



SOLITAIRE

a collection
of games
for you

by JEEYON
SHIM

SOLITAIRE

a collection of games
for you, the player

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PIN FEATHERS//CLOUD STUDIES

DEAR POPPY,

FIRST LESSON

CRIMSON

GROG

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by Jeeyon Shim

PIN FEATHERS // CLOUD STUDIES

This is a solo game in two parts, to be played back to back or in portions during a fallow time (e.g. a long bus ride, stuck in traffic, in line at the DMV, bored at home, etc). Play time lasts just under 14 minutes.

MECHANICS:

1. If playing in two portions, the optimal conditions of play are when you are in slight discomfort that is not distressing to you for Pin Feathers, and when you can see the sky openly wherever you are for Cloud Studies.
2. Pick two songs for each game: something dissonant and uncomfortable to listen to for Pin Feathers, something soaring and crystalline for Cloud Studies.
3. Ask yourself the following questions accompanying each game as the music plays, and embody your imagined answers as feels right and good to you.

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PIN FEATHERS

You are transforming. The pain of the process roots itself viscerally within you; feathers sprout slowly out of every follicle on your body, your bones throb with the ache of hollowing themselves out. You hate this, and you need to move through it. You can never go back to what you were.

I: Who will no longer embrace you once your transformation is complete?

II: What are you eager to leave behind you in the wake of your new body?

III: Where will you go if you cannot stay here?

IV: How will you heal?

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CLOUD STUDIES

You are flying. Some time has passed between your transformation and the soaring vista of open sky and clouds and jewel-like topography beneath you. Your wings catch each zephyr like a child skimming their hand through clear water. Here in the sky you are a beacon, bright and distant as any star.

I: What compels you to dive when you see it glinting beneath you?

II: Where have you built your home, and what kind of nest do you return to?

III: How do the clouds feel when you move through them?

IV: Who do you want to see you as you are now, as you will be, as you have always been?

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Thanks to Gavin Pretor-Pinney for creating the Cloud Appreciation Society and reminding me that we don't live beneath the sky, we live within the sky.

DEAR POPPY,

a journaling game about caring for someone who's changed

WRITE DOWN RESPONSES FOR EACH OF THE PROMPTS IN YOUR JOURNAL.

Note: Game play for Dear Poppy takes at least seven non-contiguous weeks.

GAME MATERIALS:

- potting soil
- small seed pot with good drainage
- seeds
- instructions for planting them
- water
- loose paper
- small journal
- pen or pencil

YOU LOVED SOMEONE, AND ONE DAY YOU FOUND THEY CHANGED.

Who were they? (Circle one.)

your FRIEND

your LOVER

your CHILD

Where you would normally meet them - at their home, in bed next to you, in their own room - you instead find a small cluster of seeds, waiting expectantly.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE THE TENDING

What were four things about your loved one you remember the most vividly?

What were four things that the two of you shared that you shared with no one else?

What were four things about your loved one you wish you could recall with more clarity?

What were four things that you shared with them and delightedly shared with others, too?

Your mourning period has passed. You still miss their smile, their embrace, their funny face and the comfort of hearing their voice. But you feel accustomed to this change in them now, and you've decided it's time to plant them.

THE TENDING

Day One:

1. Write a letter to your loved one on the loose paper. As you address them, write in the present and future tense. After all, they are not gone. You might be able to hold the entirety of them in the palm of your hand, but there they are. They haven't died. They are simply dormant, waiting to germinate. Write to them with all the tenderness, love, and joy you hold in knowing them. Write from that place first. If you feel sadness, write from there, too; they would not want you to hide yourself from them.
2. Once you've written the letter, hold your loved one (the seeds) in your hand, and read the letter to them. Let your breath pass over their outer hull. See if they respond to you by moving, gently, in your palm.
3. Tear up the letter into small pieces.
4. Set the potting soil loosely in the pot. Fill it up $\frac{1}{3}$, scatter half of the letter in the dirt, fill it up another $\frac{1}{3}$, scatter the rest of the letter again, and fill it up the rest of the way. Do not pack it in too tight; your loved one's roots need to be able to travel down easily.
5. Plant your loved one according to the instructions for planting whatever kind of seed they are.
6. Water them.

WEEK ONE:

Start your journal with an entry in response to this question: What are you, now, grateful for in planting your loved one?

Continue watering and tending your loved one daily. Tell them you love them every time you water them. If they sprout within this first week (sometimes they are very precocious after their change!) move them to an appropriately sunny or shaded spot in your home.

WEEK TWO:

Write your second entry in response to the following two questions:

- a. What are you, now, grateful for in the act of planting your loved one?
- b. What are you grateful for in tending them?

