

This Way: Shannon Finnegan (Audio Transcript)

Hi. My name is Shannon Finnegan, and you're listening to an audio recording I created for This Way, which is a series of artist-designed walks and experiences organized by the MIT List Visual Arts Center. I'm making this recording in April of 2021.

This activity is recommended for two friends. You can do it together on the phone or video chat, or asynchronously texting, emailing, snail mailing at the end. OK, To start, if you're not there already, get into bed. Grab something to write with-- a voice memo app, a speech-to-text tool, something to type, pencil and paper, whatever you prefer. Take a moment to get settled in. Rearrange the pillows. Turn on your heating pad. Get a glass of water. Pull up the weighted blanket. Et cetera.

Hello from my bed to yours. I'm under a gray comforter and looking at gray sky. What do you notice where you are? Start listing words that describe your surroundings. This is a practice I learned from Georgina Kleege and Scott Wallin from an article about audio description they published in Disability Studies Quarterly in 2015. It's available online if you're interested in looking into that more.

So keep listing words. What textures are within reach? What objects are around? Are you experiencing any smells? Are you experiencing any sounds? Keep your word list loose. Jot down anything that comes to mind. It doesn't need to be literally or directly connected to what is around.

What's the mood of your surroundings? What is close and what is farther away? What stands out? What took a while to notice? Your list can be as long or short as you'd like. And whenever you're ready, share it with your friend. Then just continue your time in bed. Rest. Nap. Read. Watch TV. Draw. Send emails. Take a Zoom meeting. Whatever is next for your day.

To close, I want to thank some of the artists who have taught me about being an artist in bed-- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Alex Dolores Salerno, Joselia Rebekah Hughes, Carolyn Lazard, Constantinos Zavitsanos, Ezra Benus, The Nap Ministry, Octavia Rose Hingle, Emily Sara, Tash King, and others whose art has reached me in ways I can't remember or have yet to map.

And I want to close with a quote from a poem by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha titled "I know crips live here." I read it in Leah's book, *Tongue Breaker*, where Leah notes that it's inspired by a piece by the poet Eli Clare titled "interdependence." The poem is also available online at [poets.org](https://www.poets.org). I think it's a slightly different version.

But I first heard this poem in 2019, and I think about it constantly and thought about it a lot while creating this project as well, especially this line-- "I know crips live here. I see all the things and reach around your mattress of glory."