual VII

You are a guest in your daughter's home. Your grandson sits beside you on the sofa and starts to tell you something in Icelandic, you do not understand. You ask him to talk Polish. "Oh, I am so sorry grandma, I forgot." He tells you about a film he and his mother were watching together by a Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski. The film is about a man that is trying to catch a train. The film tells three stories, three possible versions of what could happen.

You think about your own life and where you would be today if your husband would not have done what was morally right and exposed a crime.

Action

Sit in the corner of the sofa.

Curl together with your knees up to your chest.

Observation

Look for things that carry or create meaning in the environment.

Reflection

What do you choose to remember?

What have you forgotten?



Bedroom

Cocoon

The bedroom is sometimes called the cabin. Here I crawl in and feel completely safe.

After a sixteen-day tour with foreign tourists I am exhausted and in need of deep rest. Then I lock myself in this cocoon for 24 hours. Here I lie and make sure that the windows are closed and let the strain sift out of me. Here I experience peace.

Ritual VIII

You have not heard from your daughter for some time. You try to call her mobile phone and a voice says "the phone is out of reach or turned off"

You think about your daughter and you feel your chest burst with love and pride. You are happy for her, that she got opportunities in Iceland to be independent and strong because you know that in your country it would have been different.

She knows what she wants, and she goes where she needs to go.

You call one more time.

Action

Lie in a fetal position on the bed and relax.

Observation

Pay attention to your breath.

Reflection

How does your cocoon look like?

Where do you seek peace?

Room

Composition



Dear guest,

This is my last letter to you. Soon you will hear a knock on the door and the performance is over. This room contains the entire future.

Here a young engineer works long hours creating and mending computers. He uses all sorts of tools and diverse components that he puts together.

He, himself is also composed of diverse ethnic components. He is French, Polish and Icelandic. This home is the centre of his life and here he likes to spend his time.

In this room he is occupied with preparing for the future by solving endless creative assignments.

Thank you for your visit and good luck with your future.

Karolina

Ritual IX

You are in your second home and have the privilege to sit and observe your friend making a computer in his room. You look up to him and think he is really cool. He explains to you how computer works, but you do not fully understand. You just want to hang out and chat with him. He is more interested in computers than chatting with you. You go out to your mother that explains "teenagers just need more privacy than other people, don't take it personally".

Action

Write a list of countries you would like to visit.

Wrote a list of countries you would like to live in.

Take the list with you.

Observation

Pay attention to your patriotic feelings.

Reflection

How are you composed?

What do immigrants immigrate?

105, TÚNIN (THE FIELDS)

Entrance

Vertu þú sjálfur.

(Be your self)

with Síðan skein sól.

Dear guest,

Welcome to Hátún, The Icelandic Disability Alliance housing estate

I live on the ground floor in flat 101.

I have left envelopes for you that contain; a letter, a description of ritual, and tasks that involve observing, contemplating and doing things in my home. Although I guide you through the work, you are the main character and the only spectator of what goes on.

I love music so each letter starts with a title of a song that I find fitting for that space. When you have read the letter and solved the tasks, please put the envelope where you found it. I have Cerebral Palsy disorder and make use of a wheelchair to travel through life. During your visit I'd like to invite you to sit travel in my domestic chair to gain better insight into my existence. When you read this, I am somewhere on the move, that is how I prefer to be. I travel through town in a specially designed electric wheelchair that I only use when outside, it gives me freedom to go most places in the city.

The performance is over when the doorbell rings in half an hour or when you have read the letters and are ready to go.

I hope you enjoy the stay.

Best wishes, Björk

Ritual I

You are a house. Inside of you there exists a diverse ecosystem of people, animals and microorganisms. Constant movement in and out, between rooms, apartments and floors maintains perfect balance within your system. Your life is dedicated to the service of your inhabitants for whom you create shelter from weather and winds. You are an equipment of aid to people with diverse abilities so they can be independent in their lives.

Action

Take a seat in the wheelchair and move towards
the post-boxes.

Read the names in silence and imagine that your name is on
one of the tags.

Observation

Observe your feelings and thoughts.

Pay attention to your expectations for the performance.

Contemplation

What kind of equipment's of aid do you need in your life?

Entrance

Lífið er yndislegt.

(Life is beautiful)

with Hreimur.

Welcome to my home. My name is Björk and I am 32 years old, single woman and I live here with my cat Sprettur (Sprint). My friend Kristján, also in a wheelchair, comes over daily. This apartment is our sanctuary. I have lived in this housing estate for five years, but the first three years I lived on fifth floor. It was only after I moved to this flat that I came to terms with living in this house since it is better situated than the previous one. Here is ample space for my chair and Sprettur can easily come and go as he pleases.

Pets are prohibited in the house but still there are many cats and dogs that live here. Sprettur is a great pal and is an indispensable part of my life. I have stopped feeling guilty about breaking the rules. Sometimes it is necessary going against the rules.

Sprettur might come home while you are here. Cats are very independent animals. I do not attempt to gain control over him. I am just trying to get some control over my own life.

I trust you with my home.

Greetings Björk

Ritual II

You sneak into the window after a night out and wait for the sleeping one to wake up. When she is up, you follow her every move, into the bathroom, living room and kitchen until she feeds you. When you have eaten enough, she pets you and the two of you communicate in a gentle and tender way. You need to wait until the afternoon for the yummy food to arrive on your plate, but it is worth the wait.

Observation

Pay attention to the organization of the flat.

Contemplation

What could prevent you from taking independent decision?

When do you break the rules?

Action

Leave the letter and move in the wheelchair into the bathroom.

Bathroom

Shallow

with Lady Ga Ga.

