

This was another essay I wrote while living in Boston. I don't know what the end goal was with these things. I was writing them on a semi-regular basis and luckily I was deleting them on a semi-regular basis as well. This one had some character though and got to live.

My High Score

It's time that I set a few things straight. Remember Galaga? The 1981 arcade game, like Space Invaders, but more fun? Well you should play it sometime. If you want to. When I was younger, younger than I am now, I would play it at the Laundromat. It cost two quarters. I sucked at it. Hand eye coordination, and pattern recognition were not my strong suits at five. I was good at falling asleep by eight PM, I was good at eating macaroni and cheese, I sucked at Galaga.
My High Score: 5350

Back before civilization sold out and went mainstream, fear was all the rage. If a bunch of your friends and you managed to figure out the basic physics behind hitting something on the head and eating it, the odds were you'd still probably get an infection, fall off a cliff, get a fever, starve, go blind, get eaten by something bigger than you, get eaten by many things smaller than you, or freeze to death. They kept at it though and, little by little, showed improvement. If you manage to get a hold of some fire, you should keep it around. Take note when someone eats something you've never seen before. The bees wrap around and will sometimes split into packs of threes. Shoot them first. Fear is passé, but always comes back in style.

After a year or so I was bigger, stronger, faster, and slightly better defeating alien fleets that didn't exist. I was now able to comprehend dodging and I understood that if you just shoot lasers* as fast as possible you'll probably hit something whether or not you were aiming at it. I also knew I only had three lives. Mom probably wasn't going to give me two more quarters, so I had to make them last as long as possible, lest I be doomed to watch laundry go through yet another spin cycle for like, ever.
My High Score: 57300

You know what was really the cat's meow though? Agriculture. If you catch two cow-like creatures and keep them from running away, they'll make more cows. Tubular! If you eat a plant you like. and you throw what's left of it on the ground. More of it will come out of the ground. Far out! People learned a few quick and easy tricks and in no time at all life was better and nobody was working nearly as hard. Put a few sticks in the ground, place some tattered fur over them and give it a name. Good job, you've founded a civilization. Put your best hat on and push people around. If you tell people you're God they'll believe you.

Then the delivery man came with a big box. Or maybe it was just my dad. I was like six, I don't really remember. Before you knew it we had our very own washer dryer. I wasn't allowed to use it. It was beige so I didn't have any interest in using it anyway. Gone were the days of the Laundromat and, consequently, Galaga. But I found that snakes like to hang out in the wood pile out back so life and I were pretty much even stevens. My score would remain unchanged for years.
My High Score: 57300

In the next few years fads came and went. The wheel, polytheism, writing, and aliens built the pyramids, things got old and were thrown away. You'd be surprised how much goes to waste. Well, you wouldn't if you knew the garbage truck's schedule and you were mostly nocturnal. I was 21 and lived in a house with a bunch of friends. If I've learned one thing it's that's even if you have a big house, and even if you live there with your best friends, you're going to find new and interesting ways to hate them. I think that's how

World War I started. After retreating to the great outdoors after a particular stressful night involving mandolins I wandered the streets in search of one man's treasure. Department of Public Works would occasionally put stickers on tempting garbage piles to warn about the dangers of bed bugs. The priest Laocoön warned the Trojans about the dangers of armed men hiding in a literal gift horse. Why get in the way of tradition? Amongst that night's haul of goodies was a no-brand black market video game console. Upon plugging it in I discovered with delight it had the ability to play Galaga. It'd been fifteen years, but my motor skills had improved vastly, I was unemployed, had plenty of time, and I ruled at Galaga
My High Score: 764850

History came and went. A beaten to death franchise of war was running out of steam. Finally someone got the original cast and crew back together for one last try at stardom and came out with World War II. It was very popular. The script of the third installment has been stuck in development hell for years and at this point they may just reboot the entire thing.

My friends had to start coming up with reasons to get together. Class reunions, marriages, funerals. I used to say "You can't spell funeral without fun!", but stopped when I saw it on a bumper sticker. When you meet with old friends you ask about things that have changed, but you notice the things that have stayed the same. Someone who was good at drawing is now a tattoo artist, the hothead rebel with a million opinions works in politics, that guy who was really into otters is a self proclaimed furry. Do we become caricatures of ourselves or is it vise-versa? Some traits become our life's work, others are abandoned with our embarrassing old CD collections.

I still have the ability to play Galaga. Sometimes I do. Sometimes I think to myself: "Maybe I'll practice this everyday for hours and become incredibly good at it so I can impress people." Luckily, like so many things, I am kidding myself about my commitment to impressing people. People are harder to impress these days anyhow. With a flick of a finger I flash through the sum of all of man's knowledge. All the history, triumph, tragedy and loss is nestled nicely amongst videos of people, more committed than I, getting to the kill screen of Galaga. After you've played Galaga long enough the system's computer simply runs out of things to throw at you. Your spaceship floats aimlessly with nothing to stop it. No more aliens to be slain. No more battles to fight. Then you die and the machine resets. The analogy is hanging there like a ripe fruit, but I'm not hungry. I'll let you pick it.

Diversify your fulfillment. Run faster and farther, or slumber comfily, whichever fits best with what you're currently jiving on. Remember, forget, smile, yell, make music, make noise, get in trouble, get arrested, get a new job and talk about how it's so much better than your old one (for the time being). Tally up your accomplishments; when you die and we'll compare notes.
My High score: Yet to be determined.

Lasers is spelled with a "Z." If you don't know that then you're like the chubby kid on the losing team.