Continue watering and tending your loved one daily. Tell them you love them every time you water them. Monitor them for over or under watering, and signs that they are getting the right kind of light they need.

WEEK THREE:

Write your third entry in response to the following three questions:

- a. What are you, now, grateful for in planting your loved one?
- b. What are you grateful for in tending them?
- c. What are you grateful for, now, in how they've changed?

Continue watering and tending your loved one daily. Tell them you love them every time you water them. Monitor them for over or under watering, and signs that they are getting the right kind of light they need. Think of a joke to tell them next week.

WEEK FOUR:

Write your fourth entry in response to the following four questions:

- a. What are you, now, grateful for in planting your loved one?
- b. What are you grateful for in tending them?
- c. What are you grateful for, now, in how they've changed?
- d. What are you grateful for that you used to do together that, now, you do by yourself to honor their memory?

Continue watering and tending your loved one daily. Tell them you love them every time you water them. Monitor them for over or under watering, and signs that they are getting the right kind of light they need. Mark a passage in a book you are reading that you think they would like, and share it with them next week.

WEEK FIVE:

Write your fifth entry in response to the following five questions:

- a. What are you, now, grateful for in planting your loved one?
- b. What are you grateful for in tending them?
- c. What are you grateful for, now, in how they've changed?
- d. What are you grateful for that you used to do together that, now, you do by yourself to honor their memory?
- e. What are you grateful for, now, that is new in your life that you think they would like to know?

Continue watering and tending your loved one daily. Tell them you love them every time you water them. Monitor them for over or under watering, and signs that they are getting the right kind of light they need. Think about something funny or charming or lovely that happened to you this week, and tell them about it.

WEEK SIX:

Write your sixth entry in response to the following six questions:

- a. What are you, now, grateful for in planting your loved one?
- b. What are you grateful for in tending them?
- c. What are you grateful for, now, in how they've changed?
- d. What are you grateful for that you used to do together that, now, you do by yourself to honor their memory?
- e. What are you grateful for, now, that is new in your life that you think they would like to know?
- f. What are you hopeful for, for them? for yourself?

Continue watering and tending your loved one daily. Tell them you love them every time you water them. Monitor them for over or under watering, and signs that they are getting the right kind of light they need.

WEEKS SEVEN, AND ONWARD:

Think about whether your loved one needs to be repotted soon, and pick out a lovely new pot for them if they do. Think about whether you want to keep them inside with you, or whether they would be happier being planted somewhere outside. You know that there are hazards either way (mites and mildew indoors, animals or blight outdoors); but nonetheless you love them, and part of loving them means knowing them as they are, anew, as this tender, green, beautiful living thing. You watched the miraculous, stretching transformation of their germination and sprouting. You've marveled at their translucence as light shines through their stalk and their leaves. You've felt how fragile their form is under the soft, hesitant touch of your hand grazing them as they move ever upward. You will bear whatever comes with grace. They will grow.

You will love them. You will always love them.

FIRST LESSON

CIRCLE ONE

Are you:

A mermaid

A selkie

A siren

I: ON THE SHORE, AT NIGHT

The sea used to be your bower and garden, your hearth and home; no longer, not for a long time.

How did you lose your place in the tide?

Standing before it now, feeling the damp crumble of the sand beneath your bare feet, something inside you keens with terrible longing.

What do you yearn for?

You sacrificed everything for them.

Who did you cleave yourself in two for?

In your hands you cradle something:

Your SKIN

Your VOICE

Your LOVER (what is left of them)

It's time. You have to release it. You have to.

When do you throw your cargo into the water?

II: IN A COMMUNITY SWIMMING POOL, DAYTIME

Physical therapy extended further and further out the more you broke down, until finally it led you here.

What ailments seeped in to your body over time?

The pool is a hollow simulacrum of the vast expanse you used to roam, but the buoyancy you feel in the water comforts you.

When you close your eyes, what do you imagine around you in the water?

Tendon and muscle twinge in response the new ways you gently work them. It is not the same as when you streaked, sleek and powerful, through the sea; but right now it is enough.

How do you settle in, just a little more, into realizing what this body can do for you?

You think about the humans you've seen, from below, serenely floating on their backs. You wonder what that feels like.

CHOOSE ONE:

You feel comfortable floating on your back.

You DO NOT feel comfortable floating on your back.

IF YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE FLOATING

Let your feet leave the concrete floor. Lie back, gently and wide. Feel your ribcage swell and sink with the air you breathe.

What holds you now, that only you can feel?

IF YOU DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE FLOATING

Let your feet find purchase on the concrete floor. Hold your hands out in front of you, cupping them as though you are supporting something very, very precious to you.

