



SURREALIST WALKTHROUGHS FOR POST-FLESH LIVING  
DIGITALLY CUT UP FROM VIDEO GAME FAQs  
BY  
NATHANIEL K SMITH



# SAVE SCUM

assembled by  
nathaniel k smith

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# simple advice, just run

never run to the place where the bees gather  
never get hit by an enemy  
never take off to the morgue  
never flee the influence of this tendency

the bee has finally broken through  
use your skills when you run out of magic.  
well done choices will make the game easier  
gain experience for not trusting the skull.

now is your chance to fight the real bosses  
kill the head to finish the battle.  
just forget about it  
unless there's nothing else you have.

there is only one truth in the multiverse.  
you are one of these unfortunate players.

# yahoo dot com has the answer

all you have to do is  
punch a guy that's standing still  
graffiti the elevator  
and walk to the panel.  
the computer will ask you to select a floor  
it will often make mistakes.

hack the computer  
you'll get a vision as fast as the modem.  
the images here represent  
nothing, actually. it should be cleaned  
after using.

sell the computer  
once you've exhausted the dozens  
of new situations and objects.



# the doorless room is not impassable

if other sims are in their way  
sims move without caring  
sped up and saving  
the time of monsters.

there is another way out of the dark.  
bear the endless flow of soldiers  
climb the ledges to reach the poolside  
do a running jump to love  
at first sight.

repair and update.  
save your game using mirrors  
approach torches that look like brush strokes  
see that temple at the top? this  
is the beautiful looking game.

there's treasure you can collect  
if you dare. choose members for your party.  
you'll have to dash like hell, restless  
and tired, over dead bodies.

# step by step guide to beat them all

exit the toilet  
look up in the skies  
then go into the boss room.

laser bolts take down what's in their path  
which is not always a bad thing:  
you will appear once again at the start.

check the strange camera  
wonder which person you are.  
to the right is a bathroom.

# you could read this walkthrough

first, a drop of your blood  
on the page.  
then, peek around the wall. explore  
this village. ask your father. get  
as much health as you can.

then, enter the building.  
succumb to disease. fall  
quickly. join with the weapon. be  
careful with the jump.  
become more chaotic.

end, pretending  
to be dead. act as a shield.  
crumble into ashes.  
you should see  
a man.

# waking is not a difficult rpg

while asleep your character  
can do nothing but wait and  
gain creativity. a state of  
ecstasy, a trance, is needed  
to exit this long level. it  
will explode just as the door  
opens. grab onto it by pressing B.  
put two of your characters  
in berserk status.

this vision by no means  
stands alone.

this friend and foe alike  
must be used to stun your enemies.

this stuff is so nasty  
i had a hard time typing it.

this amputation attack goes poof  
and becomes a child upon waking.

# single player only in offline mode

if you can't play with people  
don't fret: you'll never have  
that pleasure.

heal your creature  
mind the headcrabs  
have your secrets  
destroy yourself  
with your own grenades.  
a couple of black birds  
will get scared and fly off.

your story is quite grim.

get out  
sleep in hotels  
hide underground  
set aside in a cool place  
head down into the tunnel  
when you come out the other end  
use your greatest attacks  
sound your first cry  
and do 9,999 damage  
in one second

# you want to know how to win, right?

give them food  
steal their water.

be killed by the hunter  
keep his ammo for later.

take your own bones  
if you want.

at the right of the room is your body  
why does it give you so much pleasure?

you must go in a dark atmosphere  
appear randomly in the forest fifteen times.

wander right into an enemy  
eventually, you'll complete the mission.

talk to people, check things out, check out the shop  
behold the three great temples.

die a hundred thousand times  
but don't take any chances.

## to cure this affliction

very simple mission here  
don't worry much about it  
skillful players can win  
every game. know what you're  
buying for better results.  
what you want is something  
to allow you to forget. you  
would see the cages become  
a mess but the potions are  
effective. a portion of  
the cave wall is weak. great  
is the power of the hand. i  
don't know how to avoid this  
kind of attack.

# witchcraft is a miracle

you can't always win.  
the demon now lives  
on the network. the sim's  
lover is going to flame.

you're getting higher and higher  
but not everything is fantastic.  
everything will stop  
if you talk to the guys.

the most powerful weapon  
is not fun to look at.  
it may require you to adjust  
your gaming philosophy.

get to your ship before the planet explodes.  
we will take the right path: the hard one.



# running an efficient household

there are many areas here.  
walk outside to the trash  
open it with the ARMOR KEY  
you will come out  
in another hallway.

couldn't stop him  
had to run away.  
couldn't save them  
the only goal here  
is to survive.

it's not worth it.  
go further  
into the instructions.  
put the skeletons  
back in their graves.

## 0 XP

christ's power over  
the idea of the devil's power:  
it's now all gone.

more may come from far away.

the "far-away convert" sent in  
by the ghosts who destroy the rocks  
beneath you:

blood thirsty but effective.

## people, but on hard mode

if you need it, go out and get it.

this trick can result in weird side effects  
this

is particularly a death cause. on the path  
to the slicer, jump through and over and out  
of the pit.

for an unknown reason, this attracts them  
even if you aren't caught in the act.  
these  
are symbols of torment.

when you enter the office  
a super rat will attack you  
the boss hits you with his laser eyes.  
watch the tragedy today  
to get to the secret of the game.

