

# DISPATCHES FROM THE GAMING CLOSET

AN ANTHOLOGY  
OF EXPERIMENTAL  
WRITING AND  
REFLECTION ON  
ARTGAMES AND  
CULTURE



DISPATCHES FROM THE GAMING CLOSET

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## DISPATCHES FROM THE GAMING CLOSET



# INTRODUCTION

*SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY*

*+ Wren Tiffany*

**SH:** When you think about what kind of conversation happened amongst this group of artists, how would you describe it? What did it feel like?

**WT:** The energy was something like an after school film club. People who didn't know each other before became friends—or, like a unit—afterwards because of this shared interest [in games.] The biggest thing I noticed over the course of the semester was that they all started to think about this activity they love a lot, that maybe they didn't think of "critically," or as nuanced of a pastime as they thought. I really noticed a shift in perception. Many conversations were happening for folks for the first time; separating the concept of play from the games themselves, or as objects and software programs, helped them understand their specific interests, what connects them to others (broadly) and what play means. It felt like fleece.

I didn't expect to start thinking and talking about what it meant to be in my own family unit or how we communicated because of the games I grew up playing with them. There's a lot of strategy that is involved in dealing with the dynamics of people you're playing with. I learned a lot about the personalities of each of the students via the games that they were drawn to. Some of them would want to play more solo games and some of them needed intense strategy and a challenge to be engaged – what they need from a given game says a lot about who they are as a person. There are aspects of games that mirror real life that they get to explore while playing some of these games and there are others that are full of deep fantasy. When I think of this cohort, I think of the color blue – blues and greens and maybe a little purple.

**SH:** What moments of our time together stand out for you ?

**WT:** I learned the most about them when we went to this arcade, Dawnstar Games in Scott's Edition here in Richmond. I got to see them in the wild. We split up but stayed close, as this "unit." Some wanted to play digitally and some stuck together to play tabletop games. It was a chance to do what we talk about in class but in real time. People were literally picking up game boxes from the shelves and talking about their experiences with them.

One student showed me their Pokémon card collection and they had so much pride in what they'd built. I took a photo of one of the cards and sent it to my sister who likes Pokémon cards. She sent a text message back saying, "beautiful." We don't have the closest relationship, but that was a moment that felt really good and that wouldn't have happened without this student – or this particular class.

There was also a moment where I sat down at the Rock Band drums and I put on the same version I had growing up (the Beetle's version;) one of the students sat down and played the guitar with me for, like, three songs. At Dawnstar there's a big projector on the wall where the Guitar Hero is set up and it felt like the entire room became my childhood basement.

When I think about that experience, I think of warm, a red-orange-pink spectrum, and even though I don't like to say the word "nostalgia," I felt it. We were all connected in this network of play and digitized muscle memory.

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## GLIMPSES OF THE MAYOR'S DIARY

*Banana Duck*

*These are snips of diary entries from the Mayor of Pinwheel village.*

3/27 5:42 pm

### To-do list

- look at supermarket
- Collect ore for x2 sell
- Fish?
- Talk to villagers



I ran into a beaver named Phineas on my front lawn, Never seen him before. He looks like a Boy Scout leader. He gave me a badge called "Village Representative" because I... run this town? Glad to see visitors in our humble town. We don't get them often. The first task of the day is to figure out what's worth double the price at Retail so I can make extra money today. On the way over, Elise stops me and says she's moving away and says "Let's have fun till I leave." Yea...sure. She's so backhanded with her compliments. Elise's vibe is NOT needed here in Pinwheel City. Today's double-price item is...Headwear? Odd.. choice. As I wander around doing my daily rock breaking, Bob finds me and asks me to return an item to Elise for him..like do it yourself (I didn't tell him that and I still did it.) I spoke to Cookie as well and she asked me if I've seen Sterling and Shari being BFF's! Something'll be looking out for. Cute. :)

**3/28 10:34 am**



I don't remember anything after that...I Woke up back in my bed, must've passed out. As per usual, Sterling is walking around his yard next to mine. He wants to show me his gains mansion (his house). It's the fanciest, most colonial, and least gym bro house ever. I moved on and gathered a few things to offer to recycle for money at retail. Bugs are coming out more today. Spring has sprung! Gave Big Top some fruit for his scury and he gave me a T-Shirt he doesn't wear anymore! This town is barter central!

Later, I went to the newly expanded supermarket and finally got a slingshot. I've missed so many balloon presents. Sigh. As I was shaking trees, wasps came out and my net got caught on a branch! I needed to stop by the supermarket AGAIN for some meds to reduce swelling...which I never ended up doing.

**3/29 2:19 pm**

Biff's birthday is today!  
Elise moves out tomorrow heh heh.



Retail's Shopkeeper Reese and Cyrus, her carpenter husband, woke up! Finally, have access to customizing furniture. Started construction for a campsite, gonna get some more visitors to our humble town! Hopefully, someone cool will replace Elise! As I'm running around in my new hat, I get stung by wasps.. again. At 6, I get ready for Biff's birthday party! I've gotten him an office locker as a gift... I then proceeded to forget his gift and ended up having to give him the watering can I had on hand...Awkward...He still loved it though! Now I gotta get myself a new watering can. After hours of hard work, I finished construction on the campsite. Tomorrow is exciting!

3/30 2:43 pm



Biff sent me a letter. "...Thanks for the cool present! I can tell you picked it out just for me!..." If only he knew...The town noticeboard reports a meteor shower tonight! The campsite is all built and ready for visitors, unfortunately nobody today. I checked if Elise was in boxes ready to move, she was! Wahoo! I did lots of fishing and rock breaking until dawn, then there was the meteor shower!! I wished upon many stars...it was so gorgeous.

3/31 1:58 pm



I checked my mailbox and I got a letter in the mail from Wishy the Star. It says that they'll grant my wishes I made last night! I've also gotten a farewell letter from Elise. Nana calls me Po Po and wants me to get her a pear to satisfy her pear cravings. Also ran into Apollo (he's wearing such a cute duck shirt.) He told me about Nana saying he needed more pizzazz and asked me for advice, so I gave him a balloon dresser I got from a balloon. Going up to the shops to look at today's selections. I ran into an old villager friend, Phoebe! I didn't remember her at all! So that was cool. I accidentally bought some glasses I already have...Ugh... gonna have to sell them. I don't have much space in my house. I need to put money towards my next house renovation instead of town developments for now. I keep tripping over myself today, seriously, I don't know why...As I'm laying in bed I realize that I completely forgot to get Nana her pear! I'm evil!!

4/1 4:38 pm



It's April Fools Day! The cherry blossoms started to bloom! Went into the office but Isabel kicked me out to enjoy today's festivities (pranks)! A blank-faced clown cat named Blanca is in my village.. she says she's going to change herself to look like someone in this town, and pay them a surprise visit? Creepy!

All my villagers tried to fool me!

Bob: Did you hear the town currency is changing? We're going to use spice cake instead of Bells! 3/10 okay..

Cookie: (not a prank) told me she uses her watering can as a lunchbox LOL 10/10

Biff: " We will have a sports event here in Pinwheel and it'll be held in an inflatable stadium!" 2/10 super unreal.

Big top: "I've been meaning to tell you this for a while, but...I'm actually a spy for another town. " 8/10

Nana said, "It's nook day! and Tom Nook (a greedy home retail store manager) will do a dance if you purchase anything over 500 bells...I wanted to believe her!! 10/10

Blanca impersonated Shari. They competed with telling me personal info only the real Shari would know. If I got it right I would win a photo of the villager for my wall. Had to really dig into my memory to remember what personal info was the right answer. I got Shari's photo, but I spaced out and got Bob's imposter wrong! I failed to get his picture. I'm so sad!

4/2 4:24 pm



The pink trees are soooo pretty. Redd is on my island, ugh. He's a fraudulent underground art salesman. Over at ReTail, Today's double-the-price item is...Sea snail shell!?! Is this ethical!?!? Chatted with Sterling and he says he thinks something's brewing between Cookie and Bob! I do usually find them together on the beach...Drama!! Other than that, today was very laid back. I Dug up some fossils and bought some art (That I made sure wasn't forged) from Redd. Bought some more stuff at the shops knowing very well I don't have space for it!!! I've forgotten about directing my funds to upgrading my storage. A visitor showed up at the campsite. She's so cool!! Her name is Merengue and she's a rhino. She looks like a slice of cake and is so darling, I can't wait for her to join us in Pinwheel!

4/3 6:02 pm



The first thing I did was check the double-price item of the day, Scallop shells. Still...IS THIS OKAY?? Cookie wants me to fish her an OARFISH...A DEEP SEA FISH. WHAT!? Tried to catch some fish and got...a bass...and a snapper...sorry Cookie.

The town billboard says all stock in the supermarket is half price from 4 till closing!!! This is not helpful for my spending habits. Sarahah gave me a surprise visit today!! It was great to see her after so long without her visiting. As I was wondering, Shari ran up to me and saw I had a few pill bugs in a terrarium. She asked if I could trade them for her sword! Heck ya!

Before I headed home I picked some fruit and dug up some fossils...the museum better take these. I was tending to my garden and noticed some of my flowers were starting to wilt. Hopefully, more water helps :(. Other than that I'm trying to make some more bucks toward house renovation. Better yet, Merengue's getting ready to move in. Yay!

# Navigation and Reimagination Through Games

*Bella Frank*

The presence of a video game often strays from the center of its world, from its display, gameplay, or the experience as a whole; it follows you around as a memory of itself. This experience is an investment and entanglement with the sounds, the visual language, the pattern of the systems present, the tangible things you understand as you spend more and more time in game spaces. This experience of play is oftentimes to the same satisfaction of play in the real world. Your life is enriched by the time spent in this space, you are able to teach yourself and coordinate in ways you might not be able to outside of game spaces.

Over the past few months I've sunk over thirty-five hours into the game DeadCells, an indie roguelite with a focus on the repetition of death and fast paced action. You play as a failed experiment puppeteering a dead body, fighting your way through enemies and bosses alike. The aim of the game is to survive each room, each boss, and make your way to the end. The term roguelite refers to specific design elements such as permadeath and procedural map generation, in most cases being more forgiving than a roguelike. As you play a timer follows you around in the far right corner, and pauses in safe spaces between levels. The timer's presence urges you to move faster, but loading screens give you messages like, "Slow and steady is the key to a successful run!" When I began the game I was full of external anxieties, if I was good enough to beat a game like this. When beginning, I was clunky and often put myself in harm's way. The more I played the more I was able to calm myself down, as that happened the gameplay became easier. I spent less time anxious about upcoming things and focused on my character's

placement in relation to the enemies. I thought differently about the game, there was more focus and deliberation in the way I played. Progression started to become seamless and I was able to make advancements. Spending days worth of time in any world cements its presence in your life. With the scope of games these days it is easy to find a space that works for you. Though with DeadCells specifically, I wanted to choose a game I knew I was going to struggle with.

