“Museum of Civilization” assignment

Overview:
In *Station Eleven*, the survivors leave objects in an *ad hoc* “museum of civilization” that represent their lost pasts—there are objects that no longer have use value in the new world, but to which they are feel a connection and mourn nonetheless.

This assignment asks you to imagine what object you would give to the museum. What object can you imagine carrying with you at the end of the world, only gradually realizing that it no longer has a place in your life or that is no longer viable as a useful object because of the changes in technology and culture that the book posits post-pandemic?

Instructions:
The assignment has two main parts.

1. **Personal reflection**—write a brief (1-2 page) reflection about your choice, explaining why you selected this item to project yourself into the future. You may write this essay as a straight piece (that is, in your own voice today) or speculative piece (that is, in a voice you imagine for a future museum professional talking about your choice in the third person).

2. **Curatorial work**—imagine that you are a museum intern who has been tasked with updating the museum’s records for this item and getting it ready for display. The scenario: the object was left by a survivor of a disease pandemic, 5-20 years after his/her society collapsed, when the museum for which you work was just a back room in a settlement. Gradually, a full-fledged museum emerged and now, a century or two after the object you’ve selected was deposited in the museum, it’s time to put it on display.

   a. Curate the item: decide how the item should be displayed. Does it need a stand, a platform? Is it small and therefore needs magnification of some sort? Should it be displayed open? In front of a mirror so that two sides can be glimpsed? Should it be in a case to protect it, or out in the open, inviting the public to interact with it?

   b. Placard for the exhibit: write a SHORT explanatory placard that will give the museum-goer enough details to inform and intrigue (no more than 150 words).

   c. Catalog entry: Write a more extended treatment of the item (500-750 words) for the exhibition catalog that will accompany the exhibit. Imagine a voice from the future that is does not have first-hand experience with the object, explaining and analyzing it to similar future folks. The entry should tell (the future us) what the object teaches us. You may want to comment on the original owner’s biography, the original use of the object, and any uses to which it was put immediately post-pandemic. You may want to include photographs, maps, or images of other objects to help explain and situate this one.