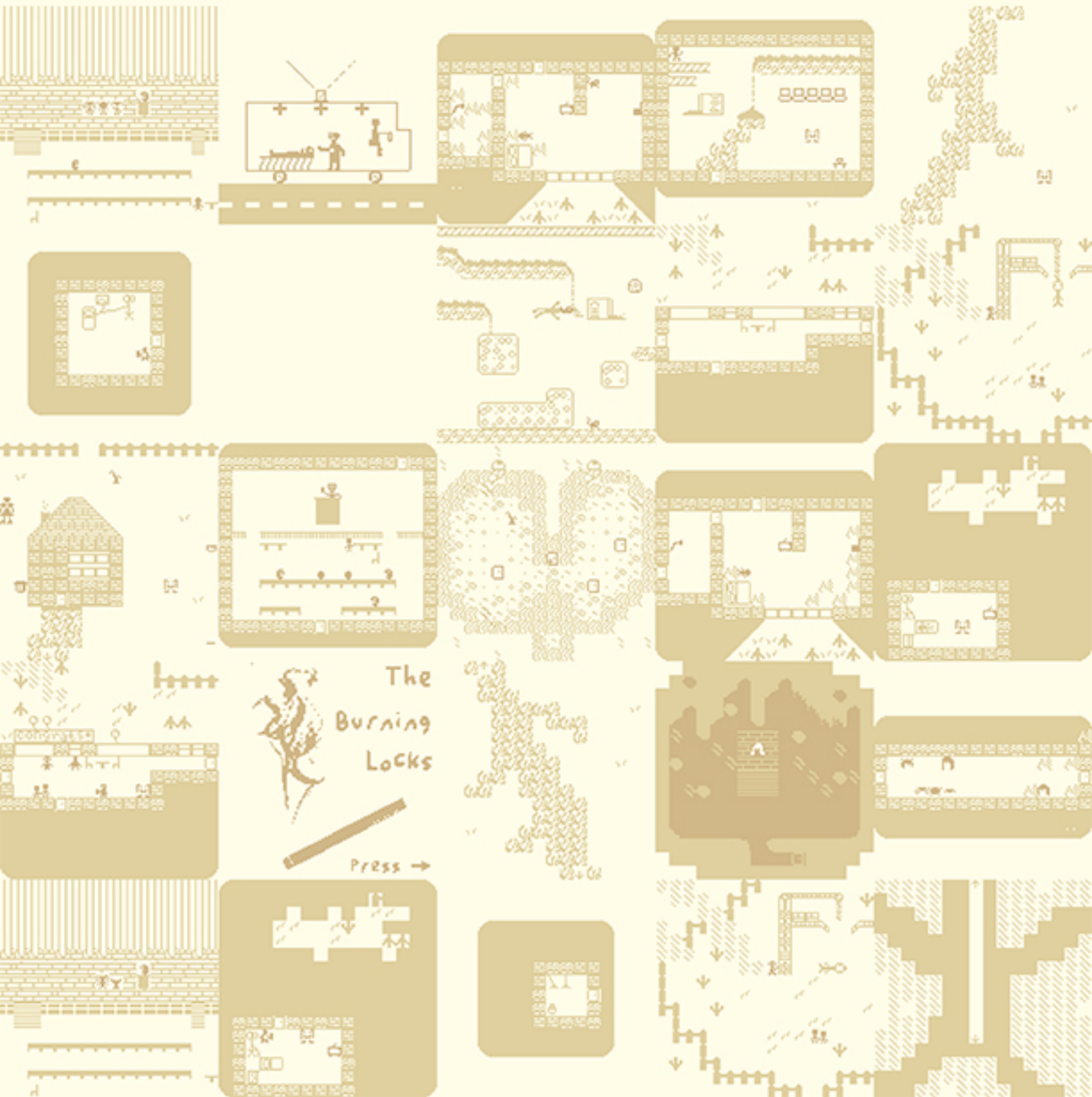


The Burning Locks: Bonus Document



by Max Levine

Thanks for your interest in *The Burning Locks: Bonus Document*.
The Burning Locks is an interactive story/Bitsy game about a neuron exploring a comatose mind and bringing it back to life, free to play on the web.

This document includes

- a page of praise from people who enjoyed the game on its original release and who inspired me to update the game and work on this document (thank you!),
- a map of the game world,
- a diary/reflection on the development process,
- an analysis of the lore and story in the game,
- and all development notes.

Scintillating Praise for The Burning Looks

That was amazing!

You're game is super cool.

★★★★★ 18 hours ago

DUDE @Macsimilian this is insane! I teared up right at the start and then was so mad I did by the end. WTF everyone play this.

👍 2 | 2 points

★★★★★ 19 hours ago

Thats a really impressive story packed into such a simple game

whoa, that is great!

8 points ·

★★★★★ 1 day ago

im still kind of in shock tbh

Everyone should play this

Oh wow, this game is sooo good and really deep too. Love it! :)

I love your game, Maxo. It's really funny and clever as heck.

Great game though, really inspired

design, I love the hidden tiles to unlock endings and the brain stem, such classic game elements that are somewhat lost in modern games. Would love to play anything you and your Dad create in the future!

Great game btw.

I cant stress enough how cool @Macsimilian game is. Make sure if you guys like it, you rate it on itch. It helps other people see it too and its def deserved.

Wow that was pretty dark and depressing! Thanks for the ride.

I was so sad and then mad and then sad and then like weirdly kinda ok

heh nice

Any game containing a room titled "Cheese Factory" is a clear winner in my book

😊 4 | I liked it

↑ 52

It seems like it's kind of a parody of self-important Bitsy games. I liked that

↑ 6

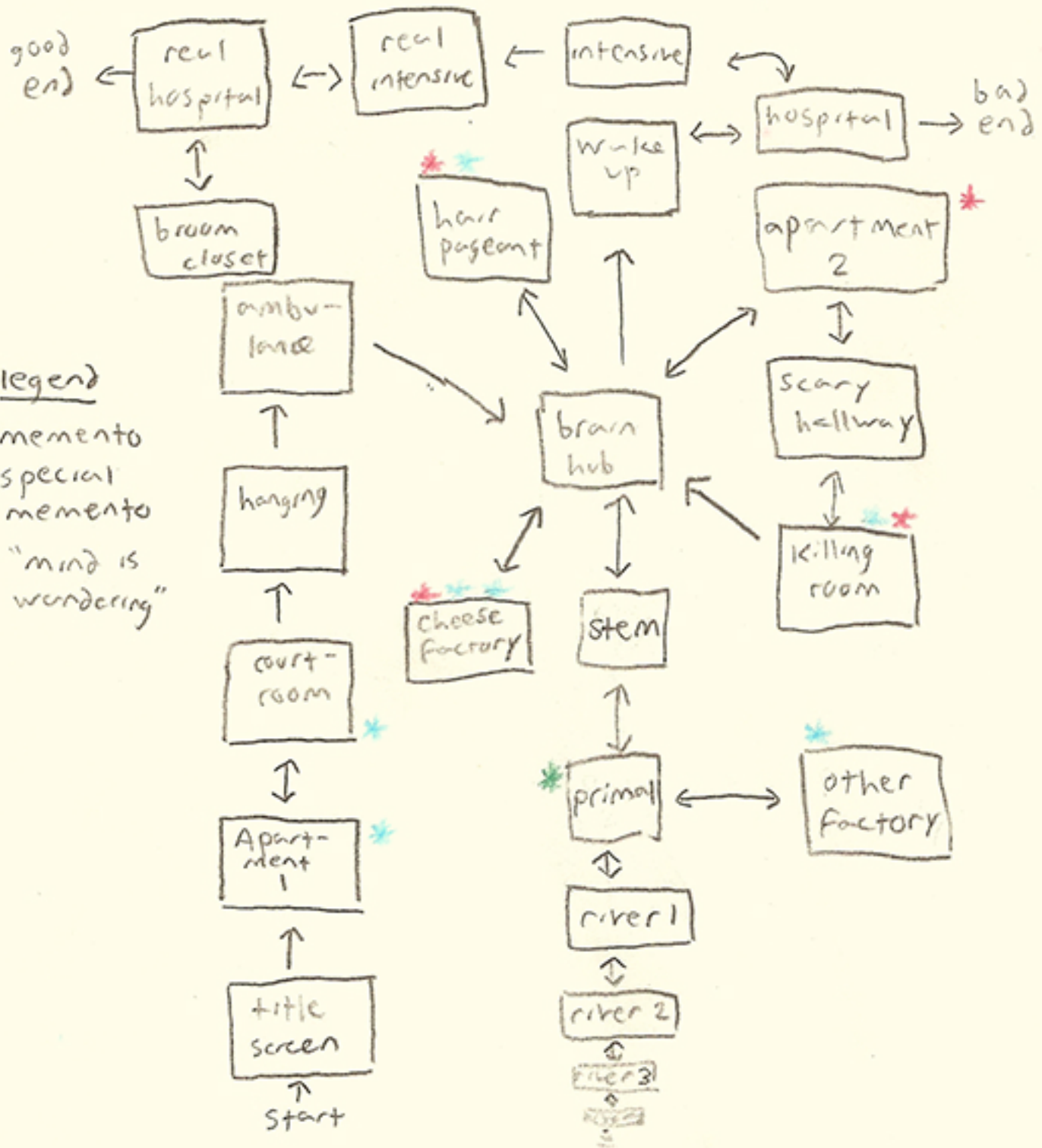
that was a really great game similar vibes as Anodyne. Dark but simple and story driven. Nice work!

I have to say... that is one of the first games that I've played several times just to get the "real" ending... I even ran down the endless river like 50 screens just to make sure it was endless... Fantastic game! I have to ask, who did the music? Because it was tied in so well to the aesthetic of the game!

👍 3 | 🗨️ 3 | 🔄 2 | 📦 4

Overall, I really enjoyed the game, my favorite one you've ever made by far. The simplistic style works well, and you know I really enjoy story centric games like this one. I like that there's a secret ending, well moreso a true ending and that it takes some effort to find it. It's simple, which is good. I can tell this game has a heart and for me at least is part of the pinnacle example of how powerful games can be to tell a narrative story.