A defining moment of my playthrough includes a final boss facing the queen of the castle. The castle that forever looms in the background, what you've been climbing toward for the duration of the game. Reaching this boss is already tough in its own right, but getting through the fight is another story. Before you duel the queen you are subject to something of a boss rush in the room before. The previous path takes place in a tall lighthouse, you climb and fight three bosses at the same time. When you reach the top you are thrown into the fight with the queen. It's fast paced and considerably harder than the rooms you've faced before. During this fight I used up my second life and slammed through all of my healing flasks. I knew I wouldn't be able to defeat her on my first try, I saw my run ending as the queen pushed me further toward the edge of the field. I jumped off, relaxed, and prepared myself for death and rebirth. Instantly after I fall the queen grabs my body from the pit and reanimates me into battle. I was dumbstruck and ill prepared for this moment, it caught me completely off guard. I fought the queen as best I could after that, losing my life once again, but the experience of that battle stuck with me long after. My reality of the game was shifted, the rules I knew changed in an instant. I never expected a character to pull me out of death to fight them, up until this point the individuals are secondary to the running and fighting you have to endure over and over again. This moment solidified the truth that the reality of the world is palpable, it is not defined by my understanding of it. There is so much to be learned and explored in game spaces.

There is one game in particular that was foundational to my personal, hands on experience with games. ThatGameCompany partnered with one-of-a-kind composer Austin Wintory to create the masterpiece Journey. An indie adventure game set in a vast desert, all the while your a mountain looms in the background.

This is your goal. With a game like Journey the intersection of isolation and connection comes through pungently. Some playthroughs you might not encounter a single player, your only companions being various creatures made of your same cloth. At the end of each chapter you can catch glimpses of mirages, silhouettes walking in the far distance. They egg you to seek what company might be in the barren desert. As you play, you come to understand that you can only have one other companion at all times. You climb towers, hide from spying creatures, scale a mountain, and do it all over again. Journey was the first game I beat as a child and it was monumental for me. I had spent so much time slugging through games before this, teaching myself how to read, barely understanding what's happening, losing hope in my abilities. Journey was a game without words or markers, it favored exploration and connection above all else. I could interact with others and... journey... through this beautiful world at my own pace. My immersion with this world flooded into my daily life, I became obsessed with the artwork and the music. Each space was beautiful and enveloping. My dream as a child was to live in Journey, it's wonderful that this space existed as an extension of my curiosity with life; all I wanted to do day by day was be immersed in this world. That obsession was paired with the reality that this world only existed through my screen, but Journey was there any time I wanted to boot it up.

For the entirety of my life I've had other people in mind when playing video games. I grew up learning about games by, of course, playing them; but I would get most of my information by watching my friends and family play games. My father was the first person to show me what a game was, and from a young age I wanted to do just as he did. My coordination often failed me, I would watch my dad for hours and awe at all the excitement on screen. This influx of information gave me the drive to learn and play on my own. It was frustrating because I was small, uncoordinated, and easily distractible. Though the sheer wonder of the games kept me immersed in so many different worlds, even ones I knew nothing about. I was always considerably interested in other people playing games, sharing experiences and engaging in play. When I would boot up old systems and play them by myself

lonesome it never felt the same as having someone there to share it with. In a lot of ways my time with games was intertwined with grief and loneliness, facing the reality of having to do things by myself. I learned many things by myself, and fell in love with countless worlds. It is a bittersweet experience to do things alone, but it was a sharp reality I saw by myself, a reality I learned for myself. Over time my loneliness was fed by the love I had for the games in the first place.

I saw video games as a space for me to connect with my family, and with friends as I grew older. It was difficult to be a young girl in these male dominated spaces, my eagerness to learn or befriend was often looked down upon and dismissed. There was a level of understanding and ability you had to have in order to be comfortable in these spaces. Nonetheless my interest in games was stronger than the anxieties that held me back. I inserted myself into spaces that weren't necessarily for me, but they were spaces I wanted to be a part of. I played many multiplayer games, itching to make friends and explore together. I was able to expand this space through watching let's plays on YouTube. Seeing games I wasn't able to buy, or groups of friends exploring strange planets. I distinctly remember spending hours in my dad's office consuming many-a-videos on G-Mod, Minecraft, Cube World, all sorts of things. I would come out running to him, telling him about the games I've found, asking if I can somehow get them. I would always be turned down, but even without owning these games there was still a space for me to enjoy them online, to watch other people have fun and experience a part of that world. Without these spaces my experience with games could have been drastically different, and I imagine myself more likely to be turned away by anxieties.

Games will always subvert your expectations, sometimes in something so small as a glitch. The subversions come from your understanding of reality, your time in the real world. Shifting to that game space gives you an entirely new hold on an entirely new world. My time with games has shown me ways to form connections both through knowledge and networks, I could understand things in ways that weren't possible before. The game world shows you realities that exist outside of our scope of understanding. In an attempt to escape that scope, you

draw yourself into a space you expect to resemble reality, but oftentimes you find things you would never expect. When I look at older games, like Chrono Trigger or Shadow of the Colossus, I am often sad these spaces aren't explored as much. My life is interwoven with games and play, and these experiences are fundamental to my being. When I sit and think about the speck of time I take up in our Earth's grand history, I marvel at the ability to be here at the same time as Wind Waker, Outer Wilds, Abzû, DeadCells, countless titles I could fill this essay with. The memory of these games will exist with me forever. Instead of games existing as spaces of interest and collaboration, they have shifted to a space of mainstream commodity. Gaming has surpassed film and television, it has shifted to a new center of being.

Masses of people tune into things like game awards, or console showcases, excited for new installations and announcements. In modern day we see corporations taking games, ideas, influence, and forming them to their liking. The era of video games has shifted indefinitely, from interest and fun to products for mass consumption. Regardless, games are cemented as spaces for growth and exploration forever. They grow with culture and technology as I and many others have. We will forever know games for what they have given us, what they have taught us, and the memories they leave us with.

## **Answer to my Amalgam Community**

*Bibby Diaz (Inferno)*

Games are often introduced to children by their peers or directly by their parents before they begin pre-school. The purpose of a game is to entertain. Games are a way for kids to escape the distractions of school and work without worrying about the consequences of reality. When playing a new game, it is like trying to eat a new food for the first time. This foreign food could either be an addiction or a disaster in the taste of its quality. The freshness and its unfamiliarity opens a new possibility of wonderness toward foods. As an example, the quality of video games can be the taste of its addiction or devastation, depending on how they are presented. The way in which I was introduced to video games gave me new opportunities to develop an unhealthy addiction to it. The unhealthy attachment I developed to video games as a child has allowed me to expand the wonders of my imagination to many of the games I had played growing up.

In 3rd grade, I encountered gaming when I was hanging out with my best friend, whom I had met in class during the first week of school. The first time I saw him, I was an awkward kid staring at him as I had never seen anyone similar to me before in terms of skin complexion. He was one of my first best friends who introduced me to gaming. It turned out that we both lived in the same neighborhood at the time where we both grew up. I recollect visiting him everyday after school to hang out with him and the other kids around our neighborhood. In my memory, he brought out his system for the first time when I went to his house, it surprised me as I wasn't familiar with the system he had shown. The two LCD dual screens, the touch screen and its

bronze color clamshell design blew my mind at the time. In front of me was a tiny grey block cartridge with a picture of a racing logo and a description of the game written in white, grey, and red text. Mario Kart DS is written alongside the logo in these colors. Before I was introduced to any other electronics, video games were non-existent in the radar of my timeline for my family and I, as we were only aware of TVs and DVDs we had owned. In my view, video games are more interactive than television or film, since video games offer interactivity while TV and film present viewing experiences. My perception of the difference between film and video games was so strange as video games allowed me to take control of the environment through the input device, enabling me to involve myself in it. I was drawn into the game by the influence of my surroundings by selecting characters and by playing through the grand prix. It was very surreal for me to be able to hold a handheld console for the first time from my best friend. Initially, it has brought out an unhealthy addiction to the world of gaming, specifically to Nintendo. It is arguably the basis of anyone's childhood experience with video games.

Nintendo games laid a foundation for me to understand what gaming is about through my perspective of what fun means to me. My definition of fun can be described as something pleasurable and enjoyable that brings me joy. A lot of times, it involves activities that are meant to be lighthearted and entertaining for everyone. The ideas from Nintendo have helped me understand the values of the foundation in a sense, and those ideas have influenced my enjoyment of the games I love. Since the company's main focus is to create unique experiences that bring joy to many players, this is what the company aims for. I was able to gain a better understanding of the background and development process of a game and how a company focuses on entertainment versus quantity in their games. I saw how much care is put into many of these games to ensure they are enjoyable while also bringing a community together, just like how they brought my best friend and my neighborhood friends closer together while we played together. It has been several years since

I felt those same memories as an adult, and I crave them once more.

Having been introduced to video games by my childhood best friend, I have remained loyal to one game ever since I was a child. There is a game called Splatoon, specifically the in-game events called "Splatfest" throughout that series that have made it even more enjoyable to me in bringing those sought out feelings of communities. The game in the whole series can be summarized as a third player shooter game where you dominate a gamemode called "Turf Wars" which allows the players to ink the map with your own color. Winners are determined by which team covers the most of the map with ink. It is possible for players to cover enemy ink with their own ink, since they can swim and hide in the same ink color. It does not matter if a single player is not the best at the game, every drop of ink counts. The more ink that is spread across the map, the better the mobility of the two teams. There are different game modes throughout the series, known as "Ranked Battles", which include intense battles featuring Splat Zones, Tower Control, Rainmaker, and Clam Blitz. There is also a fashionable customization option for your main character called "Gears" with its own abilities to help players in combat. There are options for weapons ranging from a regular gun like many shooter games to unique concepts of weapon choices from a Paint Roller, Paint Buckets, Umbrellas, and many more. On top of that, there is a single player campaign throughout the series that will help learn mechanics of the game like a tutorial which unlock some fresh gears. Across the series, there are monthly updates which allow players to join together in a community to play exclusive modes including Salmon run and Splatfest. Splatfest means so much to me in terms of how players decide to pick one theme of a topic to debate where it allows many to play on the night time version of existing stages. The fest ends with a reward of Sea Snails, which can be used on gear to expand slots for abilities or reroll. Matches can be won with different advantages based on your gear.

