

# going to meet you

By Alia Toth-Smith

content warning: death, isolation, loneliness

## personal effects

1 Soul, 30 Tree Trunks, 24 Branches (various sizes),  
1 Tree Stump (attached to top of box) , 1 Memory Deck

## to begin

Do not shuffle the memory deck. Remove all pieces from the box and set them within easy reach. Put the tree stump in the center of all the pieces.

Connect up to 8 branches and tree trunks total to the tree stump. 2 of the pieces placed must be tree trunks. Leave enough vertical space between branches so that the Soul may stand upon them. Branches may overlap as long as at least one leaf symbol is exposed on each branch piece.

## to consume

Stand the Soul on any empty space. A space is considered empty if a small leaf symbol is visible on it. Then draw and read the top 2 cards from the memory deck. Next, move the Soul to a different empty space. Place one of the memory cards on the spot the soul was and place the other card on another empty space. Finally, add a branch or a tree trunk to the tree.

Keep reading, moving the soul, placing memories, and growing the tree until a condition in *the end* is met.

## the end

You may decide to end the story at any time. If you stop before any of the other conditions are met, immediately read the card at the bottom of the memory deck.

The story may also end if:

- The tower falls, the soul falls off the tower, or the soul cannot be legally moved. Read the second card from the bottom of the memory deck.
- You read the final green memory card. Read the third card from the bottom of the memory deck.

Regardless of why the story has ended, your final task is to tear up all of the memory cards and scatter the remains into the box. They live in you now.

# specific bequests

- Pieces are meant to click together. Try different orientations or a small amount of force to get them to fit.
- It is important to **tear up the entire memory deck** upon ending the game. You may mourn, but do not let that stop you from doing what must be done.
- You may rearrange and resettle pieces of the tree you have already placed, as long as those pieces don't have any memories on them.
- You are encouraged to get up and move around the tree to move and place pieces more comfortably.
- If you encounter uncertainty, make your own call.

## credits

Designer, writer, sculptor, and painter: Alia Toth-Smith  
Design Programs: Canva, Krita  
Font: EB Garamond

Special thanks to all of my playtesters.

Are you ready?

I think so...  
What is it?

It's just...  
Did I live a good life?

Good and bad are for  
the living.

Tell me how you  
remember it.

I never knew  
my birth parents.  
I didn't think it  
bothered me, but it  
still had power,  
just knowing that  
the instant I was born  
I was unwanted.  
Unloved.

They might have  
loved me, even more  
than they could say.  
Maybe their trembling  
hands betrayed their  
heart as they left me on  
a stranger's doorstep.

I'll never know.

I know the caretakers  
at the orphanage  
loved me.  
They held me,  
swaddled me,  
and rocked me to sleep  
for a year.  
It was hard for them  
to let me go.

At least that's what  
my parents say.  
I don't remember  
them.  
I don't remember  
if I loved them back.

I know that  
I loved my parents.  
How could I not?  
They chose me.  
They gave me  
everything I needed  
for the world to open  
up to me.

I learned to dance, to  
swim, to sing, to love-  
to breathe in all that  
life could give me.  
I got good at  
everything I wanted to  
and even more.

I discovered myself.  
  
I met friends who  
I wanted to hold onto  
forever.  
  
I traveled with my  
family all over  
the country.

My loved ones and I  
made memories  
together.  
  
Moments  
that I wanted to live in  
forever.

I fell in love with  
living.  
  
It was all so perfect.

But that innocence  
wasn't something I  
could hold on to.  
Because, in  
the back of my mind,  
I knew that at any  
moment it could all be  
taken away.

Any moment I could  
be as alone as I was  
when I was brought  
into this world.  
  
Life isn't fair,  
but neither are you.

The first time I saw  
you was at a funeral  
for someone  
whose name I can't  
remember.

What I do remember is  
the big black box.  
  
All the people who  
came together to share  
their memories of  
whoever was in that  
box.

And it struck me that  
that's all we  
leave behind.  
  
Memories.  
  
I was terrified.

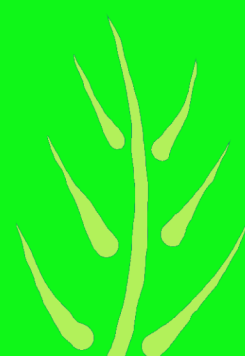
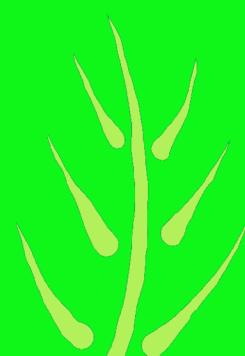
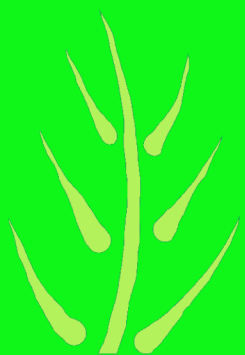
I never wanted  
to meet you,  
It was inevitable,  
of course,  
but I thought I could  
beat that inevitability  
by becoming  
unforgettable.

I was immediately  
obsessed.  
  
I networked, I smiled,  
I shook hands.  
  
I worked and worked  
and worked.

I let my friends and  
family drift away.  
They would all be  
gone soon enough and  
I couldn't ever replace  
them.  
  
So why bother?

As scared as I was  
for myself,  
I was even more scared  
for my loved ones.  
  
For when they  
had  
to meet you.

I didn't know  
what I know now.  
  
That all I had to do  
to be worth  
remembering  
is to have existed.



To have love  
and be loved.

My parents died.  
I never married.  
Children were  
burdens, not gifts.  
  
Why waste time on  
connections?

My heart ached.  
  
But, I made it.  
  
I was the best  
of the best.  
  
I made sure everyone  
knew my name.

People loved me.

But then,  
I looked  
at my life  
and I realized  
that work  
was almost all  
I had ever known.

And I awoke  
as if all my life  
had been  
a dream.

I had gotten old,  
even though I swore,  
that I wouldn't.

I worked so hard on  
my mind  
and now it was  
my body  
that was failing me.

I couldn't control my  
own body anymore.  
I was confined  
to a chair,  
the same prison  
I had chosen freely  
my entire life.

The staff at the  
nursing home were  
nice,  
but they didn't know  
me.  
  
To them,  
I was a senile has-been.

People just don't love  
you as much when  
you're old.

All my former friends  
were dead or dying.  
  
I was too fragile  
to explore anything  
except my own mind.

And I had done so  
much to try to not be  
forgotten.

Tracing memories that  
had long past.

And there was  
no one left  
who I wanted  
to remember me.

I regretted  
so much.

But even after  
everything I had done,  
I was still alone.

No one left  
who I wanted  
to love me.

But it was far too late.

It was time  
to meet you.

Well?  
What do you think?  
**I think you did your  
best. Neither good  
nor bad, just human.**

And that's okay?  
**And that's okay.**

That's it. That's all I  
can bring myself to  
remember.  
Funny, isn't it?  
**It's okay.  
I understand.**

Really?  
**Really.**

And that's where  
my story ends.  
**Does it feel like it  
was cut short?**  
Maybe, but maybe  
there's value in the  
not-knowing. It leaves  
room for dreams.