The Burning Locks Map

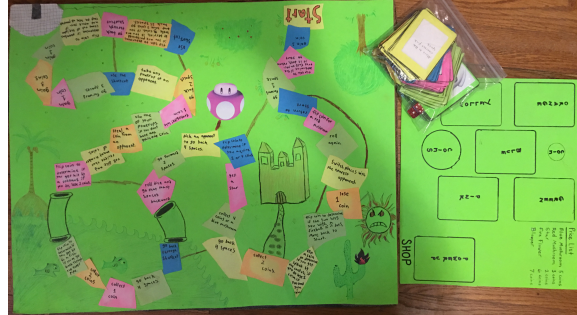


legend

- * memento
- * special memento
- * "mind is wandering"

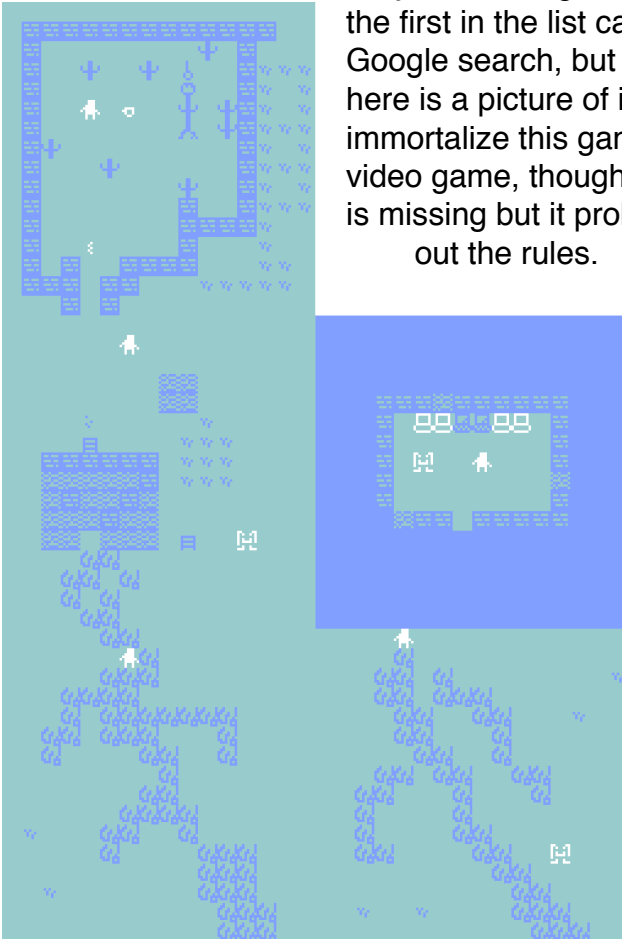
Development Diary

I was visiting my dad over winter break and the time was running out; break was ending in just a week. We needed something to do other than watching marathons of *Alien* or *Indiana Jones*. We had a history of doing projects over visits: from what I can remember, in chronological order, starting all the way back to when I was in 4th grade, we made a Mario themed board game with Mario trivia; the *Neapolitan's Ice Cream* game; a series of music videos including *I Had a Nightmare*, *Stand in the Sun*, and *And She was Alone*; *The Shed Project*, a live-performance art piece and album of my dad's songs; *Broken Razor Vacations*, a music



Mario board game

video/animation of one of my dad's songs; and, now, *The Burning Locks*. All but the first in the list can probably still be found with a Google search, but I still have the Mario board game so here is a picture of it. I think it would be cool to immortalize this game by scanning it and turning it into a video game, though it would be hard to do. The rulebook is missing but it probably wouldn't be too hard to figure out the rules.



All the screens in the original "poop game"

My dad had a new recording setup in his apartment. He had gotten an iMac with Logic X on it for Christmas and we got an interface off Craigslist to be able to connect a microphone and a synth. So I thought we could make one, simple track and then put it over a simple Bitsy game and that that would be a fine project. At the time, I thought that you could only put one song on endless repeat over a Bitsy game and hadn't discovered the Bitsymuse hack that allows you to do a lot more with sound, of which there are many in the final game. I thought that one simple song, and a correspondingly simple, short, walkabout

experience would be the extent of the project.

I had discovered Bitsy recently and wanted to make something with it, as it seemed like a natural next step (albeit a backward step) for someone who had done a few projects in Pico-8.

While my dad was at work one day, I familiarized myself with Bitsy and made a sample game that I thought was hilarious, and I even included it in *The Burning Locks* (I had to actually copy everything in “poop game” by hand into *The Burning Locks*, pixel by pixel, to do so). In the game, you walk up to a “poop factory,” go inside, use all the toilets, and then are paid for the deed. This was a creative use of Bitsy’s “item” class. To get a satisfactory ending, you had to deliver the tea (a default item that Bitsy loads with) in the first room to the poop purveyor in the second room, use all the toilets and collect your money, and then talk to the other poop purveyor on the endless loop river. You can see, in the first room of the game, my experimenting with drawing a gallows, what would be an important scene. The poop purveyor outside the poop factory says:

o my god. o my god. the poop is overflowing from the poop factory! if we dont act fast, we'll lose tons and tons of poop and the beautiful substance shall all be wasted, flowing through the streets of an undeserving town! we must act quickly. we could try eating all of it but that would be to glutenous, though i would really love too...

I was too lazy to make an actual town though, so I ended up making the two screens that eventually turned into the infinite river. I thought that the game was absolutely hilarious but my dad didn't think so: “People...don't actually eat poop,” he said. So I left that line out of the one in *The Burning Locks*. I originally included the scene in *The Burning Locks* as an Easter egg, but it turned out to actually be on the required path to get the good ending and thus a strange, out of place thing, but I hope it will inspire strange interpretations about what it means to be in a coma or something. Instead of talking about eating poop, the poop purveyor asks, “who will clean it up?” referring to the nurse taking care of the patient.

The first thing that my dad and I made was one of the main songs that plays when you are in, for example, the first apartment room, with a jingly, almost bell-like piano. This track is called *The Burning Locks*. We were planning to go to a Christmas party where you had to have a performance ready, and, if called on, be ready to perform it. My dad was going to play a chord progression on guitar and I was going to have a prerecorded accompaniment on FL Studio Mobile. My dad would tell me what the sequence of chords was and I would play a sequence of notes that were the root/name of those chords. Our performance was based on a Beck song. We never went to that Christmas party, but we used the same process to create *The Burning Locks* track. My dad recorded the guitar, and then I added the piano over it in FL Studio. (By this time, I had managed to acquire both FL Studio Mobile and FL Studio Fruity Edition on sales.)

After a few days, I had done enough research on Bitsy and learned about Borksy, and tested implementing the hacks, especially Bitsymuse. My dad and I possibly too many times were jokingly throwing the words around, “Bitsy and

Borksy,” “Bitsy with a touch of Borksy.” It was very satisfying to get the dynamical sound working, and it opened the door to making other music tracks and sound effects.

We brainstormed what the game would be about. I had been thinking about making a Bitsy game based off of true stories of my experiences in high school but that would have to be a personal project, not one with my dad. I conjectured that we could still make a succinct game (many Bitsy games tend to be like haikus) on a true story though, like our experience Christmas shopping, but my dad didn’t like that idea. I also had had the idea of a game, probably in Metroidvania style though, in which an innocent man is hanged and you are a “spark of vengeance” in this guy’s mind that has to revive him (kind of like Pixar’s *Inside Out*). I thought I was saving this idea for something—maybe a larger Metroidvania—in the future, but it wasn’t a *great* pearl I was saving, so, as we walked past the hipster shops of 23rd Avenue, I popped the idea. Over tom kha gai we discussed. My dad asked if it was like *The Binding of Isaac*, with it all being inside someone’s head, which I agreed with. It was more like *To the Moon* though, where you have to search for mementos in someone’s mind. My dad asked if I remembered the movie he had made me watch, *Memento*, which is mostly only relevant because of the title, but is also a trippy, psychological experience.

I don’t really remember the specifics, but we got to the point in our story where we needed to answer the question, “How did the fire really start?” John, a friend who was there at the time, sketched into Bitsy a hairdryer sprite. All of the stuff about hair in the story—most of the game—extended from that original, little hairdryer sprite. I kept a running Google document, which is included in the Development Notes section, in which I recorded room descriptions, item descriptions, and dialogue, to get down the plot before going to work in the Bitsy editor.

Over the course of a few days, my dad and I worked on a new room each day. We made the first room, the apartment, which was based on my dad’s apartment that we were in. We even initially made the soup that the protagonist was making split pea soup, because we happened to be making split pea soup. (I later changed it into lobster bisque to be able to bring in the literary idea of boiling lobsters.) We also made the courtroom, brain hub, hanging scene, and ambulance. The reason the ambulance is so silly and blocky looking is that Bitsy makes you draw everything in little, 8x8 tiles, something acceptable for an RPG room but not for a static illustration like the ambulance scene is. I didn’t know about the Image-to-Bitsy tool, another helpful “hack” that converts an image to a Bitsy room by making all those little tiles for you. It would have possibly been helpful for this scene—though I don’t have much art skills anyway—but I was able to use Image-to-Bitsy for both iterations of the title screen. We still had a bit of fun attempting to draw the ambulance (and other things) under these limitations, and it still turned out legible (thank you, Red Cross symbol).

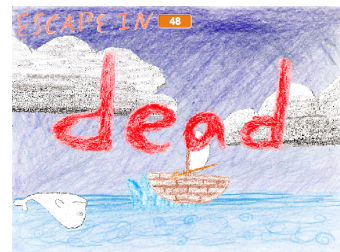
We thought that the story was stupid and ridiculous. And the music that we made was supposed to be deep and thoughtful, and I wanted the game's story to match it, but it seemed like our writing and creative skills maybe weren't up to the task. As I wrapped the Christmas presents that I would be bringing back to Asheville, my dad was watching the *X-Files*, turned to an episode about machines driving people to kill themselves. And my dad was talking about how bad it was—"almost as bad as our story."

I returned to Asheville and started school, putting our weird efforts on the backburner for a week. But eventually, I made myself design a room, the hair pageant, then another, the second apartment, which was just a copy-paste job, then another.

My dad knew that I would finish the project; I always did. I had shared the Google doc I had prepared with him so that he could add ideas and dialogue to it if he had any (there would be no similar way to both be working on the same game in Bitsy, unfortunately), but I don't think he ever did so. It was up to me. We had done the same thing with *Neapolitan's Ice Cream* and *Broken Razor Vacations*; we would work on it over our visit, then I would finish whatever was left to do on my own. After all it was mostly I being the initiator and leader of these projects. Also, unlike a lot of people, I almost always finish what I start. When I was in, like 6th grade, I made a little helicopter game prototype and a whale game, both of which can be found online. They were little games with bad art. But I wanted to include them on my portfolio collection on Itch. So, as a high school graduate at that point, I went back and polished up those projects, giving them entirely new, hand-drawn art. Any half finished project is a wasted effort and could, with just half the effort of starting an entirely new project, be turned into a finished product.