To further explain why Splatfest as a mode brings so much excitement is due to the fact that it offers to join one of two or three causes and compete to be the ruler of their thoughts on

the questions posed. As part of a team, competing in Splatfest Battles alongside your teammates and ink the most turf to win is engaging. The more matches a player wins the more it'll mean to achieve ultimate victory by proving the best ultimate answer. Many of these themes can include silly topics such as; Which is most important to you: love versus money versus fame or would you rather travel to the past or to the future? It brings players across the world to compete into these debates ultimately seeing what team will be the correct team from the questions posed. I would remember putting in so many hours into the first and second games in the series from these events as it brought out the competitiveness and communities. Even to this day, I would often debate with my friends about which theme would be the correct answer whenever there is a question posed. The unhealthy attachment I developed towards these events allowed me to explore different aspects of the game. This includes the characters, the story told, the game play, and so much more.

Each game of the series so far has to come to an end eventually. This means each title of the series had their own final Splatfest events. The main point of these final events is to engage the fans of the game to compete for the final time. Whoever wins for the final time in one of the teams can affect the future installments for the plot of the story mode of the next game. The first game of the series introduced the final Splatfest between two idols named Callie and Marie who ran these in-game events. It was interesting to watch it happen as these two cousins developed issues between each other after the festival was over prior to Splatoon 2's announcement through the official channel on Nintendo's website. After Marie's victory, her cousin, Callie, went missing after she had lost the final festival. It sparks Marie to look out for her disappearance in finding her, which is why is helping the main protagonist in the second game of the series in the single player campaign mode. Similar to the first series, the second title of the game also followed in a similar fashion to the plot for the next game. It brought another issue between two of the main characters of the second game named Pearl and

Marina. This time the theme was dictated for the third installment of the series after the winning team, Chaos, has taken the lead versus Order. The third installment of the series introduces the amalgamation of different factions of music, style, and fashion to name a few examples. It explores the apocalyptic nature of the themes Chaos and Order of how the world passing in real time affects the series. It is interesting to see how the development of these final festivals can shape the next installment of the series by bringing in the community to face each other for the questions being posed.

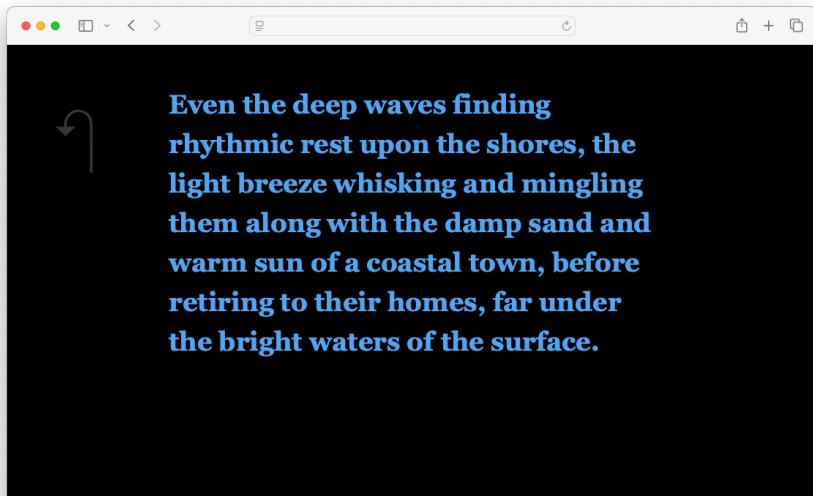
As a whole I am thankful for the opportunity to have met my best friend at the time in introducing me to video games. As it allowed me to find my own interests in games especially for Splatoon. This game has been a part of my life throughout many years for its charm to allow myself to grow as an individual. It has brought a community to me, which I had felt like I had lost years ago after not contacting my best friend for a couple of years after high school. It gave me a purpose in yearning for those same experiences and excitements when I was first introduced to the gaming world. Splatfest in each of its series has its unique characteristic in itself as the in-game world runs in real time throughout the development of its story from these festivals. The unhealthy attachment I have developed to this game in itself should honestly be checked by a doctor in itself. I eventually should reach out to my best friend at the time to see if he is interested in hanging out with me to play video games again.

## NPSee

### *Chazzie!*

NPSee is a narrative fiction game built in Twine. Here's a description from Chazzie!

*This game explores the world of one NPC and their interactions with a main, playable character. From the lack of control to scripted dialogue, you must find a way to gain "Sentient Points" and break free from this predestined prison!"*



**Even the deep waves finding  
rhythmic rest upon the shores, the  
light breeze whisking and mingling  
them along with the damp sand and  
warm sun of a coastal town, before  
retiring to their homes, far under  
the bright waters of the surface.**

# Doom 3 and What Doom Means to You

*Christopher Elszy*

Doom was a catalyst for a changing tide in the world of games. It brought a new form of extremity into gaming from its devilish imagery, big guns, metal soundtrack, and tough 90s attitude. The game also pushed cutting edge technology that brought IBM PCs. To their knees with pseudo-3D graphics, fast movement, bright colors, and online multiplayer. If there were to be a follow up to Doom, it had to some-how be as boundary pushing as it was and then some.

It also is one of the most discussed and debated games ever released. Players took different things from playing it, like its place in video game history, its excellent high octane combat design, its blood pumping heavy metal soundtrack, its macabre and boundary pushing art, and its atmosphere. As gaming entered the 2000s, blowing up demons had become commonplace, and darker, even more boundary pushing titles like Silent Hill, Resident Evil and Grand Theft Auto pushed extremity in games to new heights. No longer were there pixelated, colorful demons on Mars as the threatening monsters. Now the real monsters were zombies in the city, a cursed town, and the player's reckless actions.

The genre Doom pioneered, the first person shooter, had been evolving and growing upon its own foundation. Half Life brought dietetic storytelling with a more linear, but carefully hidden sequence of events the player traversed through. Medal of Honor brought players into World War 2 and tried to be a historical recreation of battles in history. Goldeneye brought the shooter to consoles, then Halo set the standard for console controls, and made online multiplayer more accessible on that platform.

If developers id Software wanted to push boundaries, they had to go further than all of the games listed above. Doom 3, released in 2004 for the PC had many things to prove. What would Doom be in the 2000s? What would Doom 3 do to change the first person shooter? Would fans appreciate Doom 10 years after its original release. And finally, what did Doom mean to people back then, and today?

Doom 3 was revealed in 2001 at Mac World to an enthusiastic crowd. As programmer and id Software founder John Carmack got onto the sage headed by Steve Jobs, he had to show Doom 3's biggest selling point, a unified lighting model. Real-time lighting was a Holy Grail for game developer and real time graphics programmers, and John Carmack figured out how to get it done. Using a technique called Stencil Shadow Volumes, where a mesh is generated from light sources, separating lit pixels from dark pixels, Carmack showed a 3D world not seen before, and it was running on a now quaint Geforce 3 video card on an old version of Mac Os. The look of Doom 3 shown at the demo had blue flickering lights, rusted metal, and blocky characters, with detailed texture work. It wowed developer and gamers at the time, but the game was still not ready to be show with gameplay. That would not happen till later.

Doom 3 would have a proper gameplay demo at E3 2002. This new Doom looked very different from the Doom many fans were used to. There was an intro cutscene with voice acting and animation explaining why the Doom Marine was on Mars, player movement was slow, the player had to reload their weapon, the monsters had realistic looking textures, and moved very life like, the devilish imagery seemed more threatening than ever with sacrifices on pentagrams, and dark voiced in the hallways, and the Doom Marine met his end in a brutal fashion to a Hellknight enemy.

While this may have been impressive to many a gamer at the time, there was skepticism if this Doom game was going to meet the high standards of players, especially because an equally and potentially more impressive technical showpiece title also

debuted. Half Life 2 with its physics engine, and realistic facial animation, was releasing the same year! Doom 3 finally launched on August 3rd 2004, to acclaim from critics, but a mixed response from fans, which only subsided in recent years.

Your enjoyment of Doom 3 really depends on what Doom means to you, and what aspects of the Doom experience you enjoy the most. Is Doom a high octane, run and gun shooter where the action is paramount? Is Doom a showcase of transgressive devilish imagery to craft a threatening atmosphere? Id Doom a strategic game where you must dodge projectiles and every weapon had its utility against certain enemies? Is Doom a technical showpiece of what is possible on PCs at the time? Is Doom a canvas for creative programmers and artist to create interesting experience for other players to engage in? Doom 3 does not focus on many of these things.

Doom 3 is high octane in a very different way than the original Dooms are. Its not a very strategic game, as most of the weapons function the same. Its higher production values and high bar of entry made it hard to mod, so it was not a popular canvas like the prior entries in the series. However Doom 3 shines when it comes to its atmosphere and visuals. While aspects from prior games were present, it Software went in a new direction and focused more on atmosphere and technical presentation.

The original Dooms had a great atmosphere with immersive presentation for their time, and Doom 3 is no exception. Doom 3 is a stunning game even today. While some aspects of the visuals may have not aged that well, such as stilted or underwhelming animations, Doom 3 excels with its atmosphere and immersive world. The world of Doom 3 is dark, with most of the environment cloaked in the signature stencil shadows, with some flashing lights. Textures have rust, blood on the floors, normal maps provide interesting surface detail to objects, and specular maps make the world have a certain sheen to them, depending on said specular maps.

The demons all deviate from the look of the original Doom monsters and adapted to a new 2000s age. Instead the demons have a more realistic, organic look to them. Imps have insect

like skin, the Pinkys have a walrus like appearance, and the Lost Souls are severed heads on fire flying in the air rather than being floating skulls. Newer Demons also make an appearance like the arachnid like Trites, and the always creepy Cherubs which look like dolls in an abandoned house. The demons in Doom 3 are very creatively designed and fit the atmosphere, and fittingly enough, they were all redesigns of the Doom demons by Adrian Carmack, the original designer who worked on the original Doom as the lead artist.

The crowning achievement of Doom 3 however is the representation of Hell. As with all Doom games, you eventually get to visit Hell, and the rendering and representation of it is one of the most fitting and brutal depictions in gaming. Hell in the original Dooms were abstract levels with fiery skies and skulls strewn about. Hell in Doom 3 feels like a place full of no happiness, fire and brimstone, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth. The darkness in the levels on Mars are brighter than most of Hell, as we find iron gates, stone pillars, inverted crosses with crucified victims, and the sound design with weeping people, boiling sounds and echoes of horrors. The atmosphere also does not feel over the top either. Doom 3's Hell is the best version of Hell in the series, and something id Software should be proud of. The technical wizardry and artistic aspects of Doom 3's design is something to behold. It still holds up in many ways today.

