

A vertical copper pipe with a hole is standing in a glass of water. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a plant and a lamp.

# Poetry in design

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## Introduction

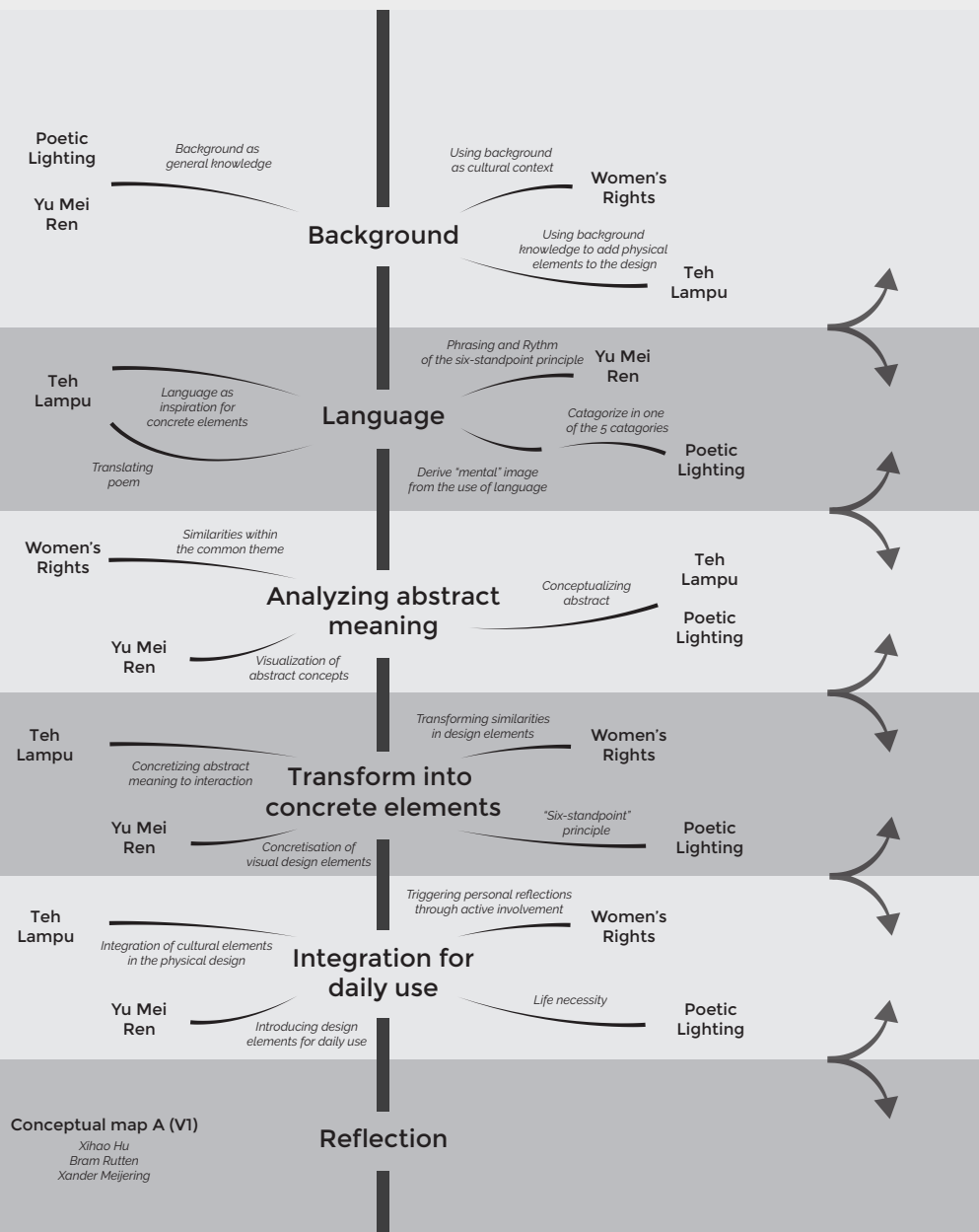
This project is conducted during the elective of Poetry in Design. This elective is trying to use poetry to access culture differences and diversity into design. Dear Enclosure is a redesign of an answering machine. By integrating the cultural subtleties from the ancient Chinese poem "Deer Enclosure". The process was started from making a conceptual map, which concluded previous methodology of poetry design. The analysis of two poems from Wang Wei was made, along with different version of translations. By extracting the values from the poem, a moodboard was depicted by video. Deer Enclosure was picked for concept exploration. Meditative water was the main inspiration for the final concept. In the end of this report, the concept video will be illustrated.