I had already designed a few sound effects and music tracks while at my dad's, but I continued to work on those all in FL Studio. Over FaceTime, I showed my dad an early version of the game that had the entire main path of the game—you could talk to and interact with everything necessary to get to the point where you wake up for the first time. My dad was impressed with my work; I had connected up all the little rooms we had made. He had been experimenting with making a song, which he thought was bad. Over the phone for some reason it sounded like it had an auto-tuned voice but didn't. It was a combination of guitar and synth—the *Rising Cicadas* track. He sent it to me to use in the game, and it is, in my opinion, the best track in the game. It's used in the brain room to symbolize the brain rising/coming back to health.

Over the next half of the semester, *The Burning Locks* was always on my mind. I would jot down notes at the gym or in the middle of the night. One day in February I had perfected the game's main path, now it was time to add the dialogue for all the objects along the side of that path—the details that really flesh out the game world and make the game either great or not. I already had what



Save the Whales with new art

they needed to say written down in my notes, now it was a matter of finalizing them into Bitsy, and the preparation, my handle on the material, and the notes I had worked on for the past months made implementing the text inspired and quality. You can see all of my notes for the game in the Development Notes section.

On the programming/design side, I made quite a few modifications to the default Bitsy output, not including what was done with Borksy. I used a separate “avatar by room” hack to change the player avatar in different rooms (e.g. so that it goes from a spark to a fireman to a person to a spark-person); this hack mysteriously disappeared from GitHub (luckily I had a local copy saved), which is not surprising considering how buggy it was. I found that sometimes changing the avatar would break the game, and the only way around this was to create a new sprite and then try to change to that sprite, and do this over and over until you found an avatar sprite that mysteriously *doesn't* break the game. In creating the second update to the game, I had another problem with buggy tools: the game generated by Borksy made the sound not work correctly, so I had to stop using Borksy and instead copy-paste the Borksy code from my old release into the new.

I also did some very detail-oriented changes to the colors and display. I used my knowledge of CSS gained from the class I am in right now, Advanced Web Technology, to add a small margin around the game (I had no knowledge of CSS, HTML, or other web technologies before taking this class, and the knowledge has been helpful in having a base understanding of how Bitsy operates). I also talked to someone on the Itch.io Bitsy forum who figured out for me how to change the color of the arrow in the game (which I modified in the code to be a set of ellipses instead of an arrow) and how to change the default text color. Half the game was designed in the blue palette of the “poop game,” but I changed it to look papery and dreamlike; I spent a lot of time tweaking the knobs, getting the colors just right. I tried a pastel light blue and pink but it seemed too cute for the subject matter. The aesthetic I arrived at I'm happy with.

I had one more week until Spring break, and decided to just release the game. No need to put together the soundtrack and a bonus document, and all those other goodies that I did for my last game, *PlusWave*. The fact is, nobody cares. I've had 4 downloads so far on the *PlusWave Bonus Document*, and 2 of them were probably me. Nobody wants the soundtrack for this game, even if it's polished and includes a track featuring every sound effect. No, that would be a waste of my time. I would finally release the game, and that would free up my Spring break to work on other things.

But, now here I am, writing a bonus document. What happened? The release went really well. You can see all the positive response I got in the Scintillating Praise section. It made someone cry! This was the best response I had ever gotten on a game. (Maybe if I got over my hang-ups and went back to using an actual game engine instead of worrying about how to implement simple collision detection for the majority of the project, I could actually incorporating my

writing skills and create something really great...) I got so proud of my creation that I even have an in depth literary analysis of the game in the Lore Analysis section. Pretty good considering what my dad and I thought of the story while we were brainstorming it!

I got the positive response, I got some feedback, and some new ideas of my own for polish, and I saved all of those up for the next week, planning to do a final, polished v.1.1. update over Spring break (I also have a little too much free time on my hands this Spring break, though I really need to be working on summer internship applications right now). You can see a whole feedback write-up I got from Chloe below:

Burning Locks Critique

Overall, I really enjoyed the game, my favorite one you've ever made by far. The simplistic style works well, and you know I really enjoy story centric games like this one. I like that there's a secret ending, well moreso a true ending and that it takes some effort to find it. It's simple, which is good. I can tell this game has a heart and for me at least is part of the pinnacle example of how powerful games can be to tell a narrative story. There were a few things I think you could have done differently but again these are just some ideas.

- The second time you return to the house on fire with the dead brother, I think you should have make the setting look a little different and change the pitch or tempo of the music to show that something's off. Things in strange places, more random junk around, something that tells the player visually "Huh, this is different than it was before..." it only really stands out since we've already been to this area before but we're expected to assume that everything's different.
- The endless looping hallway in the brain stem area was an interesting idea but the fact that you have to backtrack **all the way back** with nothing to show for it is annoying and a punishment for exploring rather than a reward which is in sharp contrast to everything else in the game. At the very least, it would have been cool to put an NPC in the hallway that tells you how many loops you've done. "You've wandered X times around the stem!" I know you were keeping count already since you had to backtrack between the two screens the same number to return to the beginning. Maybe after a certain number of times you'd get something interesting, at the very least some more lore or something...
- I played the game through 3 times taking me 29 minutes. The first time I played through without doing anything but the first wandering in the brain stem and just got the normal ending. The second time I got 4/5 and the final time I got 6/5 meaning that there are more spots than the 5 necessary to get the true ending. I don't know if there are any more than 6 for sure but it kind of bugged me that there was nothing extra I seemed to get for finding that extra memory other than another line of lore about the brother. There should be a true completion bonus for finding every single

- wandering spot, it may not be anything too special but something to tell the player that you've completed the game fully, it could even be a bit jokingly mocking if you get the doctor to say something like "You seem to be a true wanderer, you know you could have woken up sooner if you didn't get so lost in your own head."
- Had I not known about the secret brain stem area because you told me about it I would have never figured out how to reach it. Seeing as that's the area that gives you the hint about wandering spots and is necessary to get the true ending, many of your players may miss out because they simply don't know they can break the boundaries of the game. I think that in the hospital waiting room at the end of the "bad" ending, you should give the player a hint, telling them to try to go explore around the brain stem to find something new. You can be subtle about it, but remember other people who play your game don't have the knowledge about it that you do. By giving the player a reward for finishing the game, the idea that there is something more and telling them exactly how to find it will get you replayability which is exactly what you want.

I am proud to report that I implemented every single one of Chloe's suggestions in the new update.



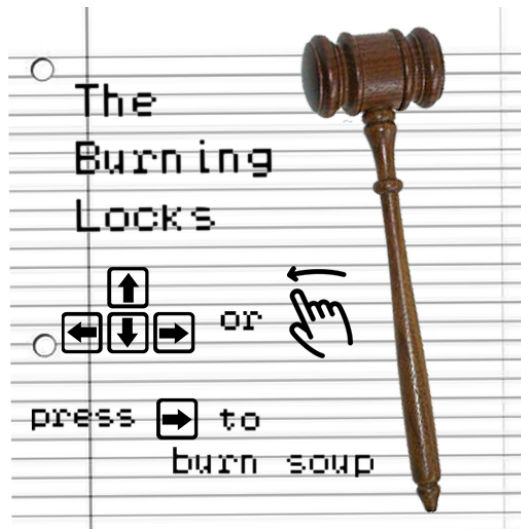
The original title screen on release



The new title screen for v.1.1. (the "Press →" part blinks)

I also received some feedback on the title screen—that it was hard to read. I agreed the title screen was bad, so I designed a new, bolder (I had accidentally used the lighter palette color the first time), more streamlined title screen. A new title screen is also a good way to mark the new, major update. The new one is simpler, and I really like the way the smoke looks coming off of the cigarette.

This is why I need to practice drawing more. Image-to-Bitsy and a bit more art skills could have made a custom title screen that really pulls you in (I just used



This is the image that the original title screen was a duotone of; it may help you see what I was going for but is too busy.

a stock photo of a cigarette). If I want to be a commercial, indie game dev, I have a long way to go, or at least need to try more, in terms of visual art.

The new update features a lot of polish, a bolder foray into metaphor, changing sound files to MP3 instead of WAV to use ~2.9MB instead of ~32.1MB (there's a time and place for lossy!), some new sounds, HTML5 gamepad support, and implementation of all the other suggestions I got. And it will include a fan-pack: this bonus document and the game's OST. If you really want to know all the little changes between v.1.0. and v.1.1., you can look at the Development Notes section, under the V.1.1 Updates

heading.

I still haven't even shown the finished game to my dad! The last he's seen of it, it was still a blue palette-ed skeleton. I'm waiting until after v.1.1. and will send the Scintillating Praise page along with the game for a surprise. That's actually one of the main reasons I'm continuing to work on this, as I probably won't be getting as many views from other sources as I did on the original launch. I want to show my dad that we actually made something really cool!

I made a parenthetical note earlier that I'd like to go back to. This is the best response I've ever gotten on a game, and it also happens to be the game with the most structured engine behind it. What I've gotten from this project, then, is that I need to learn to start using engines—with built-in collision detection, etc.—more, whether it's Unity, Godot, or going back to GameMaker. No more hang-ups about needing to build my own engine in C++ first! There will be time for that, after I continue my education in computer science, but I can be more productive and thus learn more, in the meantime, by taking advantage of a few tools. And maybe I'll actually make something that people will love! All the game projects I've worked on so far were always intended to be relatively small, learning experiences, not really expected to earn money, but I feel I could be ready for a real, commercial project—with the right tools.

Lore Analysis

It may be a little weird to do a literary analysis of my own game, but I don't think anyone else will and there is a lot in this game ripe for interpretation. It's also a good idea for me to keep a record of all of these meanings before I forget. (I also read a long critique of *Yume Nikki* recently and have my academic pretentiousness vibe on.) Anything I say here as the creator would be canon, but the only thing I want to be canon is what is in the game itself. I wouldn't want to stifle any opinion that is interesting. And, as I suspect is true with a lot of creators of ambiguous content, everything that is seeable in the game represents all that even *I* know about what goes on in the game. Maybe it would be better if I had a better grip on it, had a stash of secret concept art that explains the back-story of the protagonist's great-great grandma, but that is not the case. I do, however, have a grip on everything that *is* in the game, and I know why I put it there. So let me discuss a few of those things that *are* in the game. I will be using only textual evidence and not introducing any secret knowledge that I may have (like I said, I don't have any).