However Doom 3 tries to catch up with its FPS contemporaries that have built on the foundation made by the original Dooms, specifically games like Half Life. The genre of single player, story driven, and linear FPS games deserves a whole other essay of its own, but this style is very different from the original Dooms. Doom 1 and 2 had almost no story in them, with only a motivation for the Doom Marine to slaughter the demons, and that motivation was revealed at the end of the third episode, the end of the game. Doom 3 aims to tell its story through cut scenes and audio logs strewn through the levels. The story is very basic with very predictable twist and turns. The United Aerospace Corporation much like the original Dooms,

accidentally summoned a portal to Hell in an effort to advance humanity with teleportation technology, much like the reason for Black Mesa's experiments in Half Life. Doom 1 just had the UAC do something uncalled for to have the demons invade their Mars facility.

In Doom 3 instead we have the deceiver, Dr Betruger, who wants to spread the demons from Mars to Earth since he is a servant of the forces of hell. Along with the leader of the space marines who is working with Betruger to fulfill his mission. The Doom Marine who doesn't speak, and a concerned scientist named Dr. Swan, are there to stop Betruger from spreading the Hell invasion on Earth. That story, along with the various audio logs that fill out the world of Doom 3, even if for many Doom fans, just wanted to shoot demons in the face. As far as the shooting of Doom 3 is concerned this is the more controversial aspect of the game.

Doom 3 can be played like the original Dooms, if you are good at it and know how the game works. But for first time players, Doom 3 was an extremely slow game in comparison. Walking speed is slower than Half Life 1 or 2, and the weapons do not have as much punch as the original Dooms. The shotgun in Doom 3 takes a great while to get used to, and many gamers have called it a glorified melee weapon due to its wide spread of pellets and randomized damage. Additionally, all weapons have to be reloaded. Unlike the originals, where you can hold down the left mouse button to continuously fire your weapon until you run out of ammo.

There is also less strategy to the combat system in Doom 3 compared to the previous games. The best way to dispose of enemies is to run to the enemy until you touch them, and fire the shotgun at them, dealing usually a one hit kill to most mid to lower tier enemies like Imps and Zombie Soldiers. In Doom 1, you had to swiftly maneuver around projectiles and use the right weapon for any situation. Need to deal consistently high damage? Use the shotgun. Need more damage and also some crowd control abilities? Use the super shotgun. Need to stun enemies in place? Use the chaingun etc. Doom 3's weapons in comparison do not really have much greater utility to them either than higher damage numbers or more plentiful ammo to be found. Some

weapons like the chainsaw are practically useless due to how inefficient they are, in comparison to Doom 1 where the chainsaw can stun enemies in place, making it a useful weapon when in a bind.

Now while the combat of Doom 3 may be run of the mill and not as enthralling as the originals, one part of the gameplay that is very unique is the use of the flashlight. As stated before, Doom 3 is a very dark game, and you must use a flashlight to see around the environment. You can only have your flashlight or your weapon out at one time, so you must choose between seeing in the dark or shooting enemies. This mechanic is controversial because again, players just wanted to shoot demons like the original games, and some players also questioned the logic behind the mere existence of a handheld flashlight in a scifi game. But the original games also had dark environments so a flashlight mechanic was not a bad idea at all. The main purpose of the handheld flashlight was to not only provide a source of tension in the gameplay, but also to showcase the lighting technology that Doom 3 was so proud of.

It makes it a unique part of Doom 3's identity even if it makes it different from the originals. Doom 3 also did not push online multiplayer much, despite it having the feature. The modding scene for it is also very small compared to the originals. Doom 3 requires modders to know how to make a 3D model, use the plugin for Autodesk Maya, an expensive tool, and know how to make specular and normal maps, making it a much harder and more complicated game to mod. Doom 3 really wanted to focus on its cutting edge technology compared to its gameplay which for many Doom fans was the point of the series in general.

So this brings us back to the thesis about Doom 3 and its place in the series. Doom 3 is enjoyable insofar that you appreciate the parts of Doom that it wants to showcase. Doom 3 is a technical showpiece for cutting edge graphics, sound and artistry and tries to provide a dark atmosphere for players to engage in. This is not what Doom is for some people. They identified with Doom because of its high octane action, its

attitude, its heavy metal soundtrack, its bright colors, and arcadey feel. Doom 3 tried to not have these things as much as the originals, and wanted to be more serious, either as a means to carve its own identity in the series, or to catch up with the games that were inspired by its predecessor.

Now personally, Doom 3 is a fantastic game that is worthy of the Doom name, but I cannot deny that is by far the most different of the series, and it is understandable why it is only now that players are finally appreciating it for what it is, rather than for what it could have been. This feeling of enjoying something for what it means to you can spread to all kinds of media. Take for example Pink Floyd's The Wall. Before the band Pink Floyd made their great rock opera concept album, they were perceived as a boundary pushing progressive rock band with psychedelic instrumentation and masterful guitar work. The Wall by comparison had a greater emphasis on the lyrics telling its story, rather than its psychedelic atmosphere. So that led fans of the band to decide if was a good record or not based on what Pink Floyd meant to them. Were they a trippy band with beautiful guitars, or were they a band that wrote poetry to hit you in the darkest parts of our souls?

Doom is the same. Many people took different things from the original 2 Doom games and some of it did not carry over to Doom 3 making it a divisive game to some. Today, Doom is a massive franchise that is similarly in a bit of a conflict with itself. Despite the high quality and attention to detail in these newer Doom titles, Doom 2016 and Eternal placed way more emphasis on the high octane action, heavy metal soundtrack and technical wizardry of the original Dooms rather than the atmosphere or artistry of the previous games.

Now these newer Doom titles try to please all aspects of the Doom experience, but as the series drifts to an even more action focused series where each game feels more like a Devil May Cry game than a first person shooter, that is leaving some fans wondering what Doom means to them. It is an interesting conversation, and as the series continues will be one we will keep having, as Doom is one of the most deceptively complex and deep games ever made.

## Dance of Light and Abyss

Cyanstyxx

Good evening, illuminator. I see the gull has come to roost atop the perch. How lovely. I do enjoy our dances. I wonder every night if it shall be the last, if the wings of the gull can no longer beat, and the flock has decided to abandon the cursed roost.

But the end never comes, does it? They know not what you do, not truly. They know you guide them to safety, warn them of my treachery. Perhaps it is better to say they don't know me. I have been here since Before, and I will be here until After—even after you—but still, I am not known by many, not truly. That honor goes to you, you are my keeper, the beacon of civilization among my wildness. Yet you are mortal; your bones will crumble; your joints shall wear. One day you will fall into me, and we will be one, yet I shall weep at the loss of your spark, your light.

Perhaps I have fun, toying with your stolen rays of sun. I curl around and away from them, quelled into complacency. Perhaps it is because I do not wish for our game to end. That I wish for us to continue just one more night. "Just one more," I say, but we both know the nature of my greed and how it shall demand we persist in our little game.

It seems for tonight though, it must end. I will see you at sunfall.



Ah, good evening my friend. Diligent as always. And good thing too, the fog is thicker tonight. My strength is growing but, like you, my sight falters. Should I try to fight and struggle against it as you do? Should I fight to force this cataract from our eye? I

think it to be a pointless endeavor. Every time I do all I can feel is blinded rage. Tonight, I think I shall accept it—fun as it may be to writhe in fury and feel as the world shudders under my strength. I know you fear it. No other is as susceptible to it as you are.

Do you hate them, those that put you here? You are their bastion, their first defense against me. You are their canary. Bright and golden, perched on high, and yet you are kept caged, forced to sing to show all is well. You will die first before anyone else. Your dim silence will be your final song. A warning that the misty claws of death approach. I suppose then I must be the cat, or the coalmine, or whatever silly analogy they come up with. Nothing ever quite fits.

I suppose you don't muse about such things. You remain as silent and diligent as ever. How noble. At least I assume it is, although, it is hard to glean anything from you, despite your gleaming light.

Do you ever think of yourself as my doppelganger? I certainly do. Something like that anyway. Perhaps you are my perfect opposite and equal. You are everything I am not. Still, silent, consistent, in a word you are stoic. You are young and you hold only as many secrets as your body will allow. You are finite and small. You are everything I am not. I am as old as time, infinite and deep as it too. I am forever loud and changing. I overflow with emotions. I am visceral, messy, and dark.

You are bright, clean, and sterile.



Another night has come. Do you ever tire of them? Do you ever tire of me? After so long I fear you may have, but you seem as unflinching as your first day standing guard. You didn't get much choice in this either. You are forced into my presence each night. You must have come to hate me.

No, of course not. I don't imagine you can feel such emotion. You are nothing but loyal to them. That loyalty is cemented into your very bones. You have but no choice to be what you are, what you were made for. Sometimes I pity you my friend. Your potential

was decided the day you were born, bound by the laws your body and kin demand. You do not even know what you lack. Do you know just how different we are? I doubt it, no other has. I pity your lack of senses, that you cannot feel and live as I do. Perhaps that is arrogant of me. I suppose I too can not choose my nature. My paradox is that I am ever changing; a fact of my nature that remains constant. But you do not change.

Yet sometimes I wonder...how true is that really? I feel... as though I have had an effect on you. Perhaps I give myself too much credit. Nonetheless, I see...changes in you. Of course there are the physical changes; cracks in your facade, flickering in your eye. But something...else, is different. Your light seems to pause, ever so slightly on the reflection of my eye, the shimmer of my skin. I don't think I've seen anything like it from your kind before. Others like you were always...so quiet...so unobservant. They of course could never hear me, no matter how long I spoke to them. They couldn't see me, not really. But...you seem to be able to hear me. You can see me. You...you really do understand me don't you. You know me.

I do not know how you were able to change your nature. Perhaps it was my influence. Or maybe...I didn't give you enough credit.



Oh my dear, it seems your little keeper couldn't take it much longer. I suppose I always have been too much for many of them. I've yet to find many that can bear to listen to me without understanding my words. Many a sailor have fallen for my siren song. Since their beginning they have loved to the point of madness. Do you mourn their loss? You are meant to prevent it, to be the perfect enemy to my destruction. They have crafted you to need them.

You may not hate them, but I doubt you mourn that loss. Do you wonder how I feel?

To be contradictory is my nature. An indisputable fact of my

reality. I find their efforts to control or subdue me laughable. They make fantastic playthings, their hubris blinding them to their own insignificance. And yet at times...I despise them. Eventually I grow tired at their relentless attempts at dominion over me. I loathe how little they think of my power. They are so self assured in their own superiority that they are blind to how small and weak they are. Ohh, but how I take such great pleasure in reminding them of just how pathetic they are. How meaningless and trivial their little escapades are. I delight in their fear of me, that look when they finally realize how little they matter.