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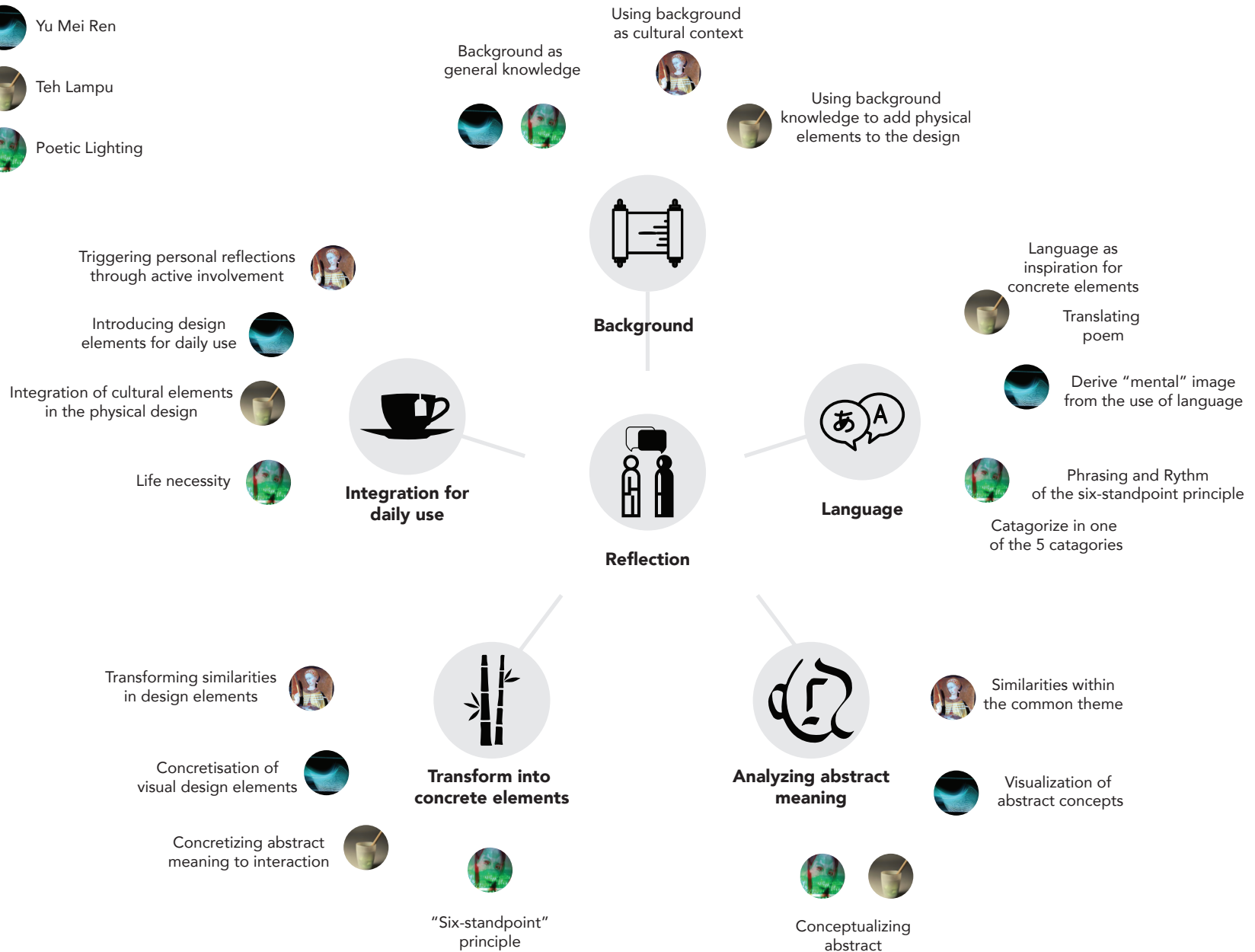