First, let me summarize the game's story. Your brother's apartment burned down allegedly because you left the stove on and your brother died. You are sentenced to death, and hung that day. Then the court retroactively learns that you were innocent, and you are cut down from the gallows and rushed to a hospital. The game takes place all in your comatose mind, except for the very end, when you wake up. Even the beginning of the game, the courtroom and hanging scene, were just you reliving your memories of it. In your mind, you search for the "clues" that show your innocence in order to confront the darkest part of yourself and wake up. You uncover suppressed memories and learn that your brother was a serial killer, and you uncover all of the things that led to this. Finally, you wake up. Or do you? You have to start over and do some extra things, as the first time you woke up was really a dream within a dream.

So, let's start the analysis...

Why does the title screen of the game prominently feature a cigarette? This is something that I am quite proud of, and actually wasn't even added to the game in its original release. Then, inspired by people who told me my game was "really deep," I felt confident enough to up the pretentiousness of my creation. I realized that I could augment the entire meaning of the cheese factory and the accident leading to the loss of the brother's hair. Instead, the cheese factory is really a euphemism for something else: the brother worked at a cigarette factory and was addicted to smoking, which led to him getting cancer and losing his hair. This euphemism is explicated in the sequence in the poop factory when you use the toilets: "that was some chunky cheese, to use a euphemism... OHHHHHHH... there's smoke coming off of it!" The rat in the apartment you return to hints at this, mentioning the cheese factory and talking about inhaling the apartment's smoke. The fifth "mind wandering" pickup (and since it's the fifth that means that it is just required for the good ending) tells the story of the brother getting cancer. All of these—the toilet sequence, the rat, and the "mind

wandering” about cancer—were also added in the post-launch update (the toilets used to just be a bunch of bathroom jokes). A lot of the weird stuff about cheese that you find in the primal subconscious—that was there on release but was all an out of place expression of my strange sense of humor. However, with the added meaning of the cheese equating to cigarettes, all of these weird, out of place things like a trashcan full of cheese and empty bottles actually makes sense...sort of. It’s possible that the addiction to hairstyles and wigs is just a metaphor for jealousy, and that the fire wasn’t caused by a faulty hairdryer but instead by a more likely culprit, one of the brother’s cigarettes. The brother wants what he can’t have. In one of the “mind wandering” pickups we learn that his girlfriend broke up with him, possibly because he lost his hair. One Reddit theorizer asked, “Wait... his brother killed his girlfriend and stole her hair??” That his girlfriend was another of his victims is a likely possibility; she was an original source/aggravator of his jealousy and an inspiration for his crimes. If this is true, it’s likely that his girlfriend was actually the “Mohawk Mindy” at the hair pageant.

What is the meaning of the brothers’ surname? We learn from the reporter at the end that the brothers are the “Harts Brothers.” This is the game’s way of saying that, despite the game being all about the brain and featuring a literal brain room, there is actually a lot of heart to these brothers’ experience. Also, “harts” means adult, male deer—perhaps these brothers are both like “[adult] deer caught in the headlights”: the protagonist was just cooking some soup and suddenly he’s thrown into this crazy ordeal, doesn’t even have time to get a lawyer initially because he’s in shock; and the protagonist’s brother, despite everything he’s done, has a similar innocence in that his evilness grew over time, and now his secrets are revealed to the world and it’s time for reckoning.

What about the recurring theme of fire? The game is titled “The Burning Locks.” The brother’s apartment is on fire. The title screen is a burning cigarette. The playable character is a “spark” of life. To progress, one must, in a sense, “burn” through locked doors in one’s mind. The door in the brother’s apartment, too, is burned through literally. The game is about turning a spark in one’s mind into a fire. Conversely, staying in the coma is darkness—and the idea of darkness is brought up if you go far enough into the endless river of the coma. It’s a motif that strengthens cohesion and feel of the game.

What is the endless river? The endless river is made of, frankly, shit. It is also “smooth.” The idea of smoothness is brought up in the bad ending: “Everything becomes smoother and smoother.” And, if you go far enough into the river, the imaginary figure there (I like to call him the “poop purveyor”) will tell you “the darkXness is flavorless but so smooth” (except that some of the text is garbled into hexadecimal). Life in a coma is that: smooth. It’s dark, nothing happens, and your already inactive mind descends into pus and nothingness. Your dreams, if you have any, homogenize into goop. (The other bit of text in the river that is garbled into hexadecimal, I should probably note here, reads, “be i monster, invisible wall, or guide? will you be oheavat va uryy?” “Oheavat va uryy” is ROT13—which adds the idea of “rotting”—for “burning in hell,” so, fully

translated, it reads, “be i monster, invisible wall, or guide? will you be burning in hell?” This calls back to the title of the game with “burning” and is also an interesting rendition of the idea of choice, and the role of the imaginary figures in choice. An “invisible wall” I like to think as a subtler form of monster or guide, in-between each. This doesn’t really fit anywhere in the game and was put there more for the creepiness of the garbled text but I wanted it to actually say something of similar creepiness/intensity, if anyone took the time to translate it.)

What’s the deal with the cheese (cigarette?) factory? Isn’t that a little over the top? As one reviewer mentioned (which you can see in the Scintillating Praise section), “any game containing a room titled ‘Cheese Factory’ is a clear winner in my book.” It does stand out. And I sort of agree, but there is actually quite a bit of interesting stuff at play here. First, the cheese factory is mirrored by the poop factory found in the primal subconscious—an interesting showcase of cause and effect.

Second, let’s break down the cultural idea of “cheesiness.” When something is “cheesy,” it appeals to a base sense of happiness/pleasure, but fails to be realistic. It’s a happy moment that someone might fantasize about but that is actually cringey. Fantasizing like this is akin to smoking—it’s not that great for you to do a lot of—and it’s something that the brother did a lot of. The brother literally smoked until he got cancer, and, in two other “mind wandering” pickups, he metaphorically smoked: he was writing a strange fantasy novel, and as a child he apparently liked having power fantasies, pretending to be good at sports. (This is something that all kids do—I’m not saying that it means they will become serial killers.) When you return to the apartment, a rat is standing in the corner, right where a “mind wandering” pickup was in the first apartment (“mind wandering” also being reminiscent of fantasizing), and this rat definitely likes cheese and also seems to like inhaling smoke (the two are of course the same thing in the metaphor).

There is another factory in the game, the poop factory, which may similarly feel out of place. It’s in the primal part of the brain, the part that is concerned with food and sex. Sex is clearly represented by the model manikin, and food by the poop factory and river of poop. The scientific notion of the gut as a second mind may also be relevant here, the poop factory having such a prominent part of the brain. The factory also shows that, despite the conscious mind being comatose, the subconscious brain continues other necessary bodily functions (to the chagrin of the nurse who has to feed and clean up after).

What are the creepy eyes off-screen of the brother’s second apartment and also visible from the scary hallway, staring at the scene of the fire? There is a very muddy/undefined part of the story around here. Those eyes out there seem to indicate that there are additional variables this part of the story. Vigilante justice? Did those eyes cause the fire? The brother seems to have killed himself because the fire meant his secrets would be revealed to the world—but that doesn’t quite seem like a strong enough reason that he would kill himself. Maybe there is something that we don’t know about and those eyes are acting out an

effective and successful vigilante mission to snuff out the killer... Or maybe he just committed suicide out of depression and self-hatred.

What really happens in the “bad” ending of the game? The bad ending is pretty bad, though that may not be obvious. My mom didn’t realize that it was a bad ending until I told her; she thought that the main character was proven innocent, and was able to wake up and walk out of the I.C.U. But it’s strongly hinted at that this is not the case. I’ll iterate all the reasons. The first reason listed, a very strong indicator about the state of the game, may be less obvious to those with less gaming literacy, which may explain why my mom missed it.

So, here’s the list: First, once you collect everything required for the “good” ending, the sound of a telemetry monitor plays, starting on a tone indicating “dead,” then turning into a beeping noise indicating “not dead.” This sound does not play if you only collect everything needed for the “bad” ending. Second, the imaginary figure (I still want to call him the poop purveyor) in the I.C.U. (get it—“I See You,” because he is like the final judge of your play session) lists your stats, etc., and, if you don’t have the necessary requirements, says, “That’s unfortunate,” and gives a hint about what more you need to do, meaning that the game is not won, despite appearing to end. Those with less game literacy may not be familiar with the concept of games having multiple endings, as well as the concept of stat grinding, and therefore will just be confused by the imaginary figure’s numbers and words, which may be why my mom missed it. Second, the nurse tells you that the man in the coma “looks just like you,” and if you examine the man laying in bed, he does look just like the protagonist’s stick figure body. While standing next to the prone body in the I.C.U., you (the player sprite) will flash between stick figure and back to the “spark” sprite, indicating that you still aren’t in your own body, instead a mere astral projection of your body that is still laying before you, still in a coma. The “music” that plays in the I.C.U. is the same track that plays in the primal subconscious area, indicating that the body lying in the bed is deep in a coma. When you wake up at the “good” ending, you find out that the original room where you supposedly woke up the first time was actually just a broom closet. Finally, the end text reads, “You forget a lot of things, but as time goes by, things become smoother and smoother. Still, you feel that, somewhere, you left yourself behind.” “Forgetting a lot of things” is probably not a good sign considering what the protagonist has gone through in regard to his bodily health; things becoming “smoother” are a reference to the poop river of the subconscious discussed earlier and this liquefaction of the mind is also not a good sign; and “somewhere, you left yourself behind” is blatantly telling you that you left yourself still laying there in the I.C.U.

In the “good” ending, on the other hand, you *really* wake up, and there is no cheesy way to make everything all better like the first part of the “bad” ending tries to lull you into believing. No, terrible things have happened, and you “will never fully recover, but you can go on with your life.”

I hope this analysis has given you everything you ever wanted to know about this weird little game on the Internet. I also hope that this will make up for all those style analysis essays I slacked off on doing in sophomore English.