Funny how they made you to be my enemy. When I first laid eyes upon you, I found you to be...tedious. I had long grown exasperated at their endless endeavor to wrestle their surroundings into submission. I couldn't even find myself to enjoy the devastation I could bring. So I ignored you. If you and your creators wished to stare, then stare you shall.

Did you know that your light burns me? Maybe burning isn't the right word, I wouldn't know. Whatever the case, when I had resolved to simply finish you, my blow was cut short. For the first time, I felt that beam of yours punch through my very being. For a brief moment, all I felt was swelling rage. I was fully prepared to rend you asunder, tear you down from your post...but then I felt your light pass across me again. I felt your stare rip through me. I felt so much. I was fascinated. For a moment I finally understood the feeling your little gulls must feel when they spend too much time in my presence. What drives them to such madness. Did you feel it too?

They may not be able to withstand me, but you...that answer is yet to be found. So I ask, dear Lighthouse, will you fall to my siren song? Will you go mad, as I have?



Finally, another night has come. I fear I have become desperate for each one. I rejoice at each setting sun that brings me to you, and I scorn the dawn that tears us apart.. Until now, I had thought myself immune to such weakness of attachment. Emotions I was always subject to, but I have never felt tied to something as I have

to you. Never did I think our game would turn to this.

I suspected that my presence had an effect on you. That some part of my immortal being had lodged itself within you. That maybe I had made you into something different. But my hubris had blinded me to how you in turn changed me. How you have unmade me. Your mortality has left its stain on me. I feel myself aching from our nightly dance, yet I find I cannot bear to give it up. I wish for your gaze to stop and rest upon me. I long to feel the light bore into my soul. I yearn to be closer to your blinding light.

I could pull you down to be closer with a whim. It would be easy to drag you with me. But I must resist the urge. Every time I graze your fragile skin, I take a piece of you with me. I wear down your defences with every tide. Every storm wrought brings you closer.

I must be careful if I want to keep up our dance. My instinct demands I swallow up the earth, to return everything back from whence it came. To stave off my greed, to spite my nature, is a fruitless endeavor. Yet just like your makers have tried, I too shall try in vain to accomplish this task. To maintain our essential contrast. I cannot bear to end our dance yet.

Do I scare you? Each meeting, each fleeting touch, each crashing wave...I feel you shake. Is it fear? Or maybe is it something else? Do you know what you have done to me? How you have ripped me open? Is it a struggle for you too? Do you wish to fail at your task as well? To succumb to my embrace as we revel in the glory of failure?

How I ache for your response. To not stew in silence in endless apprehension. Perhaps I have finally learned what it means to succumb to madness. It may be selfish of me but...I pray that you have as well...

Have you?

.. .... .= ...= .

Use the **web version**  
or **print** your own cards  
here!



## Oblique Strategies

Oblique Strategies is the name of a card set by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt, made in 1975. Each card has a suggestion, idea, concept, or sometimes just a word, that is intended to help creatives rethink how they approach their project, push through art block, and expand their perspective.

It is the inspiration for this card set, and where the title came from. I suggest checking it out!

by: Sarah Johnson  
ig: @certainly.blue

# The Most Easily Forgotten Thing

What even is this?

The Most Easily Forgotten Thing is a card set designed to create quick, randomized mental health breaks for those who need it. Each card focuses on simple things that can be done in the moment. There are a variety of card types: some for self care and mindfulness, others to simply lighten the mood or garner a laugh.

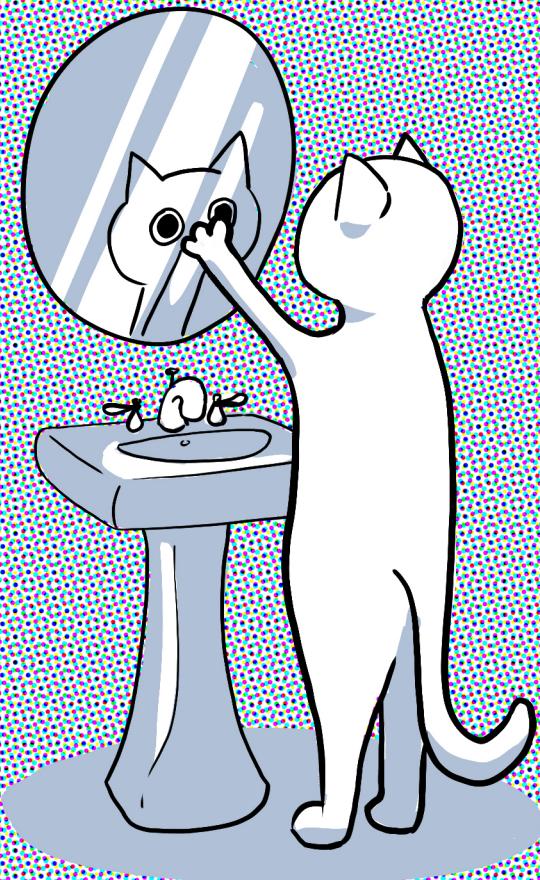
Most modern mental health games are to create and maintain a routine. Respect. But... routines are hard to keep up. The Forgotten Thing is made to be a low pressure, do good, tool to use at your own pace. Pull a card a day, or a week, or a few within one hour, it doesn't matter how you play.

I am a subscription hater, so I made the printing the cards available online for free. Anybody can print and keep their own set. They are sized specifically to fit a standard mint tin for storage. If you don't have a printer, use the web version!

*how to: FOLD A ZINE!*

Cut and fold the game instructions on the next page to keep with your cards!  
...or just keep the poster!

# I am hanging in there.



The  
Most Easily  
Forgotten Thing

CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE

CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE CUT THE DOTTED LINE

# The Most Easy Forgetten Things

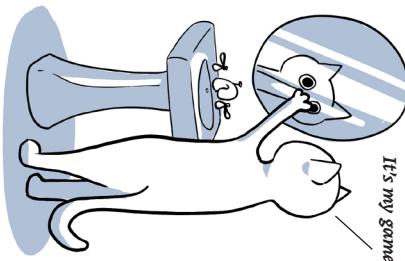
this is the front page

## How to play

There is no wrong way to play. You could shuffle your

cards and pull random. You could organize your cards and chose a specific type. You can write your own cards on the backs of pre-made cards. I support you.

It's your game now.



It's my game now.

[print cards](#) free here  
or  
use the [web version](#)... also here



A mental health card set.  
by Sarah Johnson

## Thought

Thought cards are all about reflection and mindfulness. You could keep a journal of the receipt and immediately throw it away.

## Care

Care cards include self care related activites, and reminders like stretching and snack breaks. This type will also include breathing exercises!

[card types](#)

[card types](#)

## Whimsy

Whimsy cards are just about being fun, and bringing some joy. Some cards are suggestions while others are links to videos or silly websites.

[card types](#)

[card types](#)

## Support

Support cards encourage connection, with yourself and others. This will include affirmations to reach out to those around you.

[card types](#)

[card types](#)

## **Freedom of Choice, Freedom of Space**

*Lost Dragons, AD., or IJ.*

In modern culture, games are forms of entertainment, a method of distraction from daily life, and a form of escape from reality. However, I also believe that certain games can aid you in remembering how beautiful your world is and that you can choose to take a moment and just observe. Even when the world is pushing you to follow a certain path, you can take a moment and witness the life around you and think about the small things.

A game series I find myself constantly returning to and playing over and over again is the Monster Hunter Series. As the title suggests, you hunt creatures that are beastly and dangerous. Besides the incredible creature designs of the monsters, I find myself drawn to the way the monsters interact with the different locales introduced in the games. In Monster Hunter World, the locale named the Rotten Vale became one of my favorites, and the monster named the Odogaron took a top place in my treasured monsters. With a form similar to a dog, the Odogaron patrols the floors of the Rotten Vale, a locale that is literally rotting. Dying creatures come to this area and make it their final resting place. Animals that live here are mainly scavengers because very little light comes down here, and the air is infested with a gas that aids in decomposition. So the ecosystem is focused on scavenging and eating cadavers. Just the idea of this fascinated me because how can such a place be possible? As I progressed through the game and returned constantly to this locale to hunt and capture Odogarons and other monsters that lived here, I learned that the energy and remnants of their body enriched the earth and pushed the health and continuous life of the entire continent. This was mind-blowing to me and made me fall even more in love with this game! I admire and respect nature greatly, so seeing so much thought and care put into the world-building of this game excited me so much. In addition, it was

given in such a way that the player had to discover it themselves and wasn't completely told to them. To further understand how the monsters aid the ecosystems they live in, the player has to continue to fight these monsters and gain research points. Once they reach a certain level, the journal they have that gives them the monster's weaknesses also tells them their role in the ecosystem. Also, the player can just observe them without the journal. By concealing themselves and following the monster, they can see their interactions with the environment. This mechanic, this attention to detail, is what solidifies a game in my heart. The option to let the player learn and explore the world at their own pace is intoxicating.

Then, in another game in the series, as I watched a cut scene that introduced a player hub in Monster Hunter Wilds, I couldn't help but stay locked on the surroundings and architecture. The chimes that hung from the top of clay huts and the gems that decorated said huts. This made me pause, and I could feel a smile creep up onto my face. Normally, when I get a quest to unlock something, I rush through it so I can get the item, character, or area. This didn't happen here. I walked through the area and told characters that said to hurry up to not rush me. I just moved my controller joystick slightly and moved slowly so that I could watch the interactions between characters and study the architecture. That's when a word came to mind: Culture.

This came back to my head when I came to another village. In the Monster Hunter games, I tend to grab items that are scattered around the locale. It didn't matter if I truly needed them or not; I just grabbed them, thinking I might need them later or I'd need them for crafting during the quest. I questioned this habit of mine when I encountered a village that spoke about respecting the forest, and after leaving it to complete a quest from them, I found myself limiting what I grabbed from the environment. At the moment, I didn't really think much of it, but thinking about it now, I realize that I wanted to gain favor from them, and thus, I didn't do things that could ruin my reputation with them.

Thinking of this memory reminds me of my experience with another game I love, Avatar: Frontier of Pandora. Playing as a Na'vi who was taken from their tribe and forced to gain human methods and ways, you are allowed to return to Pandora and relearn the ways of the Na'vi. Early on, you are taught not to overhunt, to be merciful in the hunt, and not to overgather

materials in the wild. After this lesson, I actively limited myself and tried not to gather materials continuously in the same area.

Comparing these experiences of these different games, I've come to realize that I can express my love for nature through them in a way I can't truly do in real life. Admiring an animal up close or harvesting plants with utmost care, I don't have that luxury at the ready in my daily life. This year, I plan to begin gardening, so one activity I could only do in-game I can try outside of it. Additionally, I am able to maneuver through areas without a harsh deadline like I do in real life. I can calmly observe my surroundings, respect the little things, and wonder how it affects the lives of everything around it.