## Conceptual map

The literature review was focused on four projects which were designed with poetry. The processes in each project were analysed. And the methodology behind the four projects were concluded into background, language, analysing abstract meaning, transform into concrete elements, integrate into daily life, and reflection. In the conceptual map, the detailed process related to each method was illustrated. Conceptual map B is an iteration of conceptual map A, which put the reflection in the middle to show that the process of using values from poetry is to reflect.

Projects:

-  Women's Rights
-  Yu Mei Ren
-  Teh Lampu
-  Poetic Lighting









## The Deer Enclosure

wang wei (7th century)

Empty, not seeing any person

Yet I heard, echoes of voices

Rays of light reach deep into the forest

Leaving moving reflections

Only to reveal bright green moss

English translation by Xander Meijering (2016)

Starting with "empty" to emphasize that there is nothing around.

"/" to wait and show that "not seeing any person" is the second conclusion

Again, first conclusion is "Yet I heard", acknowledging that something can be heard although empty.

This sound is apparently echoes of people's (voices).

"Rays of light", to show the visual image of light entering a forest.

"reach deep into the forest", emphasizing that it takes effort to "reach deep into" the forest.

"Leaving", because you mostly observe the reflections, not the rays of light in this case.

"moving reflections", because each moment is different, just as the echoes, these are not static

Light at this point serves nothing but just to reveal things. Bright green moss, because moss can be found in the forest. While bright green moss can be a bit strange and emphasize the new positivity that has been discovered while going to the forest.

There are no paths in the hills, which makes them “inhospitable”. “No men is to be found” amplifies the word inhospitable.

“Still I hear voices” contradicts the opening sentence. This contradiction evokes mystique in the poem.

“Light beams” Evokes a mental image of light shining in beams. “through the dense canopy” again contradicts light, because dense canopies do not allow for much light to pass.

The word “Glistening” allows for imagination on how to visualise and form a mental image. “Glistening” giving clarity in a dark place. “Carpet” gives a feeling of friendliness and softness, contradicting the inhospitable hills.

## The Deer Enclosure

wang wei (7th century)

In inhospitable hills no men is to be found

Still I hear voices

Light beams through the dense canopy

Glistening on the green carpet of moss

English translation by Bram Rutten (2016)

## The Deer Enclosure

wang wei (7th century)

There is no man in pathless hills,

Only echoing can be overheard.

Late sun returning forest depths,

Green mosses shined again.

English translation by Xihao HU (2016)

In order to make the rhythm of the poem slow, the key word “pathless hills” placed at the end of the first sentence. Instead of empty mountains, “pathless hills” implicitly indicate an empty atmosphere.

The first word in the original poem says ‘but’, which could also mean ‘only’ in traditional Chinese. While using ‘only’ could address that the echoing voice is unique.

The context in this poem is happened at dusk, therefore “late sun” was chosen to show the time. And “returning” gives a dynamic path of the light.

To respond the “returning” light, “shined again” shows the green moss is shined upon by light.

## The Deer Enclosure

wang wei (7th century)

No one can be seen in the pathless hills

Only echoing voices remain

Rays of dusk light reach deep into forest

To become moving reflections

revealing bright green moss.

