

# HEART OF FRIDA COLLECTION



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

## ***The Heart of Frida* Discussion Questions**

Reading the letters, notes and postcards contained in the Heart of Frida collection raises many questions that may be used for discussion in the classroom or gallery.

*The letters are arranged following the same pattern as in the Catalogue (edition M) or the website (frida2007.com).*

### ***Item A*      **Frida's Treasure Box****

When was the box made?

Where was the box made?

Where did Kahlo buy / receive the box?

Why did she sign, date, and localize the box on the inside of the lid?

Why did she scratch F K on the outside of the lid?

Why are the hinges made of pins or paper clips?

Is there any significance to the stain on the bottom of the inside box?

Where is the key to the box?

Why did she decide to create a box of letters?

When did she place the items in the box?

Why did she fold the items in different ways?

Why did she place the Ohio cigarette stamp and the cuff link in the box?

Was there anything else in the box that has been removed by a prior owner?

### ***Item 1*      **Flames of Passion****

Why did she burn a hole with her cigarette?

What is the meaning of the funeral bow?

Why did she cross out the words on the 8<sup>th</sup> line and the 12<sup>th</sup> line?

Why did she mean by past and present?



What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

***Item 2*      **The Earthquake****

What is the significance of the cigarette burn?

Why did she choose this kind of stationery to send herself letters?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

***Item 3*      **The Toad****

What was her mood when she drew this?

When was this item drawn?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to draw this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?



**Item 4 Toad Faces**

Is this a friendly letter?

Why did she choose this kind of stationery?

Why does she seem happier in the larger moon face than in the smaller one?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 5 The Love pond**

Why did she choose to be a pollywog on the lily pad?

What is the meaning of the bull's eye design at the place near her heart?

What is the meaning of the water drops?

What is the meaning of the bar across the center with the blue pins?

What is the meaning of the purple circles at the top?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?



**Item 6      Merciless Time**

What is the meaning of the question mark after March?

Why did she call this merciless time?

Why did she choose these three months?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 7      Frida's loneliness**

Why was it folded this way?

Why did she use pen and ink?

Why did she choose the image of the seaport?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 8      No Way Out**

Why is she lost in a maze?

Why did she consider that there is no way out of Allende 52?



Does Allende 52 refer to the Blue House?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 9      On Being a Tomb**

Why did she choose the pyramid as the symbol for her tomb?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

Was this written before or after her amputation?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 10      Frida's Tangled Hair**

Why did she choose this stationery?

Why did she think that Diego liked her better with braids than in more modern hairstyle?

What is the meaning of the squiggle above the word Diego?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?



What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 11      The Sad Gypsy**

Why was this stationery selected?

Why is she willing to forgive him when he is so treacherous and unfaithful?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

Does the reference to her being in a wheel chair mean that this took place after her amputation?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 12      Naked soul**

Why did she use the image of the fish for herself?

Why does she refer to Lord Tutuhuan?

Is Diego the image of Lord Tutuhuan?

Why does she refer to her multi colored huipil?

Why does she think that Diego is the UNIVERSE?

Why does she wait for Diego when he is unfaithful to her?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?



What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 13      The Broken Cork**

Do both curves represent her backbone?

Why did she connect cork screw with broken cork?

Is Diego the cork screw and Frida the broken cork?

Why does the nightgown make her itch?

Why did she connect up these words?

Is there any connection between the words in the first column?

Is there any connection between the words in the second column?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 14      Diego's Tales and Fables**

Why did she not put in the address on the envelope as she did in the other ones?

Why was this stationery selected?

Why did she use the penis and vagina as the flowers on the plant?

What are the dots that come out of the speaker representing?

Why did she choose these flowers to come out of Diego's mouth?





Why didn't she send this letter to Diego?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 15      Frida's Logic of Her World**

Is there any significance to the dashes outside the poem?

Why did she use this form for transmitting her ideas?

Why did she connect up these words?

Why did she address this about Theos?

Why did she start out in such a clinical way and end up in such an emotional way?

Is there any connection between the words in the first column?

Is there any connection between the words in the second column?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 16      Spare me, Diego!**

Is there a better translation for *Cuelgame el milgro Diego*?