## A Sushi Place

*Mars Rasheed*

No, I am not apathetic— I am in shock. Shock, grief, confusion, anger— Why, I might be experiencing a whole new emotion that no man has ever heard of. I don't know. But, can you blame me? You all think I am crazy. Off my rocker, tossed into the ocean, and rose from the depths— That's how I perceive you all, anyway. I know what you think of me. I can see your very thoughts through your windows. I am not crazy— In fact, you'll see how I am the victim as I explain how we got here today...

The old man was so gracious and excited about the restaurant— I was, too. He gave me a tour of the place, and even offered me a drink. But then... The cat. That damned cat. Lucky my ass. Large, gaudy, statue— Why did he put it right next to the door? If it were not me, someone else was bound to knock it over. Sometimes I think to myself, "would he have made a poor, unsuspecting stranger his wage slave, instead?" At first, I thought it would be a sweet deal— Cozy, relatively low-stress job in a scenic location. Oh, how wrong I was...

The customers came flooding in. Which was to be expected. New restaurant from the world's most famous chef— Who wouldn't be checking out the place? It was fine until... The holiday items came up. All of the regulars whom I had come to cherish and respect became dead to me. You can think I'm crazy all you want— But who in their right mind orders bratwurst on sushi? What sick mind even puts that on the MENU? The old man. It's always the old man. That became apparent as the months dragged on.

Thirteen establishments, all of them some sort of spin on a popular food. Everyone on this miserable rock acts like his

restaurants are the only places where they can get food. Like sheep, they come flocking in. And us, the employees, are the old man's dogs. Keeping the herd in line and enticing them to come back day after day, after day, after day— Put yourself in my shoes— Tell me that you wouldn't go crazy! Just try!

I tried to play along. To keep myself together. It all seemed worth the suffering— Then, we got to the 100th day. I had enough funds to replace that god forsaken cat statue. I told the old man as soon as I found out. I invited him before opening up the store to show him the new statue. Gave him a tour as he did for me ages ago... But then, I realized we were short on meat. It didn't take long for the old man to realize that too, and demanded I find more. I told— I TOLD HIM that we didn't have enough. Yet, he gave the same grin he's always given me when I was suffering. He insisted the fishmonger was still open— A lie. The fishmonger wasn't going to be open this early— And he KNEW this. HE KNEW I WAS SUFFERING. AND HE STOOD THERE AN SMILED—

I ended up improvising. What else was there to do? The old man smelled enough of the sea, and his sheep— No— His army of pigs wouldn't know the difference between dog food and salmon unless they were told. So, I got to work— I took the cutting knife and pounced on him. Everything became blurry after that. All I knew was that I had less than an hour to open...

And a new menu item to introduce.

# Rhythm arcade games: a brief introduction.

Most people have at least seen a Dance Dance Revolution cabinet, but did you know there's an entire subgenre of unique rhythm arcade games? In the modern day, they exist in a weird space; physically grounded with gimmicky, difficult to reproduce hardware, yet reliant on online dependencies and region specific licenses.

I'm going to tell you about some of these games, as there are entirely too many to talk about at once. So I'm only going to cover the machine if it relies heavily on circles. Why circles? My favorite rhythm games all have circle screens for some reason, and I want to write about them.

Mickey Michl



### MaiMai Finale/ MaiMAi DX MaiMai

This washing machine of the arcade is the progenitor of circular rhythm arcade action. Its side by side circles resembling a pair of standing washing machines feature an outer ring of buttons and a touchscreen on the inside, developed by SEGA, it is a part of their GEKICHUMAI line of arcade rhythm games. DX, the game's refined final (without an e) form with added gameplay mechanics and quality of life features was officially brought over to the USA in 2025. 10/10 DX (2012-2019 DX 2019-present)

### Music Diver:

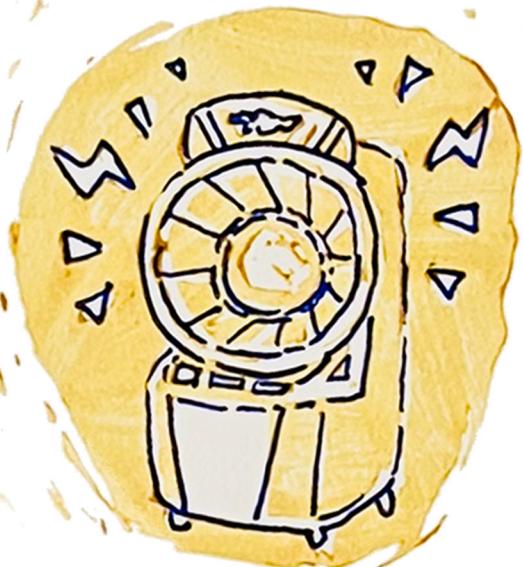
Brought to you by Taito of Space Invaders and Groove Coaster fame, Music Diver is a circular drum, with drum sticks included and everything. Except the drum is a screen with four rubber bumpers surrounding it, both of these are to be hit. You can't miss this bright pink and blue lit machine even in a busy arcade. it seems to be doing well for itself despite some software issues. I can't tell you how many times I've had this game freeze on me and have had to call arcade staff over for a reboot, but the fact that I and many others keep coming back to it tells you something about how fun this game is. 9/10 Don't forget to bring your own drum sticks. (2022-present)



## **Wacca:**

Developed by Marvelous in collaboration with J-core music label HARDCORE TANO\*C, Wacca is a circular screen surrounded by a circular touch panel for tapping, sliding, and gliding action. Released just after fellow circle game MaiMai DX and within a year of the covid-19 pandemic. The new game barely stood a chance, ending official online services in 2022. In every region except China that is. It's also living a second life as the undisputed circle game of indie rhythm arcades across America due to its low skill floor, killer soundtrack, and ease of maintenance. 9/10 She died before she truly got to live.

(2019-2022)



## **CHRONO CIRCLE**

### **Chrono Circle:**

Chrono Circle is a touch screen circle surrounded by a button covered spinning circle created by Korean company Andamiro exclusively for arcade giant Round1. I would love to tell you how Chrono Circle is, but it straight up did not work for its first few months of release and had one of the shortest lifespans of any arcade rhythm game. I do know that its gameplay system was reworked halfway into its short lifetime, but that wasn't enough to save this circle from being lost to time. ??/10 Would love to play at least once. (dec 2021 release - june 2023 last update - jan 2025 end of service)



## 8bit

### *Oblivion*

Alright, so what? I know I forget I am an old white guy trying to traverse time by re-enrolling in college at the age of 54. As a student, I am among the young adults who survived their late teens in COVID isolation. Many of which did it, as my son did, as their digital self online. Gaming and social media became their world, sparing them from their families. Their story is very different from mine, making me an 8 bit, 9 color character navigating a 3.5GHz academic world. So, what's my story? Let's go to where I was introduced to digital. Starting in fourth grade I began spending my Saturday afternoons roller skating at the Golden Skate World roller rink (Southside of Richmond, Virginia). There were a few other skate rinks in the area, but this was the closest to my suburban home. It was mine. Golden Skate World quickly became my number one spot, where I would have my birthday parties, I would make friends, learn about music, and where I would, by the next year, spend most of my weekend. I was there every Friday and Saturday night.

This was no playground, it smelled of sweaty feet, smoking butter from the popcorn machine, and stale cigarettes. It wasn't until I started going on the weekend nights that I braved going into the arcade. It was loud, darkly lit, and smokey. I played pinball, and I wasn't terrible at it (for a 9 year old). The year before, at Golden Skate World, Cathy Shredl gave me a battery operated pinball machine- Tomy Atomic Arcade Pin Ball! So, I guess I had the hang of it. But that wasn't where the excitement was in the arcade. The teenagers were gathered at the video game consoles- Asteroids, Space Invaders, Missile Command, Berzerk, and Pac Man.

Pac Man was surrounded by kids trying to watch the game unfold- watching to see if the person who was playing was going

to be able to get the high score, or at least one of the top ten scores, and be able to enter their initials on the leaderboard....,or more likely, put some sort of clever obscenity in lieu of their initials... ASS... DIK... SHT- you know, nonsense. The frame of the glass front of the game would be lined with quarters queued up as markers, informing you of how many people were ahead of you to play, if you dared.

I wanted to play Pac Man, but I didn't have the nerve. I didn't want to be surrounded by all of these older kids pushing up against me just to watch me fail, and die before even clearing the first screen. No way. So, I played the older, less popular games, namely Asteroids. I wasn't horrible at it, once I learned the sensitivity of the rocket propulsion, and could control my ship. Over the next three years, this is where I would play arcade games, and yes, after the first year I finally got the nerve to play Pac Man, mostly as a result of the arcade introducing other games- Galaga, Centipede, Donkey Kong, Tempest, and Frogger, all released that year. I was horrible, so I didn't play more than 5 times. Centipede was the least played game. It was in the corner, and as a result, it became where I could hide away. Soon I was adding my initials to the leaderboard. I was proud, so yes, I put up my actual initials.

1982 was the game changer. I was given an Atari 2600, with Pac Man as the included game, for Christmas. In no time at all I convinced my mom to give me her portable color TV, freeing up the living room tv for my brother and dad, and now I was able to play as much as I wanted in my room! I quickly became good at Pac Man, learning patterns of the ghosts and improving my reaction time. Yet, I could never beat my best friend's high score. He never let me forget. Look at me, what? 43 years later, and here I am, writing about it. But, I won't say his name, so as not to validate his achievements. Regardless, Pac Man remained my go to game. I remained an Atari nerd for a couple years...less and less over time. By 1984 I was not playing at all as the result of three events.

First, was the release and purchase of Star Raiders- which came with a 12 button touch pad. This game has a much more in depth story than other video games at the time. In telling all of my neighborhood friends about this game, I was offering for everyone to come play at my house. My buddy, Greg, had a better TV set-up at his house, and as a result I offered to bring Star Raiders

to his house. It was immediately a shit show! All of my friends ganged up on me saying that I got to play it as much as I wanted at my house, and told me that I didn't get a turn. In turn, I was only there to give them pointers and watch. This became the norm, happening most days after school that Spring. Man, was I conflict averse! I wanted to be liked, but in the end, I resented them too much to care about playing anymore.

Secondly, all my friends started to switch over to ColecoVision consoles, which had better games with more complex graphics, even though it was also an 8 bit system.

Third, I had my bicycle stolen. I was offered to get a replacement, but I chose a skateboard in its place.

I really didn't play many video games, outside of the occasional arcade game from time to time. I still had a soft spot for Centipede, and was amused by the release of 720°, the skateboarding game, in 1986.