English translation by Bram Rutten,  
Xander Meijering and Xihao HU (2016)





## The Deer Enclosure

wang wei (7th century)

emptiness

unique

contrast

only to reveal itself  
when alone

No one can be seen in the pathless hills

Only echoing voices remain

Rays of dusk light reach deep into forest

To become moving reflections

revealing bright green moss.

secluded

calm

peaceful

affection

enjoy of loneliness

English translation by Bram Rutten,  
Xander Meijering and Xihao HU (2016)



emptiness	Nobody can be seen in this place; it is just a large amount of emptiness
secluded	The hills do not have paths, so there are not many people visiting this place
unique	Only the author is present, while hearing echoes. He is the only one to hear these echoes (of voices)
calm	The sentence shows that the echoes of voices demands a calm state of the author; he needs to be calm in order to make sense of it.
peaceful	The visual image of light rays coming through the forest's leaves is a very peaceful image. And in this deep core of the forest it is peaceful; nobody is there and it is hard to reach.
contrast	The rays of light become something moving, to show something. This demands attention and is slightly in contrast with the peacefulness.
affection	The reflections, together with the rays of light demands a certain kind of affection. Only the ones who care can appreciate the beauty in the deep core of the forest.
only to reveal itself when alone	Only when time has been taken to appreciate the beauty of the forest, by means of the light rays, causing the reflections, one can see that the reflections (which are fascinating by themselves) result in revealing something from the forest that is otherwise hidden.
enjoy of loneliness	The whole process as being described in the poem, is interpreted as the feeling one can get, when enjoying loneliness. Only this can happen when someone is enjoying this forest alone.

Random Poem  
wang wei (7th century)

recognize

contrast

awkward

details

Coming from the same place as mine.

You certainly know all the headlines.

At dawn, in front of my silvery window.

Was it still too early for  
the plum blossoms to show?

English translation by Bram Rutten,  
Xander Meijering and Xihao HU (2016)

naughty

avoiding bad news

tension

homesick

Recognize	The first sentence shows how the author recognizes the person he is talking to. He explains what they have in common.
Naughty	Immediately asking for something very detailed and probably irrelevant to the person the author speaks to, can be considered as naughty.
Contrast	There is a contrast between the loneliness in this poem, being homesick and the loneliness of the deer enclosure, the enjoyment of loneliness.
Avoiding bad news	Asking this specific and obvious question can be a sign of avoiding bad news.
Awkward	Asking such a question can be awkward, because the other person probably would not know the place the author is describing with great detail.
Tension	Inside the poem there is a tension between the obvious (the headlines) and the irrelevant (the specific question). Asking this question emphasizes how the author is avoiding the obvious.
Details	The details the author uses to describe the place and moments shows the affection the author has with this place (and moment).
Homesick	From the structure of the poem we assumed that the author was probably homesick.





# Moodboard + Values



unique

tension



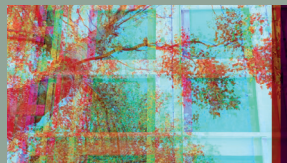
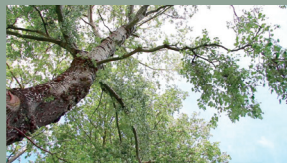
enjoy of loneliness

calm



homesick

contrast



contrast

calm

secluded

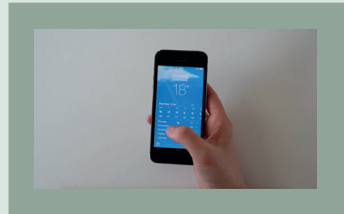
naughty



# Moodboard + Values

avoiding bad news

affection



homesick

unique

only to reveal itself  
when alone

affection



peaceful

calm

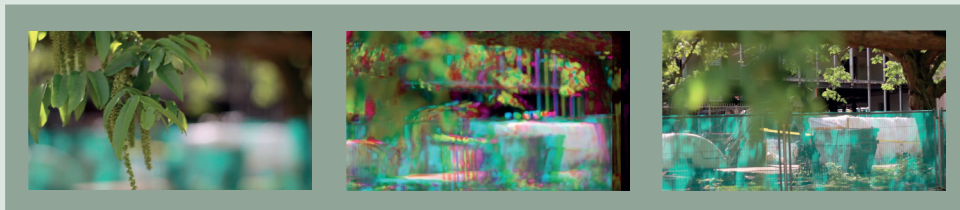
awkward

recognize



homesick

tension



contrast

details



emptiness

recognize



## Moodboard

In the moodboard the contrast between the two poems is emphasized. The Deer Enclosure shows the beauty of being alone, that one can enjoy being alone. But also conveying the necessity of having this ritual to the author of the poem. This moment alone, in the forest, is the (weekly) moment for the author to process its week. This ritual has meditative values to the poet.