The bathroom is designed, for the most parts, with the needs of people in wheelchair in mind and is very convenient. I enjoy singing in the shower, just to live the cliché. Otherwise, I enjoy going to the swimming pool with my friends. Sometimes my friends drive, or I order a pickup and meet up with them at the pool. I always need to organise everything carefully before going places since access issues can be tricky. I am fairly self sufficient and do not need as much aid as many of my friends that live with disabilities.

Ritual III

You are going to the swimming pool with your childhood friend. It is summer and the sun is shining. You roll out in your chair and greet some of the inhabitants on your way out. You feel great and wait for your girlfriend to arrive. When she does you make yourself comfortable in the passenger seat while she packs your chair and puts it in the trunk. On the radio a song with Lady Ga Ga is playing, a song from the film A star is born.

You both sing along with the refrain and you tell your friend how well you relate to the main character of the film. She says to you: "Why don't you take singing classes?" You laugh. It is not the first time this idea has entered your mind.

Action

Wash your hands.

Observation

Observe the person in the mirror.

Contemplation

What defines you?

Do you live any clichés?

Kitchen

Takk fyrir mig.

(Thanks), with Ingó veðurguð.

I enjoy cooking. I cook for Kristján who loves everything I prepare for him. I do traditional Icelandic home cooking and sometimes I make roasted leg of lamb. The kitchen is not designed for people in wheelchair but luckily, I can stand on my feet so I can work in the kitchen with two crutches. My quality moments are dinner parties with family and friends. My family is scattered around, and we seldom meet. My mother lives in Denmark, my father and siblings in Vestmanna Islands and then I have a brother that also has severe CP disorder that lives in a service housing for the disabled in Hafnarfjörður. Compared to my brother I have a lot of quality in my life. My aim is to fight for better quality of life for myself and other people in my situation. I am on the board of Sjálfsbjörg, an association of people with physical disabilities, I also do a lot of voluntary work and am in charge of the social club for youngsters with CP. We do a lot of fun things - my motto is to have fun and to socialize with a lot of diverse people.

It is society that makes us disabled, not our selves.

Ritual IV

You have been working the whole day, converting old VHS tapes into digital format, changing from one system to another. You need fresh air, and you need nourishment. In your electric wheelchair you roll to the next neighbourhood. You ring the bell to your childhood friend from summer camp, and she greets you smiling. Her home smells of delicious food and reminds you of your mother.

Action

Find a glass and have some water.

Observation

Pay attention to the design of the kitchen.

Contemplation

Do you need to move something in your life from an old system to a new one?

Living room

I want to break free, with Queen

The living room is the centre of the home. Here I leave the chair and sit on the sofa, watch television and listen to music. I am not much here during the day. When I am not working as a substitute receptionist at the Statistic Office of Iceland, I am doing voluntary work or attending a sports event. I am a passionate handball fan, and my team is FH. I attend handball games in winter and football in summer. I shout a lot at the judge and am very opinionated when it comes to interpreting rules. I have not found a particular sport for my self like Kristján, who bowles and plays botcha, but I take it really seriously to be a fan. In the phonebook I am titled Björk Sigurðardóttir FH member.

Sprettur is very agile and often plays in his climbing construction while I relax in the sofa. Sometimes an intruder sneaks in, eating the cat food and taking advantage of the cat privileges in the home but most visitors are invited and then we have fun, sing and even dance. I like to be around a lot of people, and I seek places where I have the opportunity to talk to many different people.

Ritual V

You say goodbye to your friend after a nice evening with food and games. You open your computer and start to stream music, the song playing reminds you of a really good traditional country-side ball you attended in Úthlíð in Biskupstungur a few years back. It was a beautiful summer evening, and the atmosphere was so good. You forget time and place immersed in this memory and you move to the music. "There is nothing better than a good countryside ball" you think to yourself. Then you think about the difference in dancing with crutches, like you did in then, and in the chair.

The conclusion is that the technique is very different.

Observation

Pay attention to the messages that you are getting from your environment.

Action

Push the play button on the computer and dance to the music in the wheelchair.

Contemplation

What are the highlights in your life?

Bedroom

Það er gott að elska.

(It is good to Love), with Bubbi.

Dear guest,

This is the last letter and soon the doorbell rings.

My bedroom is a bit like a personal shrine. Here I keep everything that relates to my story and the people I love. Here is a drawing that I inherited from my grandfather, a very mysterious picture with a lot of signs that you can interpret in different ways. On the wall you can also see a photo collage of myself that my mother had hanging on her wall until she moved to Denmark, then she gave it to me. Another photo collage is from a trip I made with my friend. I love travelling and to experience new things. Here is also a Manchester United fan scarf, my team in the English League. MU Fanclub in Iceland selects each year one disabled person for a trip to Manchester to experience a game on the home field. One year I got a nomination and was invited – that was a fabulous trip. Even though I love to immerse my self in memories I think a lot about the future and what it might bring. I know that this is not my future home and I also know that I might not have found my place in the world. I would like to have an education and I would also want to buy the house I spend my childhood; I relate so many positive memories to that house.

My mother once gave me a deck of Angel cards with positive messages. When we are together, we draw one card each from the deck, just for fun. Then we have positive messages with us into the rest of the day, the evening or the night. I want to leave you with a positive message from an angel. Is it not exactly what you need?

I want to thank you for coming.

Take care, Björk.

Ritual VI

You are invisible to the people you serve. Your body is pure energy that you use for embracing the ones you were sent to protect. Now you are with the girl you hold so dearly, and you spread love and soothing vibrations around her. You intend to stay with her as long as she needs you. You send her messages through the cards that are named after your kin.

Observation

Look at the pictures on the wall.

Action

Draw a card from the deck, read the message.

Write down a positive message to your host and leave it on the nightstand.

Contemplation

What would you keep in your personal shrine?

What does quality of life mean to you?