What do you hold, that only you can see?

III: IMMERSED IN A BATHTUB WITH FRESH, HOT WATER AND EPSOM SALT

The water should be very warm -- not hot, but comfortable to the touch. Add the Epsom salt while the water is running to help it dissolve.

For a standard-sized tub, use the amount suggested on the package, usually 1 to 2 cups, or the amount recommended by your doctor.

In this frank mammalian body you find yourself craving warmth in a way that your kin would find compromising. You've come to enjoy it. The bathwater covers you like a thick, heavy blanket.

How did seasons pass in the sea you come from? What did it feel like as the world cooled and warmed around you?

The sea did not constrain you. Its vistas are limitless and you traversed them without a thought for the meaning of confinement. Everything on land is a plate or a cup or a bowl; a cage, you used to think, but

you've learned to know the difference between a prison and a vessel. You feel the walls of the tub around your body. They comfort you.

How does the bath water feel as you feel it soak into your skin?

You add salt to all your baths. Your physical therapist says it helps with muscle tension. You like it because sometimes you hold your breath and sink under the surface, and the sting of the briny water at your lash line reminds you of home. Your home before where you will always live in the truest part of yourself; and your home here in this body, the home of this body.

When do you know it is time to leave the water?

CRIMSON

HOW TO PLAY CRIMSON:

Crimson is a solo player game.

Do not talk for the duration of play.

Do not let yourself be seen by any other person during any stage of play,
especially the endgame.

Keep this game in the same place as you keep your band-aids or gauze.

Play it the next time you cut yourself accidentally

(for example: a paper cut,

a nick from a boxcutter,

a small jab from a kitchen knife).

Get ready to play. Close your eyes. Take a breath.

Open your eyes.

ONE

You are a homunculus. You have been in the world for a week and a day. The magician who created you died yesterday, and your skeleton is still turning from wood to bone, your veins still run with water slowly turning to blood.

TWO

Put a small piece of white gauze on the cut. Watch the blood bloom through the cloth.

THREE

The bleeding is a sure sign that you are transforming. You are human and nothuman.

FOUR

Put the bloodied gauze in a small brown paper box.

FIVE

What makes you human? Write it on the outside of the box.

SIX

What keeps you from being completely human? Write it on the inside of the box.

WHICH ARE YOU COMMITTED TO:

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Trying to push yourself to become human, a little more every day for the rest of your days, knowing you will never completely attain what you want?

.

Or withdrawing into the reality that you will never be like everyone around you?

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HUMAN

If you commit to being human, find a tree and bury the box with your blood in the dirt by its roots.

HOMUNCULUS

If you commit to being inhuman, throw the box with your blood into a fire and watch it until it is completely burned to ash.

Choose now.

Grog



Grog is the name of fine particulate matter added to clay to temper it before working and firing it. It can be made of a variety of materials, and while different types of clay necessitate different proportions of grog, it is crucial to ensuring that finished works are both strong and flexible enough to withstand the act of creation.



You are a golem being unmade by your creator in the wake of something neither of you can take back. Once the spirit of life passes your tongue you will draw your first breath anew.

Materials:

- a sugar cube, piece of chocolate, or other small food that will melt slowly on the tongue
- a small candle (like a tea light or a birthday candle), match, and safe place to light it
- a glass of water

1. Your creator scratches out the holy letter carved into your forehead. You feel their fingers work and smooth the wound over into a blank plane.

Close your eyes. Think of four memories: one of a treasured routine or habit, one of something you believe in, one of something you did that you cannot forgive, one of an act of deep goodness you performed.

2. Your creator heaves a sigh. It sounds as though it comes from very far away. You feel them place something on your tongue.

Put the sugar cube or chocolate in your mouth and hold it in place on your tongue.

3. They speak the holy words over you. You feel yourself slipping away.

As the food melts, imagine your memories slowly coming undone, losing coherence and form.

4. "Light."

Open your eyes. Strike the match and light the candle. Look into the flame. Once the sugar or chocolate is fully dissolved, drink the water and cleanse the residue of your past from your tongue.

5. You cannot see anything past the light of creation, but you feel your creator's hands cradling your face. Their skin feels impossibly warm and distant at the same time. Your lips part just enough for them to breathe the spirit of life into you.

Take in a long, slow breath through your nose for the count of three; let it out slowly through your mouth for the count of six. Do this for four cycles, for a total of four inbales and four exhales.

6. Your creator releases you. You feel the breadth of time laid before you like a path through tall grass. You feel your own newness. You feel the year ahead in its splendor and unknowable glory.

When you are ready, draw the first breath of your new life and blow out the flame.

for my mentors past, present, and future