Then, in 1990, at the age of 20, I took a job as a "pizza man" at ShowBiz Pizza, and of course, by a matter of proximity, I began playing arcade games again. I was hooked on Super Buster Bros, and the pinball game Whirlwind. I would play both every night, after getting off of work. I became alright at both. After working there for the summer, I looked for work that was better paying.

After leaving ShowBiz Pizza I did not play another video game again until 2002, when, at the age of 32, my nephew received EA Sports FIFA World Cup 2002 for Christmas. This was mind blowing for me- the quality of graphics and game play were as good as any arcade game I had played to that point. A 64 bit processor with 128 bit graphics capability was quite a leap from my Atari as a kid.

As a result of playing this game I decided to get my 5 year old a Playstation 2 the following Christmas. I purchased it and three games- Star Wars Battle Front, FIFA World Cup 2002, and Tony Hawk's Underground. I limited my playing time to after hours- after my son was in bed, and after clean-up was complete. Our house was very small, so I played with the volume mute to keep from waking him up. Playing FIFA was a nightly ritual. I did not have a computer, nor did I have cable or a satellite. So, I played FIFA. It took me a while to build muscle memory for the controller. It was a lot to get the hang of- X, square, triangle,

circle and THEN two joysticks on top of it all! I started career mode in FIFA, and was very into it- playing in World Class level. After playing a couple virtual seasons, I had become very good at the game(at least against the computer). The next season I started, I was determined to have a perfect season. By that, meaning to go the entire season unbeaten. I was able to until the last two games of the season. There was a glitch! It was sorcery, I thought! How could I get this far in a season, and then on the second to final game my controller was not recognizing the obvious? I would press X to switch defenders, only to switch to another player not involved in the play. Or, holy crap!, my best goal scorer began running backwards- against the run of play..., or God forbid, he would take a shot, & it would be a howler, sent into the upper deck of the stadium. They made the game so no one could have a perfect season! WHAT?! I was outraged! I threw the controller! And once I did, I was done. I scared myself. This was supposed to be fun. It was to be a relaxing activity for me, & here I was throwing shit. I quit! That was the Fall of 2004.

I did not play again until the COVID blip, when my second son, Gabriel, & I bought a Playstation 4 with our first stimulus check. We bought a few games, but for both of us, it was all about FIFA 2021 and 2022. We played against each other frequently during those days of isolation. In the beginning I would beat up on him, winning handedly. That did not last long though! He practiced. He played. He play the in-game training mode. He became a monster- crushing me every time. We played frequently nonetheless. By the end of isolation, and as we had began to climb out from under our rock, my son bought himself a gaming laptop and was now playing free online games with his online friends. I on the other hand was no longer playing FIFA. My time was spent drawing with crayons.

So now here we are, the beginning of 2025. For school credit- I have been encouraged to play a variety of video games. My instinct was to start where I had left off, playing FIFA 2022. After a few weeks of doing so, I made mention to my classmates that I still had my Atari 2600. I went to my parents house and found it where my nephew had tucked it under the bed in the guest room. I pulled it out and brought it home- figuring out what all I needed to get it working with a modern era digital television. I had to order a replacement 9 volt adapter and a RCA to coaxial converter. In addition, I had to try a few different configurations

before determining that programming my television to have analogue stations was necessary to play the Atari. Channel 2, as always!

After getting it all set up, the nostalgia of the moment began to set in. What was I going to play first? I have Donkey-Kong, Chopper Command, Championship Soccer, Space Invaders, and Pac Man(Star Command must still be at Greg's house...eternally). I picked the obvious pick, Pac Man. It took some wiggling and reinsertion, a time or two, for the cartridge to register in the Video Computer System ™(I love it!). It was now working! The insanely stiff joystick for a controller! The prehistoric 8 bit graphics and 1 bit audio! That was it! It was refreshing! It was so simple! This was more than nostalgia, this was a reset. I was being catapulted to a simpler time, where a little went a long way. Sure it was a wild time being a teenager- in the Reagan years of the Cold War, having friends who barred you from playing Star Command, or having your bike stolen, but it was only 32 channels of cable, rotary phones, daily news papers, the 6 o'clock news, and being home by dark. It was summers at the pool, backyard touch football, and playing on the school soccer team. All of this ease was part of the experience in the familiarity of Atari's version of Pac Man- with pixels that can be measured in inches versus inches measured in pixels.  
Sure, today's gaming laptop, with blazing fast CPU's crunching 3d games, 124 gigs of RAM shredding through live renderings of more than a billion colors in 8K resolution is very satisfying. To the point, sci-fi of 1984 is a reality today. But, this KI takes comfort in the game play of 1982 Atari Pac Man on the 2600.





# Wishing the Imaginary Tangible

Susan Sarceño

It's 1 am, my fingers swiping and tapping in tandem, the machine heating up over time. The posture over my phone perhaps uncomfortable but gave way to how immersed my whole being was. The body of mine taking a back seat as my mind locked in, the physical discomfort fading into the back of my head. This depiction of mine was a result of something mundane, a mobile game.

As a seasoned player for many years, I seek out gratifying experiences, which mobile games often lack. Scratch that- they most definitely lack but perhaps I was wrong. If given the choice, most experienced players would pick a Console(Playstation/Xbox/Wii) or Gaming PC(Personal Computer) over a phone no questions asked.

With all this in mind, I deliberately made things harder for myself, finding a thrilling mobile game. It wasn't ideal, but I craved the kind of gratification that comes from my personal taste, online interaction and rankings- the ultimate fulfillment. Games span various genres like single-player, puzzle, role-play, VR, and co-op, but highly competitive(ranked) games, while highly rewarding, are definitely not for everyone. The intense pressure is not the only issue in its division, other players shed their humanity, and one's own psyche begins to change. That alone pushes many over the edge- one would think it obvious and sadistic.

I took it upon myself to find profit in the most nonsensical place, in hopes of gaining the same high gambling at a casino does. And—I was very much successful in finding it, Mobile Legends: Bang Bang. The catalyst to my enlightenment, one that finally shouted waves of sense. I willingly dove into a space I deemed beneath me and came out changed.

At first, Mobile Legends was a wonderful illusion. Your day ruined or uplifted depending on the outcome of the match. If you're looking for a fun experience in pubs(casual matches/games), uninstall. Unfortunately, as captivating as it may seem in the beginning after winning a couple matches, you'll slowly but surely level up, a trap playing encouragement. Regardless of your care for your personal ranking, your pubs will soon unveil its hellish theme all along. The once amicable conversations and call outs will turn into the most toxic waste bin. If you're not already calloused to it, don't bother. Only play if you've mastered the art of growing thicker skin and knowing when to quit.

The initial victory of finding this game—like I'd found something rare. Was soon overshadowed by the realization that came with an unprecedented aftertaste. I had to drown out its subtle hums well after the screen dimmed. I could still hear everything— it shouldn't be possible but it was. I'd hear them while my attention was divided, even when I wasn't playing. The brave echoing voice around the realm, the devastating cries, those unique spells and slashes, the warnings and all. One game blurred into another. I recall when my attention was fully entertained by weak distractions—a fleeting moment. In the midst of my sneaking towards enemy lines I heard her voice, "ENEMY KILLING SPREE," my team was wiped out. Being put in this position countless times, I knew retreating was best. It's only logical once everyone starts swiftly echoing warnings—don't engage, not alone. If I fell, our base would be left wide open. This wasn't just a match anymore. It was morphing from a dopamine hit to a mental gauntlet.

But in that state of mental immersion, I was strengthening a greater skill, my situational awareness. If you're out and about but hear a police siren, you know. You don't need to see it. You just know. This is no game but many call it a game of life— very confusing may I add. A single siren might be an isolated call, sure. But more sirens, different tones, overlapping harmonies— that's when you understand that this is serious. Life threatening, even.

We normally don't pay much mind to the invisible moving waves all around us. Sonically adding to this world, constantly feeding us

information. If you plug your ears you'll only notice what's in front of you—you're unaware of the chaotic play around you. Closing your eyes will feel just as or perhaps more powerless but your ears will guide you. The disturbance all around you is clear as day— you may not see it but at least you're aware of both notions. Processing a chaotic flood of visual and auditory cues in real time isn't just a vital gaming skill. Using them simultaneously, making split second decisions with a cacophony of visual and sonic information is an immense state of knowing— you've achieved operating in a heightened state.

You'd think with this situational awareness and all, I would be able to break out of this particular fascination I seem to have. Regardless of the results, win or lose, the satisfaction or disappointment will not change the final outcome of the day's playing session. The 'ending' is only a sign that this particular match is over. It'll be a brief respite for myself, to breathe a bit and gather my bearings before my finger is already hitting the 'play again' button. I'll be left wondering, in the midst of waiting for my new team to be assigned, whether it was a wise choice to continue playing. The ending of a match doesn't necessarily stop my impulsive and competitive nature, if anything it encourages it. Winning or losing means so little to a gambler, such as myself, the ending only serving as a placeholder. Before I inevitably dive back into playing the damned game, my body inadvertently contorting back over the phone. And somehow, it feels natural... it isn't supposed to be so natural is it?

# **ABOUT THE WRITING PROCESS**

The following prompts were designed to help the authors of this anthology explore alternative forms of response—personal, poetic, fragmented, surreal, or speculative. Each prompt invites you to see the game not just as an object of analysis but as a collaborator in meaning-making. These questions can be used individually, combined into multi-part inquiry, or offered buffet-style. Enjoy!

## **1. Fragments of Play**

Write a series of short, disconnected fragments (one sentence each) that capture your experience of playing the game. These might include sensory details, emotions, mechanical observations, or narrative moments. Then, reorder and shape these fragments into a loosely structured reflection.

## **2. Dialogue with the Game**

Write a letter to the game you played. Speak to it directly. This can be loving, critical, confused, or admiring—whatever feels honest. Address the game as if it were a person or living entity with its own desires and intentions.

## **3. Glitch Writing**

Choose a moment in the game where something unexpected happened—a mechanical failure, emotional surprise, or narrative twist. Retell that moment in a way that mimics its disruption: use disjointed sentences, repetition, looping, or abrupt shifts in tone.

## **4. Replaying Memory**

Reflect on the first time you played the game and the most recent time. How did your understanding, emotion, or strategy change? This can be written as a dialogue between two versions of yourself or as two separate voices in conversation.

## **5. Inventory of Feelings**

List ten emotions you felt while playing. Then, choose one or two and describe them using an unusual form—like a recipe, a weather report, a field guide, or an emergency manual.

## **6. What the Game Remembers**

Imagine the game is writing about you. What does it notice? What moments does it highlight? What does it misunderstand—or understand better than you?

