

## On living alone

When I think of the most important things I've done to take care of myself, investing a big chunk of my monthly salary in my own apartment is perhaps the most important.

I've lived alone for the past few years. For a brief stint in NYC, I had room-mates before I swapped a fancy apartment with room-mates for a simple one on my own. It was the best investment I made.

[Durga](#) compares it to the feeling of waking up on a Saturday morning, knowing that you've nowhere to go. I get tremendous sustenance from that solitude, from having a few hours to myself at the end of each day to refill my well, settle back into the rhythms of my psyche and feel whole and connected to myself again.

I push myself through the door sweaty, and laden with bags. I live on the first floor. I have big bay windows and high ceilings. I have a small kitchen, a tiny bathroom. I have my own washing machine - a luxury I appreciate with every load, since living in NYC and carting my smelly clothes around. Since crouching on the bathroom floor in India with a bar of laundry soap, a big pile of washing and a whole array of bugs.

It was a time in my life when I never felt safe. But in my home, I could feel the reverberations of myself within these four walls. In the small daily ephemera, I saw myself reflected. The mustard coloured mugs with chai teabags sitting water logged and spent, lasange bubbling in the oven making the house smell like cheese and joy, the purr of the kettle boiling 6 times a day, padding around in too-small slippers, hot water bottle under my arm. I set it up to support me. I bought a fancy alarm clock that promised to make me up in emotionally soothing ways. I ordered food and was never happier than in the moments after I'd placed the order and was waiting for it to arrive.

I'd come from tough days at work and remember, slowly, incrementally over hours and days, who I am without my work. Who I am when I am alone.

I was travelling a lot too, often to witness trauma that took root in my cells. There was nothing like the relief of coming home to my space. I unpacked straight away, wanting to push the trip out of my brain as quickly as possible, dumping dirty clothes into the wash basket, unrolling the toiletries still in their zip lock bag and putting them away ready for the next trip, gathering the scraps of paper that always seem to accumulate. Running a hot shower, making tea, lighting a candle.

I sank into the rhythms of my space - I am a person who does well with ritual and routine. I filled the kettle before bed and clicked it on first thing in the morning. The first cup of tea fuelled an early morning writing sesh, a hot water bottle on my lap for warmth. I got stuck in my routine sometimes - binning a cauliflower (organic and all) because I lacked the ingenuity to be able to cook something outside the ordinary. I'd have friends for dinner occasionally which was fun, though there was always a sign of relief when the socialising was over and I was left with leftovers and the final drops

of the good wine.

I found comfort in these routines. My space was restorative. It was sacred to me too. A hook up gone wrong haunted these walls for a week, no matter how many candles I lit, hoovers I did, times I aired it out, it still felt contaminated by that. I now know that sage was what I needed.

Living alone removed every ounce of performance from my home life. It gave me a sense of groundedness, of being a part of the world, a space where I could be my full self and that, in this world, is a rare gift. It became "[a form of self-portraiture, of retracing the same lines over and over—of becoming.](#)"

Living alone wasn't just about solitude, it was medicine, it was self care.