Development Notes

current number of wanders: 7

V.1.1.1 Updates

- bug check all of these thoroughly
- ~~is bonus doc still accurate (read through)~~
 - ~~chunky cheese sequence~~
 - ~~harts bros~~
 - ~~put bonus doc cover photos through to be 128x128~~
 - ~~“burning in hell” is in ROT13~~
 - ~~monitor beep noise when collect everything~~
- ~~is ost and auditory medley still accurate? add mementoDistort and monitor~~
- ~~not “the Burning Apartment case”: [insert last name (maybe harts)] Bros. case~~
- ~~something other than hexademical for the 1st river thing (will have to update bonus doc) (ROT13 for rotting)~~
- ~~more frames for bowl of cheese (maybe too many frames)~~
- ~~change that smoking hot back to just hot~~
- ~~Move fire so not run into next to hairdryer~~
- ~~distort memento sound in killing room (square wave?)~~
 - ~~update OST Auditory Medley~~
- ~~see if can use corrupt hack temporarily in killing room~~
- ~~favicon hack to look like flashy sprite~~
- ~~Blood memento sound: Just try regular memento that suddenly interrupted by static and stops, then suddenly resumes where it would have left off (so that it still goes thru all brain...) maybe static trails off in spurts like the square wave...~~
- ~~Square tone wave (panned left) when collect everything needed for true ending, on slight delay and only does so once, trails off in spurts (like coming back to life)~~
- ~~That was a big load of chunky cheese (or there was a bit of crunch to that cheese, or **that was some chunky cheese**), to use a euphemism (one of the toilets) (maybe replace wow you really had to go and right before ohh)~~
- ~~Then after ohh one: they’re smoking/**there’s smoke coming off of it!** I guess that’s how it is when you’re an ephemeral spark (add this sequence to bonus doc)~~
- ~~check for unused variables and unnecessary spaces in dialogue~~
- ~~just squeak squeak not squeak~~
- ~~only fire has burned it open once~~
- ~~credits tacked onto right inside door and use end from dialogue hack. interacting with door first teleports you outside~~
- ~~make scarys worst sound quality~~
- ~~see if gamepad will work~~
- ~~try rainbow credits~~
- ~~move she dumped him wander up past 5~~
- ~~go through original scrap list highlights and see if anything interesting still un included~~

- ~~convert all audio to “best” quality mp3 with <https://online-audio-converter.com/> (except scary and scaryQuieter on worst)~~
- ~~redo title screen?~~
 - ~~maybe man laying in hospital bed~~
- ~~at least set menu color scheme darker (can use ambulance color scheme)~~
- ~~1st memento upper left of kitchen~~
- ~~actually make 1st memento upper right~~
- ~~add sequence to end hangman: “I have nightmares every day”~~
- ~~incorporate things from Chloe’s suggestions~~
 - ~~move 2nd brother to be in creepy position, reaching, other stuff out of place...~~
 - ~~change second apartment music (silent?) maybe still find better audio for this part~~
 - ~~poop purveyor or other npc gives count for how deep into endless river. maybe poop purveyor says different things depending on how deep your are, instead of on a cycle. starts repeating randomly after get through all of them. at the end of each say “you are _ far away.” actually, he eventually devolves into (shaking text) nonsense like JBVHGFXXX 99 Q and just starts repeating that (maybe code in hex/binary or something “the darkness is flavorless but so smoooooth”)~~
 - ~~if gather all (??) mind wanders, add to end of poopman, “you seem to be a true wanderer. you know you could have woken up sooner if you didn’t get so lost in your own head.”~~
- ~~Reference to cancer as actual hair loss due to cigarettes in one of the mind wanders (instead of burns and cheese) (maybe the last one, to not overdo title screen)~~
 - ~~before girlfriend dump: You remember your brother’s battle with cancer. One round of intense chemotherapy was enough to keep the sickness from taking over~~
 - ~~after 1st sports and bisque: your mind wanders and you think of the time when you and your brother were kids, your brother leaping and flailing around the yard, enraptured in his own hallucinatory game of sports~~
- ~~multiple frames for dark eyes outside to blink~~
- ~~the door is labeled: I.C.U. (because poopman judges/sees you) (both doors)~~
- ~~improve rat’s speech style (will have to update screenshot on itch, link to that on screenshot Saturday reddit, [put other places here]): “squee! cheese factories don’t...squee! squee!”~~
- ~~leave real intensive first time: he did it he’s really awake everyone!~~
- ~~final room where you walk off into an abstract sunset for both endings~~
- ~~why did you come here, to this dark place? (nerve maybe)~~
- ~~don’t repeat I.C.U. and burned open door text~~
- ~~don’t repeat credits~~
- ~~move fire so run into it not next to hairdryer~~
- ~~end of hallway dialogue doesn’t trigger again~~

- ~~louder pwet song in poop factory~~
- ~~brain nerve not touch floor (will have to update cover)~~
- ~~“burning in hell” somewhere~~
- ~~try to animate conveyer belts~~
- ~~reverse second mouse direction and have him sequence into squeak squeak~~
- ~~kept the sickness from taking over~~
- ~~something about smoke inhalation~~
- ~~more of the same substance drip drip drip~~
- ~~one of THEM had a huge wad of hair in it~~

Processing

- ~ put game data through borksy
 - o exit from dialogue
 - o avatar by room
 - o extended logic operators
 - o end from dialogue
 - o gamepad input
 - o bitsymuse (HAS OPTIONS)
 - o permanent items (HAS OPTIONS)
 - o unique items (HAS OPTIONS)
- ~ add ~~sounds.html~~ sounds and borksy.html (replacing everything after “<!-- BORKSY HACKS -->”)
- ~ put w/ sound folder
- ~ add border or space around game screen (pale paper color):
in #game, set width:94vw and max-width:94vh. in body, set padding:1.5vw
- ~ change text box and arrow color and default text color w/ faqs
- ~ custom arrowdata (for arrow shape)? ideas: **ellipses**, arrow pointing to bottom right corner stairlike, cloud
- ~ change background color for page (in body and #game) to pale paper color #ffffde8
- ~ Post to itch: fullscreen optional, autostart, set size to multiple of 512x512, but with added height for the fullscreen option (585x604 seems good)
- ~ **If music seems broken/wont load immediately on Itch, try turning “automatically start on page load” off and then back on**

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|
| Text box | Light #ffffde8 or 255,253,232 |
| Normal text | Darker #d1b888 or 209,184,136 |
| Special text | Dark #e0d09f or 224,208,159 |
| Arrow | Dark #e0d09f or 224,208,159 |

Logos and marketing

- ~ Itch logo: gif of brain (w/o doors and neuron) and the title text over it (630x500).
- ~ itch page background: duotone of hanging scene with brain, maybe just duotone of floating brain.
- ~ promotional page with all quotes from people who liked it, filtered to palette of game

Bonus Downloads (\$2)

- ~ Bonus Document
 - o put map (see below) in bonus doc
 - o cool cover: combo of itch logo and itch background
 - o reflection piece
 - o the promo page with all the nice quotes
 - o all development notes
- ~ ost soundtrack that includes the unused loud poop song, a track that's a combo of all sound effects, and a track that consists of all unused sounds. cover art similar to itch logo cover
 - o Auditory Medley, Unused Auditory Medley (sounds, start and end with memento forward and back)
 - o Rising Cicadas (main2)
 - o A Perverse Subconscious (unused loud poop)
 - o The Primal Void (poop)
 - o The Burning Locks (main1)
 - o Song of the Dinosaurs (phoneDino) ...
 - o Urgent Emergentcy (phoneCool)
- ~ make a map of the world, shows memento locations, special memento locations, and the 5 mind wanders in a legend
- ~ desktop and mobile backgrounds, grid of all rooms, use blank rooms to make perfect rectangle, don't show player sprite in any

Share

- ~ update rat speech in screenshots and screenshot Saturday, update poo screenshot too, maybe just do all
- ~ update scintillating praise pic too wherever it may be uploaded
- ~ add gamepad support itch tag
- ~~~ Itch.io (duh)~~
 - o game jam(s) it may fit into at the time
- ~~~ Add your game to the Bitsy games collection!~~
~~<https://itch.io/t/59094/add-your-game-to-the-bitsy-games-collection>~~
- ~~~ Share thread (post map): <https://itch.io/board/51835/games>~~
- ~~~ Itch Release Forum: <https://itch.io/board/10022/release-announcements>~~
- ~~~ Bitsy Discord (post map)~~
- ~~~ Itch Discord~~
- ~~~ Pico8 discord (how much cross over is there?)~~
- ~~~ /r/gamedev discord~~
- ~~~ screenshot Saturday reddit (maybe after v.1.1)~~
- ~~~ Game Dev's Quest discord (bonus doc again) Small engines for small games (like Pico8)~~
- ~ game dev's quest discord again with poster. hey awesome people, made a plaque for I don't know reason. update, not really anything new, just new title screen pretentiousness
- ~ respond reddit comment asked if brother killed girlfriend, included in bonus doc

- ~ lore analysis to /r/fantheories ?
- ~ ~~/r/BitsyGames (post map)~~
- ~ /r/gamedev
- ~ /r/indiegaming
- ~ ~~/r/webgames~~
- ~ /r/fl_studio
- ~ /r/itchio
- ~ ~~ongameamonth~~
- ~ ~~twitter~~
- ~ ~~Submit to Bitsy Omnibus:~~
 - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdI1GRoJNDP7O5swn_NXziU3ATpiie9G8H9JSiCqyyTAdlCzQ/viewform
- ~ Youtube playthrough: play through twice. commentary
- ~ /r/tothemoon
- ~ review to the moon on steam and have link
- ~ ~~grandpa saul, I promised~~
- ~ facebook (v.1.1. with promo page)
- ~ send 1.1 to dad along with praise poster (b day may 24)
- ~ share with bitsy discord again and talk about bonus document

