

Dear Poppy,

a solo roleplaying game about someone who has changed
by Jeeyon Shim

Note: Game play for Dear Poppy takes at least seven non-contiguous weeks. All photos and images by Jeeyon Shim.

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 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.

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Your mourning period has passed.
You still miss their smile, their
embrace, their funny face and the
comfort of hearing their voice.

You will always miss them. But
you feel accustomed to this change
in them now, and you've decided
it's time to plant them.

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 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, to share 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 they need 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 to both (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 grow. You will bear whatever comes with them with grace and love. You will keep writing to them, writing your gratitude whenever you are moved to. You will love them. You will always love them.



for poppy