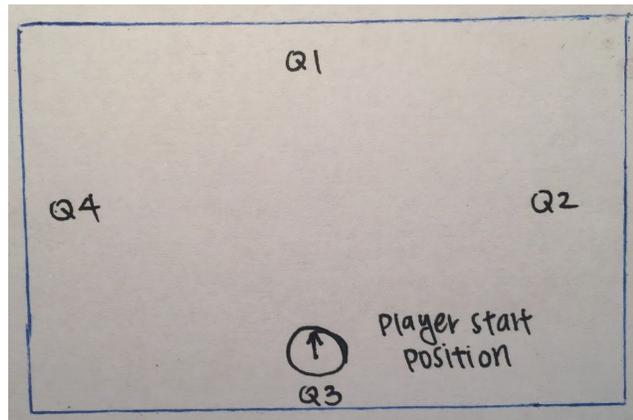
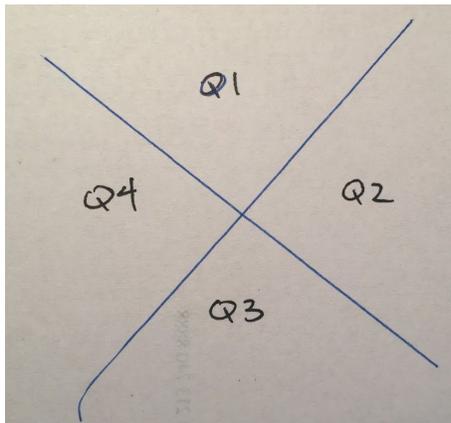


Note: I'll be referring to areas by quadrants, as outlined in the chart below. All the italicized blue text are the narration the player will hear.



Players are prompted “Go to the footprints.” This is written in a simple white font with a muted yellow outline. This will ensure that each player is at the correct spot and facing in the right direction before starting. They will be near the back of the room, facing the front of the room (see image above).

It is pitch black at the moment. The only thing we see is the faint glow of the footprints right below us, emitting the same yellow color as the font of the prompt from before.

We hear a voice. It is clear, maybe with a very slight, subtle touch of reverb to not have it sound like someone is speaking right into our ears or a couple inches from our face. It should feel like this person is existing in the same room as us, as if we are having a normal conversation at a comfortable distance, not too close, but not too far.

*Home. Means very different things to each and every one of us. But there is a general consensus that home is safe. It's comfortable. Where we're free to be ourselves. We can laugh. We can cry. At the end of a long day, we can go home and find rest, possibly with the people that we love and care about the most.*

*I'm fortunate in that home was always a set location. I didn't have to worry about whether or not I would have a roof over my head at night. But then again that's a house--not a yet a home.*

Right before the start of the next sentence, four walls begin to rise up from the ground, slightly staggered in timing. Q1 Wall is the first to start coming up, then a half second later Q2 is emerging, then Q3, and Q4. These are simple off-white walls.

By the end of the phrase “grounded by the floor,” a light beige carpet floor slowly fades in.

By the end of the phrase “holding up the roof,” a stucco ceiling, matching the off-white walls slowly fades in.

By the end of the phrase “when does all this become a home,” all the furniture slowly fades in. Furniture should be middle class, suburban, and 90s. The only things that have to be here are the black Panasonic television against the Q2 wall and a fish tank in the corner of where Q3 meets Q4.

*So when exactly do these four walls, grounded by the floor, holding up the roof--when does all this become a home?*

At “people inside,” two parental figures slowly fade into Q1.

*I've been told that the people inside are what gives it life. And again, I'm lucky that both of my parents were present in my early childhood, working hard to support our family and prepare a future for their only child.*

At the start of the next sentence, a gentle 3 second fade of ambient audio begins. This ambience includes quiet conversational chatter in Cantonese in Q1, sounds of a television channel broadcasting Hong Kong dramas edited to sound as if they are coming out of lo-fi television speakers in Q2, and a quiet but constant hum of a fish tank filter in the corner of Q3 where the wall meets Q4.

*We were a quiet family, but still the house would fill with our occasional chatter, sounds from a bulky black Panasonic television, hum of the filter from the fish tank--typical things from a middle class suburban family in the 90s. This was the environment with which I grew familiar. This was home.*

At the end of “one person from this home leaves,” one of the parental figures slowly fades away.

At the phrase “if the people are the foundation,” cracks on the walls and ceiling begin to form in no particular order. We hear a low rumbling sound, paired with cracking, as if the wooden beams holding up this house are breaking.

At the phrase “home is now broken,” all the furniture slowly fades away.

At the phrase “draw the line,” a bold black line appears, starting at the center of Q3 and slowly stretching to the center of Q1, cutting the room in half.

*But what happens when one person from this home leaves? Does that make it one-third less a home than it originally was? What if it's for a “good” reason? What if the family inside this home will be better supported by their physical absence? Would this compensate for their emotional absence, as well? If the people are the foundation for what makes a house a home, does this mean that this home is now broken? Or is its privilege of being called a home revoked completely? Where do we draw the line?*

After we hear the word “Lines,” thin black lines start forming on the edges where each wall meets the next and where they connect to the ceiling and floor. The timing should be similar to the staggered timing like the walls rising previously, but more random, instead of them appearing in a predictable order. They “drawn” in that they stretch from one start point to an end point, like how the bold line on the floor was formed.