Final

- ~ ~~(Changes slightly depending on whether you inspected the second dead brother. remove things in brackets if haven't inspected)Nurse: I've been watching that EEG/hearttrate?? monitor steadily climbing - and now you're awake! How is your neck? We know that you didn't start the fire. The fire department found a faulty wire...huh, you already knew that? well, people have visited and told you things, maybe that's how. People in comas have been known to hear things. The fire isn't even what killed your brother: an autopsy showed that he committed suicide. [You knew that too?] You wouldn't happen to know why he would want to kill himself over his apartment burning down, would you? ...~~
- ~ ~~Nurse 2nd time: Well, you seem well enough to go. [You couldn't have seen everything while asleep, could you?] Feel free to check out the intensive care unit on your way out; a man is in a coma in there and he looks just like you! (make scary noise here, maybe a short, loud fade in and out of the scary music track, or momentarily switches music to scary track, or new dread sound effect, like beginning of sayo nara)~~
- ~ ~~Try to get nurse sound on second dialogue to happen on separate page (even when haven't inspected body). Stop music for this. See if (stop music)(sound effect)(play music) would work. or just have music resume another way~~
- ~ ~~poop toilets all consistent colors (lighter?)~~
- ~ ~~check if bitsymuse options are all filled in for each room~~
- ~ ~~check to see if memento system for hairdryer same as others~~
- ~ ~~make scary hallway track slightly quieter~~
- ~ ~~check volume levels in general~~

- ~ ~~see if multiple playthroughs are stable (b/c of avatar by room weirdness)~~
- ~ ~~make beds solid~~
- ~ ~~add varying narrative dialogue to each of the 7 mind wandering pickups. you think of the time that... when you were kids... (humanize brother)(maybe put a huge long story here?)~~
 - ~~Is your mind wandering?~~
 - ~~Is your mind wandering again?~~
 - ~~Your mind wanders and you think of the time when you and your brother were kids. Your brother tried out for the sports teams every year in school but never got in. He was too uncoordinated. [instead he did something else and became obsessed with it]~~
 - ~~Your mind wanders and you think of the soup you were making, lobster bisque. You think of the old adage about boiling a lobster.~~
 - ~~Your mind wanders and you think of the time when you and your brother were kids. Your brother found a lame street kitten about to be cannibalized by its own family. He nursed the kitten back to health.~~
 - ~~Your mind wanders and you think of the book your brother was writing. It was a cross between Robin Hood and space pirates.~~
 - ~~Your mind wanders and you think of your brother's only girlfriend. She dumped him for someone who he thought was more attractive.~~
- ~ ~~FAQ allows more animation frames maybe for ambulance and conveyer belts; maybe mind wandering flits around in a tiny square circle~~
- ~ ~~filter to make main music darker/weirder?~~
- ~ ~~check to see if memento 1st and 2nd time is the same~~
- ~ ~~make sure all text box colors are consistent in killing room~~
- ~ ~~put ... whenever there is continued dialogue~~
- ~ ~~go through all sprites and items and make sure there is dialogue if there needs to be~~
- ~ ~~try to get a funnier music track for more ridiculous parts like cheese factory, hair pageant (change "dark" room track for those two)~~
- ~ ~~ending song with lyrics? (would need to use the prevent restart hack (would actually need a custom version of that hack that allows for different endings) and would need to switch rooms to one where song is playing right before "ending". and it would need to happen only at the true ending, because need to be able to restart after bad ending)~~
- ~ ~~open door sound~~
- ~ ~~figure out rounded corners for blood room (using just two colors for sprite, should be possible)~~
- ~ ~~dis be an important memnto~~
- ~ ~~Make brain hub squish animation invert some on lower part. Will have to update itch cover~~
- ~ ~~It's got to be somewhere in that brainstem~~

- ~ ~~come back and visit us sometime, in your dreams, ye?~~
- ~ ~~Maybe I made the mistake of not getting any lawyers~~
- ~ ~~Poop nerve oh you came down from the brain/ are a brain cell-classism! Such elitism~~
- ~ ~~Poopman arms: end exit same as ye in poop world. Make sure one in intensive has similar arms to itself~~
- ~ ~~way it refers to "THE hairdryer with a slightly frayed cord..." changes depending on whether you inspected the first hairdryer.~~
- ~ ~~may have some effect and affect something somewhere~~
- ~ ~~everything goes back to normal. you go back to living by the river~~
- ~ ~~I set up the congrats sign outside~~
- ~ ~~put poop sprites on the infinite river~~
- ~ ~~in not won intensive, make player sprite every few frames flash into spark avatar~~
- ~ ~~low in the mid 70s~~
- ~ ~~nurse scare noise quieter~~
- ~ ~~make spark in final animation the other frame so it's pulling inward~~
- ~ ~~second time you talk to final poopman and he gives hint about brain this will be added to hint: in the brain stem would be my guess (just set special variable and if that bad is set it just does that hint for that part of the cycle)~~
- ~ ~~See if even number of frames would work for end avatar~~
- ~ ~~do an odd number of frames for heartbeat door 2 unbeat 1 beat and redo cover~~
- ~ ~~Load final back into bitsy and check if intro music init in right place~~

BLEH

- ~ ~~make broom closet small again. ← maybe? definitely. (with a little extra room/space blocks on the left)~~
- ~ ~~move location of cheese factory wander to not be so near head (maybe more upper left)~~
- ~ ~~maybe add poop memento to final icon/key display for wake up door if have found it~~
- ~ ~~move over pageant wander a little bit (have to move two)~~
- ~ ~~way more wanders, with a certain threshold to win (e.g. would need only 4 out of 5 to win) (will need more dialogue stories) "not enough wandering. youll need at least _"~~
- ~ ~~pwet noise further to the end of toilet text~~
- ~ ~~center of brain floor empty (slope)~~
- ~ ~~multiple wanders in cheese factory~~

Misc

- ~ ~~more "your mind wandering" objects~~
- ~ ~~update avatar by room options js. save a backup though in case it messes it up.~~
- ~ ~~make wandering objects invisible~~

- ~~try them as light WHITE colored blinking (or non blinking) single pixel.~~
 - ~~put unreachable one in hair pageant area~~
 - ~ ~~make mind wandering more cream colored to stand out less and look less like a fly~~
 - ~ ~~no mind wandering in place where isn't spark (such as gallows)~~
 - ~ ~~even darker main text (then set special text to darkest on palette with [clr], what main would've been)~~
 - ~ ~~change space block to paper light color for most rooms, and whenever there is black, make it blobby shaped like flowing patches/blobs of ink.~~
 - ~ ~~MAKE DUMMY COLORS~~
 - ~ ~~credits and smell reset when go far away. smell when go back to brain, credits when walk away. change how detection of enter poop world works with final poopman in separate variable. this will actually need to make use of permanent items~~
 - ~~make so it registers that you found the primal subconsciousness immediately when you enter the body area. separate entirely from the odor system (set found poop world to true when enter (false by default), set reset odor to true when exit poop world, (true by default)) just do it one thing at a time.~~
 - ~~for poop world body and secret entrance make teleportation happen onto sprite/exit. make exits with arrows in river and to river teleport you ONTO the arrow, to be consistent with body~~
 - ~~end: walk down narrow hallway w/ windows to the upper and see credits in invisible permanent items a single, invisible item.~~
-

Apartment 1

- ~ ~~Whether person was unconscious from smoke or just asleep, we don't know~~
- ~ ~~TV: either True Grit or show about cosmetology, how to care for hair, etc~~
- ~ ~~Soup: I left and forgot a pot of split pea soup on the stove~~
- ~ ~~put real bed in apartment~~

Courtroom

- ~ ~~cant go back to apartment 1 from here? (make solid door)~~
- ~ ~~Use variables to deal with multi-sprited judge and two dialogue progress~~
- ~ ~~(shaky text for gavel slams) "Brother mysteriously dead, despite apartment only half burned, suggests foul play" "Guilty of arson and murder * the judge slams his gavel* sentences to hang by the neck until you are dead *the judge slams his gavel* today! *the~~

- ~~judge again slams his gavel* *the judge concludes with a slamming of his gavel*~~
- ~~~ talk again to judge: *the judge looks you dead in the eye and slams his gavel*~~
- ~~~ audience 1: you're gonna hang for this~~
- ~~~ audience 2: how could you?~~
- ~~~ audience 3: now where am I going to buy my wigs from on etsy? you monster!~~
- ~~~ audience 4: truly murder in the third degree! that's the worst degree right? the one with third degree burns!~~
- ~~~ people you pass twice in court have 2 things to say~~

Gallows

- ~~~ what are you doing here, mr. fireman?~~
- ~~~ now molly, this is what happens to you if you get on Santa's extra naughty list~~

Brain Hub

- ~~~ Neuron: I am the neuron at the head of a long strand of neurons, with a message for you. Who are you, you might ask? You may have noticed that you are not the accused, nor any other person in this ordeal. You are like one of us, a neuron. One spark, wandering his consciousness. Search the clues. The world's court of the living has declared your innocence, but you must realize it yourself to return to them. One spark, one neuron firing, to start a fire. Or languish here within your own mind.~~
- ~~~ have some of the squishy things have flipped animation slide so out of sync with each other~~

