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WELCOME

Whether game designers mean to or not, they can't help but leave traces of themselves in their work. It's something you can see in several games we've covered throughout this issue. Some, like developer Dan Hett (see page 18) have funnelled tragic and deeply personal experiences into their games. Others, like Tim Bekkers, creator of *Imagine Lifetimes* (see page 48), have made games initially built around their somewhat cynical outlook, only for their perspective to change as development has progressed, and they've grown older and more positive.

As Shane McCafferty, designer of *LOVE: A Puzzle Box Filled With Stories*, points out on page 12, the medium has long been a venue for drama and human stories – but games that explore the more delicate, nuanced areas of existence are comparatively rare. “By and large,” he says, “games that try to tackle tougher emotions are still the exception rather than the rule.”

Kudos, then, to the designers that dare to explore those trickier sides of the human experience: loss, regret, and a smattering of existential dread. Video games are an escape, of course – and god knows we need a bit of escapism with the real world being the way it is right now. But like poetry, novels, music, or any other art form, games are also a valuable mirror, offering reflections that can be comforting, thought-provoking, or plain disquieting.

Ryan Lambie
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