The second poem, Random Poem, shows the negative side of being alone. Trying to view the poem from the poet his perspective shows how, although being not alone, one can feel lonely. The homesickness the poet experiences is in contrast with the enjoyment of loneliness in The Deer Enclosure.

The moodboard showed us that we needed to pick one poem to continue. The relation and contrast between the two poems was still interesting. However, assuming it is written from a different moment in the poet his life the two poems both carry different values.



The choice of continuing with The Deer Enclosure was made due to the meditative atmosphere the poem carries out. This meditative atmosphere is being carried out through the visual story, the way it is put on paper, the simplicity (and being written in traditional Chinese), how the poem can be recited and we even experienced it while analyzing the poem.

Looking at the cultural origin of the poem: being written in traditional Chinese, the poem its meditative atmosphere can be a cultural bridge between the poem and other cultures. As connecting the poem to the Dutch (or Western) culture we can see how our Western culture has integrated cultural influences from (ancient) Asian meditation and meditative practices. Yoga, Zen Gardening and practicing meditation being Asian cultural influences in our Western culture.







## Iteration #1

Burning incense being one example that came quickly to our minds. This activity traditionally has a meditative and spiritual purpose but can also be found in some of our houses in the Netherlands.

The Deer Enclosure, as we interpret it, describes the process of making sense of continuous information. The qualities of smoke (from burning incense) can enable this process in the physical world. When light rays are beamed through an area, these are not visible until they are reflected upon some kind of material. Smoke could make these reflections (as mentioned in the poem) visible.

The first exploration has been a photo frame which projects imagery into "nothing". When an incense cone is being burned the idea is that smoke would build up in the photo frame, revealing the otherwise "hidden" images.





From the poems values we extracted that the process, of going through seclusion to unravel the “reflections” in the poem, is a meditative one. We investigated traditions of incense burning as they are meditative. The smoke of incense gave us the idea of something visible, but ungraspable, as the “echoing voices” in the poem. The smoke did give us the meditative process, but the difficulty lays in eventually revealing the reflections. After looking at reflections in smoke we turned to water.



The idea of spinning water comes from "...moving reflections..." in the poem. By spinning the water, it shapes itself into a lens form, because of the centrifugal forces. This would theoretically enable a lens with a dynamic focal point. However we found the vortex created in the water meditatively more intriguing than the reflections caused by the light.

## Iteration #2

The idea of revealing sound with spinning water still comes from "...moving reflections revealing..." in the poem. The literal light reflections are replaced by sound, also linking to the "echoing voices" in the poem. The water hides the sound, like "echoing voices", but can reveal the sound using the spinning water referring to "moving reflections".











Dear Enclosure is an answering machine that keeps messages hidden until they are revealed to the listener going through the process of seclusion and meditation. The spoken in messages, pouring from the tap in the cup, are being recorded. All the messages together slowly fill the cup.