# you want to "kick some serious ass"

you mean to change others into mutants

it will take an extra life sphere.

it will consume your health.

it will make some fights unfair.

pirate bases produce contraband:

powerful swords for peace, devliverance

from enemies. you can combine them with

your guns if you have the tools.

just go straight ahead, fighting

in a horrible slaughter.

enter the warrens of thought:

the vision is still there.

it took an insatiable hunger for blood.

well done, soldier

# PRAYER COMMAND!

paula has a special ability  
called Pray.  
pray you have an extra save file  
back in reality.

take the candle.  
climb on the block.  
pray to it everyday and  
head for the center.

it'd be best to save her  
for the end of the game.  
paula may disappear  
but she carries her weight.

all that remains now is for you  
to accomplish your destiny.

## major in self sabotage

go back to university  
convince them to let you out  
walk to the end and ascend  
the many stairs. sabotage it.  
walk into the next room. talk  
to her. choose  
the second choice.  
the next part is a little tricky  
ask her about the death claw  
ask her about the wine glasses  
ask her to teleport you.  
the floor moves beneath you  
a pit appears before you  
you find yourself in a cave  
the save point is hard to see  
if you walk up to this  
it will fall into place.

# this is a 'gentle drop'

use your magnums at first  
then switch to your uzis  
when prompted.

open up with the heart key  
grow into a new body  
crows will welcome you.

as you destroy your target  
another will be created  
hunting nearby.

you can't stop this dark.  
you can't stop this evil force.  
you can't stop.

# i like you do you like me

keep hugging the wall  
there's a long conversation.  
she walks into the bedroom  
you're back at the start.

do this several times.  
walk back and talk to her  
the second time.  
you'll hear a beep.

turn right  
down a slight slope  
if you walk up to this  
it will fall into place.

see that giant thing walking  
and shooting? turn right through  
the surgeon for the small medipack  
stand in front of the blade.



## flesh pixel

to get the secret,  
go into the small cave. your skin  
grows musty and itchy here: you  
have the chance to grow in a human body.  
what kind of psychopath  
would make a similar thing?

opponents will start to fight back  
as you advance out of the pit.  
might can be useful at times.  
go to the gondola  
let it ascend.

before you click level up  
solve this puzzle: a fork  
in the path.

# hours of gaming leisure at your desk

enter the middle aged man  
but be ready, sharpshooter.  
his heart is known to you.  
go through it into battle.

become a perfect agent  
in the nature of genuine disease.  
the answer to this riddle  
is another boss fight.

if you don't knock him out  
his ghost obeys.  
you'll find it in the end:  
the twisted connective tissue.

everything is connected  
but nevertheless neglects  
the hard work.

blast him quickly.

# cool to feel the bump maps inside

search the coffin here.

the two key commands  
are REGRET and AGREE.

go up and fight the feelings  
they split into many parts  
to defeat you.

the symbols represent objectives.  
find an interesting sequence  
exit into the long, dark hall  
to the red light telephone.

the door shall unlock.  
a sick person shall answer.  
the fight is over.

you can touch the power room  
inside.

now, back to the questions list.



# Appendix: Software Sample

The cut-up in this collection was performed with the software *prosaic*, also written by me.

*prosaic* takes plain text files and processes them, cutting them into phrases like this:

```
sentence = pre_process_sentence(sentences[x])

stems = nlp.stem_sentence(sentence)
rhyme_sound = nlp.rhyme_sound(sentence)
syllables = nlp.count_syllables(sentence)
alliteration = nlp.has_alliteration(sentence)

phrase = Phrase(stems=stems,
                raw=sentence,
                alliteration=alliteration,
                rhyme_sound=rhyme_sound,
                syllables=syllables,
                line_no=x,
                source=source)
```

then, when it's time to work on a poem, I write a template that looks like this:

```
[
  {"rhyme": "A", "keyword": "win", "syllables": 10},
  {"rhyme": "B", "fuzzy": "food", "syllables": 12},
  {"rhyme": "A", "syllables": 11},
  {"rhyme": "B", "syllables": 13},
  {"blank": true},
  {"rhyme": "C", "syllables": 10},
  {"rhyme": "D", "syllables": 12},
  {"rhyme": "C", "syllables": 11},
  {"rhyme": "D", "syllables": 13},
  {"blank": true},
  {"rhyme": "E", "syllables": 10},
  {"rhyme": "F", "syllables": 12},
  {"rhyme": "E", "syllables": 11},
  {"rhyme": "F", "syllables": 13},
  {"blank": true},
  {"rhyme": "G", "keyword": "life", "syllables": 12},
  {"rhyme": "G", "keyword": "up", "syllables": 10}
]
```

Finally, *prosaic* takes the database of cut-up phrases and the template and approximates a poem by combining each rule from each template, randomly "weakening" them until it finds a match.

```
if ruleset.contains(dogma.BlankRule):
    return ("",)

line = None
while not line:
    sql = sa.text(ruleset.to_query(conn))

    lines = conn.execute(
        sql.params(corpus_id=corpus_id)
    ).fetchall()
    if is_empty(lines):
        ruleset.weaken()
    else:
        line = choice(lines)

return line
```

*prosaic* is entirely open source, which means anyone can read and contribute to it. You can find the code at <https://github.com/nathanielksmith/prosaic>.

You can also play with a web-based version of *prosaic* at <http://prosaic.party>.

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# About the poet

Nathaniel K Smith is a poet and software engineer living in Portland, OR. He lives virtually at <http://tilde.town/~vilmibm>.

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He has also written:

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*Through These Wires Shall Course Blood*, original poetry

*Shitty Dreams Vol. 1*, an anthology of nightmares

All are available at <http://tinyornithopter.press>.



*"you are one of these unfortunate players."*

# SAVE SCUM

This is a poetry collection created by randomly cutting up FAQs and walkthroughs for over 40 different video games.

Each poem is a collaboration between the original text authors, a computer program called *prosaic*, and a human poet editing and augmenting phrases.

For more works like this, check out  
*<http://tinyornithopter.press>*.