Poop World

- ~~~ Come back soon! if you ate less cheese maybe you would be constipated less and could come here more oftener~~
- ~~~ *the glass of cheese on the counter top fills you with constipation and consternation*~~
- ~~~ multiple dialogue list for toilets~~
- ~~~ make one of the poopman's arms bob back and forth~~
- ~~~ another memento that's required for real ending~~
- ~~~ outside nerve: hi, im a nerve. all hail the poop factory!~~
- ~~~ flowing poop only solid when landing in pile and going under door~~
- ~~~ maniken: (memento) hey there. im a model. a model maniken. I like to model all the newest hats and hairstyles~~
- ~~~ (looks like the tiny line blip as is on the barely alive model) hi, im Horton. im a snail. I feel kind of sad, to be Frank~~
- ~~~ maybe: it's a bowl of mac and cheese. shards of computer parts mixed with melted cheese~~
- ~~~ maybe: it's a trashcan full of cheese. what a waste! and a bunch of empty laxative bottles~~
- ~~~ arrows in poop world body~~
- ~~~ the odor of a poop factory wafts from this direction~~

Cheese Factory

- ~ ~~Rat tells spark that this is an imagined, not real, cheese factory, and that they don't usually have giant blocks etc, after all, can rats talk? should I a rat be able to talk? 2nd time: a strange place a mind full of cheese is~~
- ~ ~~As we left the hospital that day, I saw him looking longingly at a woman's full head of hair. He was never the same person again.~~

Hair pageant

- ~ ~~Also, mysteriously as brother rises in prominence of winning the pageants, he has less and less competitors in the pageants, while his variety of style only increases~~
- ~ ~~"and the winner is our only contestant, but nonetheless endlessly inventive..."~~

Apartment 2

- ~ ~~TV: It's a murder show or movie about killers, tuned to a special report on the night scalper. this wasn't what we were watching was it~~
- ~ ~~Autopsy showed that my brother committed suicide, wasn't killed by the fire. How did this fact get into my conscience? Someone in the waking world must have said it to me~~
- ~ ~~hairdryer: scald marks around electrical outlet where the special hairdryer with slightly frayed cord is plugged in. the fire department noticed that the fire started from this side of the apartment~~
- ~ ~~put real bed in apartment~~

Scary Hallway

- ~ ~~liberal use of shaky text in scary hallway~~
 - o ~~maybe even for "this is an important memento" for blood wig~~
- ~ ~~permanent items and a resetter switch when go through door~~
 - o ~~There's piles of wigs here, each having a different personality~~
 - o ~~right outside door: "I'm getting a really bad feeling about this...Brother? Brother?"~~
 - o ~~...memories suppressed...~~
 - o ~~"you can feel the ghostly eyes of the owner of this hair staring back at you"~~
- ~ ~~"Hmm, this looks familiar" "this looks familiar" "from the hair pageant" (for each of the three wigs at the hair pageant are lined up in order)~~
- ~ ~~"my brother would be horrified if he knew these wigs were burning, he was always talking about their value~~

Ending

- ~ ~~Delete what already have in nurse~~
- ~ ~~Intensive care unit blinks into existence only when you go inside (still 2 rooms). the name "intensive care unit" shows when you~~

- ~~enter this room. after talk to poopman inside and have gotten everything, going back outside leads to special ending room~~
- ~~~ (some cool message is outside the windows) maybe "you're really awake and alive ☺!!" or "congrats!"~~
- ~~~ TV in waiting room (or inside intensive care): update on the night scalper. ...on the good news, activity on the night scalper has ceased...~~
- ~~~ add to bad ending: Still, you feel that, somewhere, you left yourself behind.~~
- ~~~ reverse direction of 2nd (won) nurse~~
- ~~~ try fix coma guys head~~
- ~~~ poopman in intensive care unit: This man is comatose; will he ever wake up? I tell him, "to wake, you must confront the darkest part of yourself. to leave, you have to complete all the business" "only his brainstem is active"~~
 - ~~o talk to him twice and he gives stats: "your mind wandered 2 out of 8 times, you found the primal subconscious but did not find the memento there"~~
- ~~~ make credits hallway every other~~
- ~~~ leave without talking to poopman twice: maybe I have unfinished business here (cant leave door)~~
- ~~~ say that's too bad at the end of all failed stat readings~~
- ~~~ if have gotten 0 or 1 mind wanders hint about those. primal subonscience overrides hint this so not two hints in a row. just add this hint to the last case in poopman decision tree, but only if mind wander less than 2. actually may just be able to add one more option to the end of the options~~
- ~~~ final tv talks about sunny weather: sunny slightly cloudy with low in mid60s. it's a beautiful day~~
- ~~~ bad ending: "Everything goes back to normal. You soon forget you ever had a brother. You forget a lot of things, but as time goes by, everything becomes smoother and smoother." good ending: "You don't think you will ever fully recover from this. The betrayal of your brother and the stay in the hospital will always be with you, but you go on with your life."~~
- ~~~ Make memento sound only play once when talking to the final poopman and winning~~
- ~~~ nurse moved saying have a nice day mister. nurse "you're looking alive!". mention "since you and I are the only two in this room..." or "between you and me since no one else is in room" to hint that poopman is only an imaginary figure. maybe second time: "now I don't have to clean up your poo" referencing poop river~~
- ~~~ new dialogue here for poopman, I knew you could do it -poopman~~
- ~~~ outside the window is congrats message and balloons~~
- ~~~ people standing outside intensive won to congratulate. people from game, hangman, default bitsy guy. reporter says im a reporter falsely accused wakes up do you have a statement~~

Credits

Max Levine

~~Seth Levine~~

~~Bitsy — Adam Le Doux~~

~~Borksy (& various hacks) — ayolland, mildmojo, DavidMowatt, Sean S. LeBlanc~~

~~Image to Bitsy — synth_ruiner~~

Phone Ideas

- ~~~ change psst guy to lowercase. It makes you wonder if this will affect. doing that enough may have some effect~~
- ~~~ try final won room silent. make a final wake up and intensive. get rid of special doors and have poopman teleport you to new end section. can have changes like coma man awake/standing, special music or silent. awake coma or empty bed and active monitor. new bed can be passed through~~
- ~~~ intensive care (non won) has poop song~~
- ~~~ make all memento sounds separate: cheese, trophy, stove, blood wig, model, poopman win. different sound entirely for poopman win. don't need to avoid repeat since will teleport out~~
- ~~~ chairs and tables in outside area~~
- ~~~ when transition to won section, room where you were in coma disappears (or it's a broom closet and when you go inside it says this wasn't a broom closet before was it). nurse and poopman are both in intensive, bed empty.~~
- ~~~ sound is reverse memento~~
- ~~~ you didn't find the primal subconscious. its got to be somewhere in that brain~~
- ~~~ capitalize night scalper on tv~~
- ~~~ try only changing one pallette. see what happens if blood room pallette only has 3 colors and you put a mind wandering there~~
- ~~~ change too bad to unfortunate~~
- ~~~ wandering hint from less than 3. not enough wandering. youll need to search the corners of your mind~~
- ~~~ set talked to 1 even in won dialogue~~
- ~~~ check if blood room pallette has same colors~~



End hallway

intensive core unit breaks into existence only when you go inside (still 2 rooms)

asterisk to podium, going back out leads to special ending room

Palette: real world

Scene 1: A fire burns in an apartment room. It has a bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen; person sleeping/unconscious in bed.

Person: whether they were unconscious from smoke or just asleep, we don't know

TV: ~the last thing they were watching was True Grit.~ show about cosmetology, how to care for hair, etc.

Pot on stove: (it looks like the fire is spreading from here) I left and forgot a pot of split pea soup on the fire

Locked door in bathroom not accessible yet

Memento: split pea soup on the stove that isn't completely burned up, still liquid (need to interact with stove before can leave first room)

(use variables to deal w/ multi-sprite'd judge and two dialogue progress)

Scene 2: courtroom with judge at podium with gavel and a number of people in the audience

Judge: "guilty of arson and murder; slams gavel" Sentenced to hang by the neck until you are dead Slams gavel again

Audience member 1: "You're gonna hang for this!"

Audience member 2: "How could you?"

Audience member 3: "Now where am I going to buy my wigs from? You monster!"

the judge slams his gavel...

the judge slams his gavel...

the judge again slams his gavel

Scene 3: The gallows.

"What are you doing here, Mr. Fireman?"

"Now Molly, this is what happens to you if you get on Santa's extra naughty list."

the judge concludes with a slamming of his gavel

Scene 4: Ambulance

"Patient is miraculously still alive, but unresponsive. The EEG shows minimal brain activity."

Palette: dream world

tells again

Scene 5: Brain with various doors leading to different memory locations.

Neuron: I am the neuron at the head of a long strand of neurons, with a message for you. Who are you, you might ask? You may have noticed that you are not the accused, nor any other person in this ordeal. You are like one of us, a neuron. One spark, wandering his consciousness. Search the clues. The world's court of the living has declared your innocence, but you must realize it yourself to return to them, or languish here within your own mind.

the judge looks you dead in the eye as he slams his gavel

Mind Room 1: The Accident/Cheese Factory (connects to mind room 2)

A scalding pot of chemicals pours onto the brothers scalp

Rat tells spark that this is an imagined, not real, cheese factory, and that they don't usually have giant blocks etc. after all, can rats talk? Should I a rat be able to talk

The accident at the cheese factory. My brother's scalp was scalded with boiling hot cheese...

Memento: his brother was accustomed to bringing home cheese samples. One of these had a wad of hair in it. Draw a hair growing out of it

the odor of a poop factory wafts from this direction

Mind Room 2: Hospital following the accident (connected to from mind room 1). Room is actually all dark, story is told in words:

...He would never have naturally growing hair again. Doctor tells brother to wear a wig. Bald, I noticed my brother looking jealously at a woman's full head of hair.

Mind Room 3: Hair pageant

Brother is into taking care of hair. He wins the hair pageant for having such variety and taste in his many hairdos. Also, mysteriously as brother rises in prominence of winning the pageants, he has less and less competitors in the pageants, while his variety of style only increases

There was my brother standing jealously in the corner of the hair pageant *and the winner is our*

Memento: ~one of the other finalist's hair styles look familiar...they were one of brother's wigs! *only contestant...*
He stole their hair!~ the first of many trophies brother won

Mind Room 4: The Apartment (connects to mind room 5 via locked door in bathroom that was locked in the previous apartment but is burned open)

Pot of boiling cabbage on stove: He left this pot of split pea soup. Was it what started the fire? Did he deserve to die? The stove was on, but **the soup wasn't all boiled down, still soup left**

TV: ~True Grit is still on. Is that movie really that long?~ **it's a murder show or movie about killers.** Tuned to a special report on the Night Scalper.

Autopsy showed that my brother committed suicide, wasn't killed by the fire. **This fact somehow got into my unconscious, maybe someone told me in the real world. Why would he kill himself?**

Hairdryer: Scald marks around electrical outlet where a hairdryer with slightly frayed cord was plugged in. The fire department noticed this.

Mind Room 5: Scary Hallway (connected to from mind room 4)

Memory suppressed but now realizes is important. Walking down a hallway where there are piles of wigs, each looking like a different personality, the lives his brother has taken. "You can feel the ghostly eyes of the owner of this hair staring back at you." "Hmm, this wig looks familiar" (for each of the three hairs in the hair pageant) Reaches the end of the hallway. "Brother?" "Brother?" he asks on the way down. Memory ends abruptly when he reaches the door at end into... This door had always been locked, but it's open.

Music is muted

Final Mind Room: **Special Red Color Palette.** Room filled with blood. Realization: I remembered all of these murders; every victim with a different color and style of hair. My brother had worn all of these hairstyles of all those murdered in those reports. My brother was the prolific Night Scalper.

The memento in this room is a wig with still a little blood caked onto it that he had once seen. In order to exit back to the brain hub, this wig will need to be stationary and not disappear after you first see it, OR you need to be able to go out the way you came and exit through the apartment door.

Scary music.