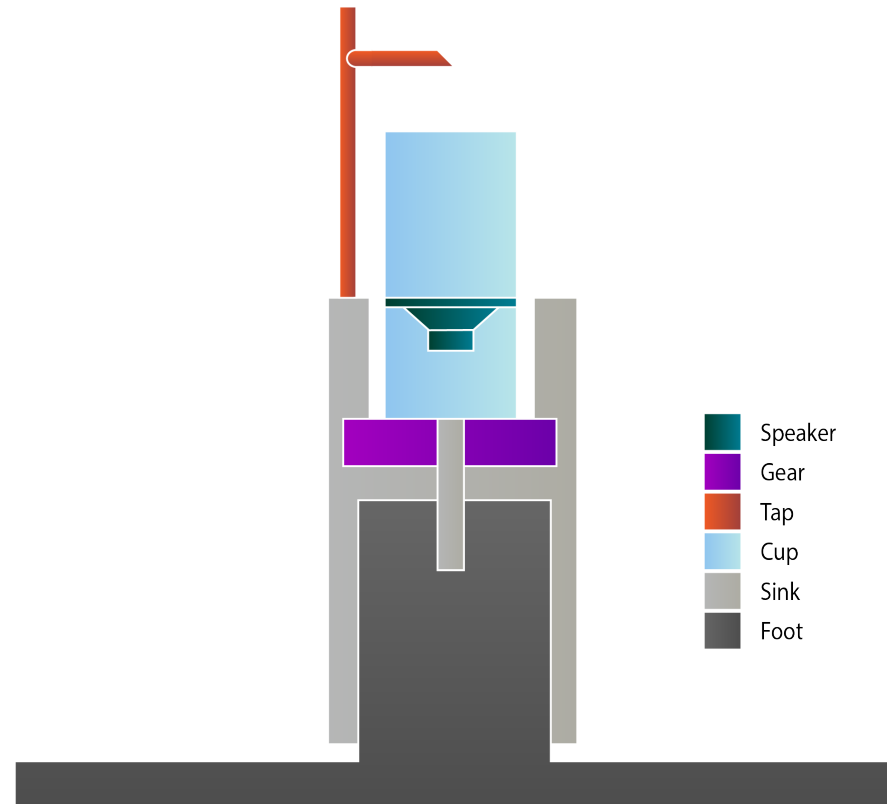
The stored messages are hidden from the listener, but play muffled in the trembling water, like "echoing voices" in the poem. Dear Enclosure will only reveal the message when the listener secludes himself and focusses on turning Dear Enclosure at the right speed. The water in the cup will form a passage through which the message is revealed.

To make space for new messages the cup needs to be poured out in the sink now and then. While pouring the message will sound as long as the water flows.



Dear Enclosure is built around three main parts. The foot, the sink and the cup.

The sink swivels around the foot. The cup is placed in the sink underneath the tap. For creating a passage that enables the message be revealed, a water vortex in the cup is necessary. To enable the creation of a water vortex in the cup, a centrifugal force is created by turning Dear Enclosure. The rotation speed required for a water vortex is not easy to perform by hand, so a planetary gear is integrated beneath the cup, doubling the rotating speed. The gear also reverses the rotating direction. The tap functions as a handle to turn Dear Enclosure. The faucet ends in the centre of the cup, so no matter where the message comes from, it always comes back to the place where it can be found.



## Video + Explanation

The story starts in the morning with a closing door, meaning the owner is leaving the house.

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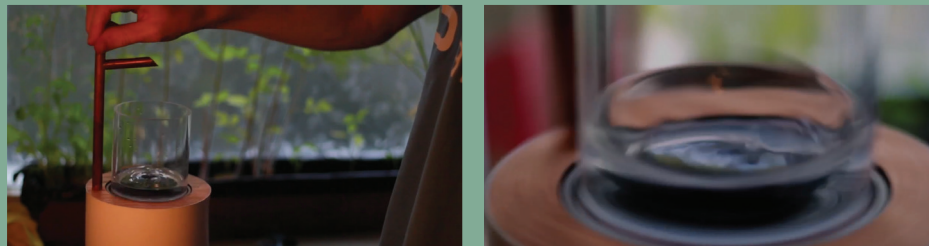


A message comes in, pouring in the cup. During the day and evening more messages come in.

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In the evening the owner comes home and wants to hear the recorded messages.

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To hear the messages, the owner turns Dear Enclosure.

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After playing the messages the cup is emptied, making place for new messages.

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The process repeats itself.

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