What is the background of *Hang me a miracle*?

What is the significance of the sword through the heart?

Why did she replace the traditional arrow of love with the sword?

Why does she hate at Diego so much?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 17      Diego the Fat Amphibian**

Why did she sign her name in this peculiar way?

Why did she give the frog a red eye?

Why did she characterize herself as a blue fish?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 18      The Toothless Lion Lies**

Why was this stationery used?

Why didn't send it to Diego?



Why does she represent herself as a flamingo?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

***Item 19*      *The Queen Bee and the Maguey Juice Wasp***

Why did this item go onto the reverse side?

Do the two cigarette burn holes by her legs represent her amputation?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

Note that this was probably written after her amputation because of the reference to the "The Queen lost a leg and her Kingdom" and ... "without a leg".

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

***Item 20*      *Wasting Away***

Why does she have the address above her name on the envelope, contrary to the other envelopes of this type?

Why did she choose this stationery?

What event triggered this letter?



**Item 21      Diego, The Useless Amphibian**

- Why did she use the tomato sauce imagery?
- What was her mood when she wrote this?
- When was this item written?
- When was this item placed in the box?
- What event prompted her to write this item?
- Why did she place this item in the box?
- Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 22      Fatuous Fires**

- Was this letter written after the amputation?
- What is the meaning of leather belly?
- What was her mood when she wrote this?
- When was this item placed in the box?
- What event prompted her to write this item?
- Why did she place this item in the box?
- Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 23      My Great Companion**

- Mar....iquita* suggests marijuana? Could it also refer to Mary Henderson her friend in Paris?
- Why did she cross it all out?
- What did she not want Diego to look at it?
- Why is her eye all red?
- Is the green image in the middle a cigarette? And if so, a marijuana cigarette?
- What is the significance of CUNI if this has to do with marijuana?



What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

***Item 24*      **The Chimera****

This was probably written in 1938 when she was in Paris.

Why didn't she mail it?

Why did she keep it in the box?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

***Item 25*      **Comrades!****

What is the significance of the cigarette burn hole?

Why did she remain so loyal to Stalin?

Does the red hammer and sickle refer to the emblems of the communist state in Russia?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?



Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 26 Comrades II**

When was this written?

To what do the months Nov Dec January refer (Probably 1953 and 1954)

Why did she use these colors?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 27 The Revolution**

This was written after her leg was amputated in August 1953

What prompted her to write these letters?

Why did she dress Diego (if that is him) as a clown?

Why did she see herself as a doll?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 28 Stalin's Funeral Bow**

This was written on or after March 4<sup>th</sup> 1953, the date of Stalin's death.



What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 29      The Spinal Column**

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 30      Leg-Little Leg**

This was written either just before or just after her amputation in August of 1953

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 31      My X-Ray**

Why does she think that she's screwed up rather than sick?

Why does she use Chromofore as the author?

Did she create the back bone by painting one side and then folding?



What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 32 My Back-Bone is so Bad**

Why did she draw only the body and not the head?

Are the three lines across the abdomen her corset she had to wear?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 33 My Mutilated Body**

Why did she select the kingdom of Mictlan as her image?

Why did she cross out the drawing of her head at the top of the letter?

Why did she have such virulent feelings toward Diego?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?





Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 34 Tap Tap**

This must have been written after August 1953 after the amputation.

Why did she select Sadjá Topil as the guardian of the door for this?

Why is there a cigarette burn hole in it?

Is the Tap Tap the noise her wooden leg made when she walked?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

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**Item 35 I Did not Win**

Why did she select a butterfly as the image for her foot?

This was probably written after her amputation.

Why is part of the letter crossed out?

Is she the moon face on the left?

And if so where are the eyebrows?

What are the two images on the right?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?



Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?

**Item 36      Frida is Dead**

What is the meaning of the cross out on line 8?

Why did she separate Coyoacan and use Diego on the upper spaces?

What was her mood when she wrote this?

When was this item written?

When was this item placed in the box?

What event prompted her to write this item?

Why did she place this item in the box?

Why didn't she show this item to others? Or did she?