Scene 6: Hospital room after waking

"You're awake! How's your neck? We know that you didn't start the fire. The fire department found a faulty wire in your brother's special hair dryer that started it. And that's not even what killed him! An autopsy showed that he committed suicide. You wouldn't happen to know why he would want to kill himself over his apartment burning down, would you?"

Notes: victim has huge bouffant hairdo

He sells wigs on etsy

"Im getting a really bad feeling about this" - triggers scary music in hallway halfway. Actually, scary hallway has slightly quieter music as the blood room - no need to split it up!

Bathrooms are a common theme

For black screen in Bitsy, just set all the palette for the room to black

The cheese factory is mirrored by the poop factory because the brother worked at a cheese factory and was constipated constantly

Brother would want me to save these wigs; he was always talking about their value

In the final view of the apartment, glowing eyes are outside the window, indicating that it was an outside force that caused the fire.

People you pass twice in court have two things to say

Brother committed suicide because he knew the fire would mean his secrets would be discovered

Mementos are solid; the found sound only plays once per memento though

Apartment kitchen: the glass of cheese on the countertop fills you with constipation and consternation

Proved innocent at hanging: faulty hair dryer started fire and brother commit suicide

Get it to work with phone swiping for it to work better on phones

Add more "is your mind wandering?" Objects.

Make special ending if seen everything (poop world, mind wandering, find special memento in poop world...): maybe nurse says upon waking "well you couldn't have seen everything while asleep" if not

but you already knew that from hearing people talk?

Poop section: why did you come here, to this dark place? Well, to wake, you must confront the darkest part of yourself. To leave, you have to complete all the business. Pwet noise when poop in each toilet

poopman 1

poopman 2 after everything else

Same conveyer belts of goo in poop factory as in cheese factory. A similar bucket filling with poo labeled "POO"

Outside: nerve: hi, im a nerve. All hail the poop factory!

In the brain world, you have to collect an item (memento) from each room to be able to go back to consciousness. Once you have all the items you can go through a special looking door to the eyes in the brain hub to continue

Per memento: "(color)This is an important memento.(/color)" memento sound effect plays

brother hold trophy

paper pallette

Open door sound

more Final Steve Sprite
for centering in memento

collection ending dialogue (bleh)

make poop river infinite w/ variables

fade music option?

make doors grey

paper pallette

Judge: brother

mysteriously dead,

despite apartment
half burned.

Foul play

Fullscreen optional
autostart

background color is color of space block

make arrow grey too

poop only solid when landing in pile and going under door

make pooped-in toilets non-gray

FAQ:

- more animation frames (conveyor belts?) (ambulance?)

- unlimited other colors for special sprites

- custom text box color

- print variables

"you found 7 out of 8 times and DID visit the brainstem"
wandered

- print tiles/sprite/items in dialogue

- non-blurry:

Set size to 512x512 (or maybe a multiple of that since Borksy seems to handle

OR (see FAQ for cube) to paste css in (the sharpness)

Get dialogue box to be paper theme too (may need to use {cli} tags in

make sprites more apparent or at least get rid

of things in their way - brain floor, bottom part

of wood on the stage

pageant

editor)
for text

Logo: GIF of brain (w/o doors and neuron) and the title text

over it w/ custom font. (cursive)

Fetch page background: duotone of hanging scene w/ brain, maybe just duotone of floating brain

take cut of white triangle in dialogue

brain current glowing only along edges

* Custom "title screen" room - just remove actual title and make the starting room the title. Teaches controls!

add pink to the pallette for sprites?

dreamlike, pastel theme from Downwell?

• custom font?

X make door in closet apartment locked

- Scary music start in hallway when look at the wigs.
 - better if halfway down hallway. or just quieter version for hallway
- change sprite to fireman for hang scene ^{whole}

- change sprite to solid sprize for ambulance
 - (make new palette for ambulance where sprites are grey colored, and make a sprite thats just a solid block)
 - ~~black screen after accident too.~~

• ability to go back thru all doors

- try sprite/transparency w/ doors
 - Player (for invisible sprite on door w/ transparency)
 - CHANGE COLOR to COL 1 (see FAQ in mess alt end)

froped in pooo rive in subconscious

in comat only brain activity is that pooo
(you can keep going in the pooo loop but can just go back up to exit primal pooo area)

• credits

- you can smell the odor of a ...
Using variables & permanent objects, get this to show up every time you're going in that direction?
- X try make gallow's text box down to bottom of screen (or near whole gallow's down) ^{a little}
 - try to move gallow's down ^{a little} so text box is back at top of screen to transition more smoothly to ambulance

- make all doors go to one stop outside door, for consistency w/ not overlapping the brain doors



• custom font?

Sounds

- type break
- win pageant suddenly
- ambulance
- poop in toilet ("pwet" sound?)
- burning music
- petty in brain & ending
- scary in scary room & half hallway
- poop in poop world
- ambulance in ambulance
- main theme elsewhere
- silent in first half of hallway

Animators

- Fireman
- Sparic
- wake up in hospital
- solid for ambulance

• paper-esque palette theme?

• check to see if memento 1st & 2nd time is the same

are exit from courtroom right
Mice gutters
entrance starts
improve brain mice
nurse symmetr/
end: "people have been visiting you and telling you this stuff"

this a wondrous place this endless river is, go back from whence ye came and finish your quest, or stay here and become an old vegetable. I am the poop perveyor.

Set up music so that can add non-single main.

Trim scary and scary quieter to take up less space

see if can exit from hanging without changing coords

All three are poop perveyors and play the Dino song. Third one says hear the song of the Dinos

Light around outside of blocky stick body

Credits hallway it will work

phret noise

• rec bed in apartment

end: walk down narrow hallway w/ windows and see credits in invisible times cred its hallway

• poopman in hallway asks if you found him
perma-heart
Just put the grey cowboy in the ambulance
waiting room?

• get non-jingle (or some other) for Mar 2!

Murder in the third degree

"door to the intensive care unit is locked." (always open?)

Guitar → main

inside, poopman watches over a comatose talk to him twice and he gives

Guitar w/ piano → end & brain hub

stats, "you found 2 out of 8 wandering. you did not find the special area"

Phone dino → poopman 3

"only his brainstem is active"

Phone cool → in ambulance, and after Freeman says he's innocent

First time you talk to poop man outside in the intensive care unit (the door when you enter says this is the intensive care unit) he says "the man is in a coma. will he ever wake up?..." Second time he gives stats for your run: "your mind wandered 7 out of 8 times, and you did not visit your

primary subconscious" when you leave the room after and have gotten everything. Special ending will

See how only changing avatar once works (w/ multiple playthroughs) Freeman is already talking to hangman

Swamp main and main 2 (new cicada one)

- Arrows pointing in Poop river
X multiple playthroughs non-glitch?

This page isn't highlighted a lot

itch logo: brain room w/o doors cropped
w/ title over it



gif

(can just make it all in Bitsy w/ title drawn to match Bitsy font, will need to crop it to 630x500 externally though)

Change to "Press → to burn soup" (use image to bitsy and just draw ^{the pixels} in manually)
Set brightness right by lining up the six dots

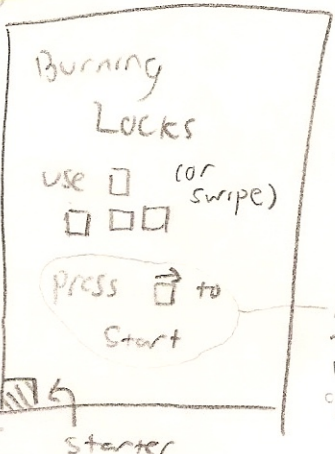
Set game's title to blank & then put avatar in this room

try putting

Solid Sprites *S
here
to prevent moving
(ed A could's)

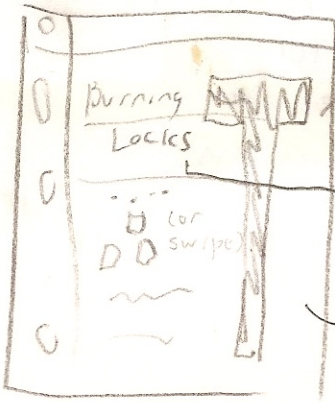
off-screen
avatar
in game data

edit the POS of SPR A
to be negative
make



maybe this blinks? or changes

(use image to Bitsy room tool)



gavel (google images)

Bitsy font

lined paper

use main 2 (cicada) track for title screen

sure all text box colors remain consistent in the kitchen room

credits

- Max Levine
- Seth Levine
- Bitsy - Adam Le Doux
- Bitsy - ayolland (& various mod makers)
- David Mowatt
- Fonst - Sean S. LeBlanc
- image to bitsy - Synth-ruiner

~~dark text box~~
~~grayer text~~
~~light special text~~

- text box: light
- normal text: darker
- special text: dark
- arrow: dark

Pre-process
~~all text, sds~~
(etc) + ss
• sprite/tiles colors set right?

- Exit from Dialogue
- Extended Logic operators
- Bitsymuse (has its own options txt that must be set)

- Post-process
- put game data through Bitsy
- add sound.html and put w/ sound folder
- change text box and arrow color w/ and default text color
- change background color for page (in body and #game)

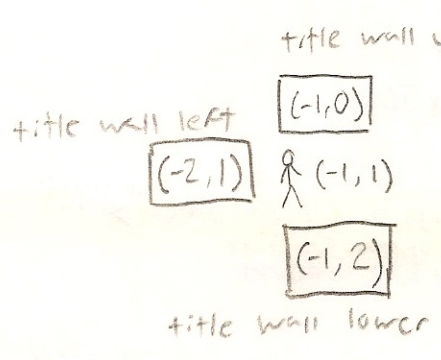
FAQs

This page isn't highlighted a lot.

Alt-click to select tile in room

no mind wandering in places w/o spark (gallows and wake up)

Nurse is in the way but moves after you talk to him ("you seem well enough to go")
~~maybe see the patient~~
~~and wait for the doctor~~



remove spaces from sound names & files
& run through html validator

See if **change window height so fullscreen**
button won't block game window

poop pellets all consistent colors

~~make brain (set) small -> maybe? definitely. (w/ little room to the left)~~
move location of cheese factory wander (maybe ^{more} upper left)
to not be so near head

maybe add poop moments to final icon/key display for wake up
door if have found it

move over pregnant wander a little bit (have to move two)

Why more waders, with a certain threshold to win
(would need more dialogue stories)

only need 4, not 5 to win.

put noise ~~after~~ at very end of toilet text
center of brain floor empty (slope)