*Lines. Lines separate. Divide. Keep apart. Instead of the walls holding this home together, I now start to see how they separate each room from another. How each of the walls themselves are separated by a solid line. Lines draw boundaries, which is what I should've done to keep myself at a safe distance from everything and everyone else.*

At the beginning of the next sentence, a long fade out of the ceiling and floor begins. As this is occurring, the four walls start to move further away in four respective directions, as if we are standing in the middle of an explosion happening in extreme slow motion.

Every surface of the house should be gone by the end of the phrase “The American Dream.”

The bold line on the floor starts to form a faint white outline and the lines of the wall edges start turning into a greyish white as the walls are drifting away.

*This house now holds people who once were supposed to be the example of what it means to love. I grew up learning from television and movies that glorified the concept of marriage. It's what we're all striving for, right? To meet that one person--our “soulmate”--fall madly in love with them, get married, and start a family of our own. The American Dream. But no one talks about what it's like when life deviates from this all-too-perfect plan.*

At the beginning of “The people we call our parents,” the lines of the wall edges slowly fade. By the end of “who am I supposed to turn to,” the lines should be almost invisible, only noticed if we are really looking for them.

At the phrase “the other one who hasn't physically abandoned,” the parental figure who is still in the house begins to have their colors inverted, turning into something that resembles the negatives of photographs.

*The people we call our parents are the ones we look up to. We learn from them. We trust them. Or at least that's how it's supposed to be, I think. But when one leaves and the other one who hasn't physically abandoned me starts to check out mentally and emotionally, who am I supposed to turn to?*

At “If I see them sitting at the bottom of the stairs,” the inverted parental figure appears stooped at the bottom of a few steps of stairs in Q1. We hear them trying to hold in their sobs and see them with their bodies hunched over, hands covering their face. There are hints of blue smoke/fog particles floating around Q1.

At “If they ask me how I would care,” the inverted parental figure appears, standing tall and looming over us in Q3. We hear an aggressive voice yelling in Cantonese and frustrated groans. They alternate between facing us and pacing across Q3, madly gesticulating. There are hints of red smoke/fog particles floating around Q1.

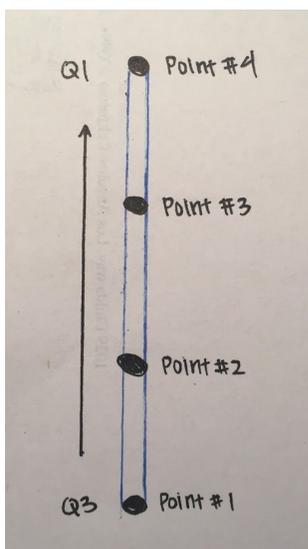
At “Do I make an effort,” the crying and yelling sounds begin to grow in volume and the blue and red particles grow denser and create a swirling motion. The sounds cut and the visuals very suddenly fade away at the end of “meant to stay broken.”

*If I see them sitting at the bottom of the stairs crying, do I try to comfort them and cry with them or do I stay back, stay silent, and pretend I didn't see anything? If they ask me how I would care for my parents in the future and scream at me when I respond with “equally,” do I express how awfully terrified and inadequate I feel or repress reality for now so I can cry about it in solitude later? Do I make an effort to change the situation? Or would I just be trying to fix something that's meant to stay broken?*

At the phrase “I walk this line,” the bold line on the floor, still with the faint white outline, emits a glow of the same yellow as the footsteps from before.

*And so for the next however many years, I walk this line.*

There will be four different points the player walks to in order to trigger the next four lines of narration. Each point will be on the line and emit a swirl of particles, the same yellow as the glow. (Refer to the image below for where each point is located.) Only one point is visible at a time. Point #1 is shown to prompt the player to walk to the location and triggers “This line between wanting to connect” narration, and then, disappears after the narration is over to show Point #2, and so on.



Each time this happens, the four walls that drifted away start to return, reversing the process and drawing them closer as each point is reached. The walls should meet and the ceiling and floor fade in at the end of the phrase “understanding what I need and should do instead.”

The bold line the player is walking along is also slowly disappearing. The parts that we have walked on fade away as we make it to the next point. At the end of the last narration line of this set, the line should be completely gone.

*This line between wanting to connect with and trust other people, and staying wary and protecting myself from potentially getting hurt.*

*Between being honest and saying what's on my mind, and being smart and saying what other people expect and want to hear.*

*Between knowing how family is supposed to be, and knowing that mine could not be further from the picture other people have painted.*

*Between knowing what I want--long for, even--and understanding what I need and should do instead.*

*And as I walk this line and rebuild my life, my reality, I realize that home isn't necessarily a place. It's not a house. It's not even the people inside the house. Home is a feeling. And like all feelings, it's fleeting.*

At the phrase "I can rebuild," all the furniture and the same ambient audio fade back in.

At the phrase "fill it with the memory of my parents," the two parental figures fade back in.

After we hear "Of what home used to be," there is a brief pause (about 3 seconds) before the entire house and the parental figures slowly fade away.

*I can rebuild my childhood home exactly as I remembered it, down to the Panasonic television against the wall and the old fish tank in the corner, and fill it with the memory of my parents when we were still a family, but now, that's no longer home for me. It's exactly what it is: a memory. Of what home used to be.*

At the beginning of "When I tell myself," swirls of yellow particles will appear in a few different spots, random generated. Every time the player walks into a swirl, it disappears and a new swirl will pop up at a new location.

At the end of "I just want to go home," all the particles fade away.

*When I tell myself that I want to go home, I don't actually have a destination in mind. I don't want to go anywhere, really. When I say I want to go home, I want to rid myself of these insecurities. I want to fit in my skin. I want to be happy again. I just want to go home.*