## **7. The Game as a Dream**

Rewrite your experience of playing the game as if it were a dream. What illogical sequences or surreal transformations emerge? What deeper meanings or subconscious desires begin to surface?

## **8. Speedrun Critique**

Write a review of the game in exactly 100 words. Then, cut it down to 50 words. Then to 25. What remains? What do you prioritize when space is limited?

## **9. Patch Notes for Myself**

Games often publish “patch notes” to show how bugs have been fixed or features updated. Write patch notes for yourself after playing this game. What parts of your thinking or feeling were “nerfed,” “buffed,” “revised,” or newly installed?

## **10. Ghosts in the Machine**

Describe a moment in the game that felt haunted—by the past, by its world, or by your own memories. Write it with atmosphere and unease, drawing attention to what lingers or refuses to be resolved.

## **11. Five-Second Flashbacks**

Write five tiny vignettes (3–5 sentences each) that capture flashes of your play experience—moments of frustration, joy, awe, boredom, confusion. Arrange them in any order. Let them echo like snapshots or emotional blinks.

## **2. Playing with POV**

Describe your experience of the game in three different perspectives: first-person (“I played”), second-person (“You

played”), and third-person (“They played”). Which feels truest? Which creates the most interesting distance or intimacy?

### **13. The Game’s Confession**

Imagine the game is confessing something to you. What does it admit? What does it hide? Let it speak in a vulnerable voice—revealing its intentions, contradictions, or insecurities.

### **14. Rules for Feeling**

Games often imply emotional rules. Write a list of five unspoken “rules” this game taught you about how to feel. (“Rule 1: You will feel lonely but in control. Rule 2: The more you try to win, the more the game resists.”) Then, break one of those rules in your piece.

### **15. Rewind, Pause, Fast Forward**

Choose one powerful moment from your gameplay. Describe it three times: first in real-time, as you experienced it; second as a paused, analytical reflection; and third as a distant memory, years later.

### **16. Easter Eggs in My Life**

Games often hide “Easter eggs”—secret messages or surprises. Write about a hidden or unexpected personal memory that surfaced while playing. What did the game unlock or accidentally trigger?

### **17. What’s Left Unsaid**

Focus on what the game doesn’t say. What’s missing? What gaps, silences, or absences feel intentional—or telling? Write into that space.

### **18. Endings and Unfinished Business**

Reflect on how the game ended. Did it feel satisfying, unresolved, inevitable, surprising? If it didn’t have a clear ending, invent one that matches your experience—or write about what you hoped might happen instead.

# CONTRIBUTORS



## Banana Duck

Ximinim nam, vent vel magnatur restiore vendus ma vent. Voluptat quamene mperatur? Fuga. Et latus, sitaerumquos ea si occaturiasi conecta tendaerio et quatem reperup tatquide.

## Bella Frank

I'm a lifelong gamer greatly interested in how play shapes identity and memory. I explore personal experiences with gaming, examining what it was like to navigate life thanks to these variety of spaces.

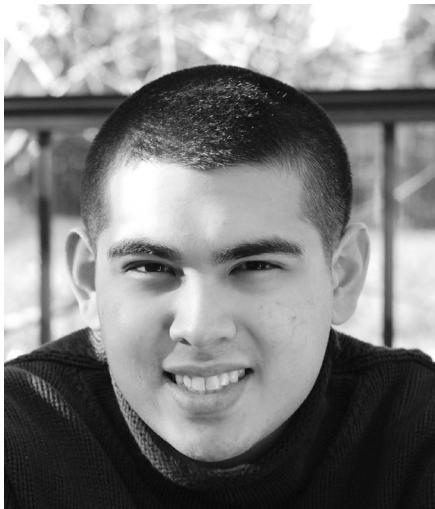


## Bibby Diaz (Inferno)

Ximinim nam, vent vel magnatur restiore vendus ma vent. Voluptat quamene mperatur? Fuga. Et latus, sitaerumquos ea si occaturiasi conecta tendaerio et quatem reperup tatquide.



**Chazzie!**



**Christopher Elszy**

Christopher Elszy is a 3D artist, and programmer from Leesburg VA. He has an interest in video game history, and the technological feats they achieved.



**Cyanstyxx**

Artist with a mad science streak, and pirate enthusiast. Lover of the ocean, art, games, mythology, and the ever present eldritch horrors beyond man's comprehension. Hoarder of round sunglasses and trinkets. Forever yearnin for the sea...

## Sarah Johnson



Sarah is a Kinetic Imaging major and their favorite Pokemon is Poliwhirl. Their work primarily focuses on themes of mental health, gender, and their relationships with others through the creation of self-published zines and animations.

## Lost Dragons, AD., or IJ.

Just a person that doesn't quite fit in the feminine identification but still partially identifies as female. So I like to believe I'm sometimes a female sometimes a no-gender. Anime, video games, sci-fi and fantasy things are my passion. I want to show the wonders of everything and anything of the infinite universe and beyond.

## Mickey Michl

Mickey is a multimedia artist who is hopelessly addicted to rhythm games. When they aren't mashing circles in an arcade, they can be found creating 3D art and games.



## Oblivion

3rd year KI student with a focus in motion graphics. I am an old dog learning new tricks. It's a journey.



## Syd Osborne

I was inspired by the late video game magazine that was Game Informer to create my version of a Game Mag focusing on my favorite FPS Valorant. Before Game Informer became overrun with ads and promos for Game Stop it was a well designed magazine with cool art and graphics; these are the aspects I attempted to replicate in my design.



## Susan Sarceño

If I could realize my daydreams into the physical, I would and I do so sonically. My intentions to drown you out of this reality into my convoluted ones isn't purely out of escapism. What I envision will be completely different than how you will embrace and visualize sounds. If I can entrance you, or perhaps plant a seed of curiosity, I'll be thankful to you for listening to worlds I wish were true.

## Mars Rasheed

### Editors / Facilitators

Wren Tiffany

SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

*An asterisk (\*) has been added when it felt like content warnings would be generally helpful. Because many games deal with Reality and some parts of Reality can be harsh and rough, themes in some of the resources below can get sad or sexual or gory or scary and other potentially uncomfortable things here sometimes. If you have reservations but still are curious, maybe ask a friend (who consents) to check the link out before you do. Sometimes a summary from someone you know can either edit language or hold whatever feelings that might come up is also useful.*

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22. Outer Wilds, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/753640/Outer\\_Wilds/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/753640/Outer_Wilds/)

23. Loco Roco, [https://store.playstation.com/en-us/product/UP9000-CUSA06090\\_00-UCUS986620000001](https://store.playstation.com/en-us/product/UP9000-CUSA06090_00-UCUS986620000001)
24. Nidhogg, <https://store.steampowered.com/app/94400/Nidhogg/>
25. The Unfinished Swan, <https://www.giantsparrow.com/games/swan/>
26. Bound, [https://store.playstation.com/en-us/product/UP9000-CUSA04193\\_00-BOUNDGAMEUS00001](https://store.playstation.com/en-us/product/UP9000-CUSA04193_00-BOUNDGAMEUS00001)
27. Tearaway [Unfolded], <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/games/tearaway-unfolded/>
28. Little Big Planet Series, <https://www.playstation.com/en-us/games/littlebigplanet-3/>
29. -<https://www.mediamolecule.com/>
30. Vib-Ribbon, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/162460> (no official link :P)
31. The Longing, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/893850/THE\\_LONGING/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/893850/THE_LONGING/)
32. World of Goo (1 + 2), [https://store.steampowered.com/app/22000/World\\_of\\_Goo/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/22000/World_of_Goo/)
33. Little Inferno, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/221260/Little\\_Inferno/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/221260/Little_Inferno/)
34. Half-Life Series, <https://www.half-life.com/en/home/>
35. Any Hideo Kojima game (Metal Gear, Death Stranding..), <https://www.kojimaproductions.jp/en>
36. Tomodachi Life, <https://www.nintendo.com/au/games/nintendo-3ds/tomodachi-life/>
37. Katamari Damacy, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/848350/Katamari\\_Damacy\\_REROLL/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/848350/Katamari_Damacy_REROLL/)
38. Ultrakill, <https://store.steampowered.com/app/1229490/ULTRAKILL/>
39. Rhythm Heaven Fever, [https://nintendo.fandom.com/wiki/Rhythm\\_Heaven\\_Fever](https://nintendo.fandom.com/wiki/Rhythm_Heaven_Fever)
40. Celeste, <https://www.celestegame.com/>
41. Wind Waker, [https://www.zeldadungeon.net/wiki/The\\_Legend\\_of\\_Zelda:\\_The\\_Wind\\_Waker](https://www.zeldadungeon.net/wiki/The_Legend_of_Zelda:_The_Wind_Waker)
42. Ico, Shadow of the Colossus, [https://www.gendesign.co.jp/E\\_index.html](https://www.gendesign.co.jp/E_index.html)
43. Castle Crashers, Battleblock Theater, <https://www.thebehemoth.com/>
44. Secret Little Haven, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/827290/Secret\\_Little\\_Haven/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/827290/Secret_Little_Haven/)

45. Sticky Business, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/2303350/Sticky\\_Business/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/2303350/Sticky_Business/)
46. Subnautica, <https://subnautica.com>
47. Hollow Knight, <https://www.hollowknight.com/>
48. Valorant, <https://playvalorant.com/en-us/>
49. Warhammer, <https://www.warhammer.com/>
50. Keyforge, <https://keyforging.com/>
51. Crash Bandicoot™ N. Sane Trilogy, [https://www.nintendo.com/us/store/products/crash-bandicoot-n-sane-trilogy-switch/?srsItid=AfmBOoqf8T\\_EeyXrrK38h-wcXJa\\_ab09iu04rPoqyEGgPSQ0fYCwsJFG](https://www.nintendo.com/us/store/products/crash-bandicoot-n-sane-trilogy-switch/?srsItid=AfmBOoqf8T_EeyXrrK38h-wcXJa_ab09iu04rPoqyEGgPSQ0fYCwsJFG)
52. Coming Out Simulator, <https://ncase.me/cos/>
53. Dead Cells, [https://store.steampowered.com/app/588650/Dead\\_Cells/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/588650/Dead_Cells/)

## General Links

- Steam, <https://store.steampowered.com/>
- Game Studies Journal, <https://gamestudies.org/2404>
- The Strong Museum : National Museum of Play, <https://www.museumofplay.org>
- VGA Gallery, <https://vgagallery.org/>
- VGA Zine, <https://vgagallery.org/vga-zine-home>
- ART GAME STUDIES, <http://artgamestudies.org/>
- Journal of Games Criticism, <https://gamescriticism.org/>
- Radical Software Group, <https://r-s-g.org/>

