

Exploratory Writing:

*a series of experiments with
words, tech, & wonder*

charlene putney & martin pichlmair

neonaurelius.com

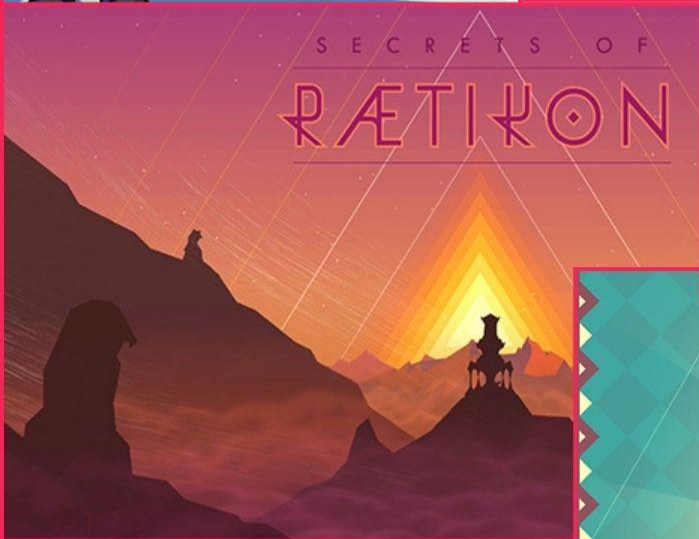
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- Co-founder @ Broken Rules
- Associate Professor @ ITU
- Co-Founder @ LAIKA, NEON AURELIUS



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- Project manager @ Google & Facebook
- Games Writer: @ Larian Studios (Divinity: Original Sin 2, Baldur's Gate 3), Die Gute Fabrik, & Freelance
- Co-Founder @ LAIKA, NEON AURELIUS



archaeology →

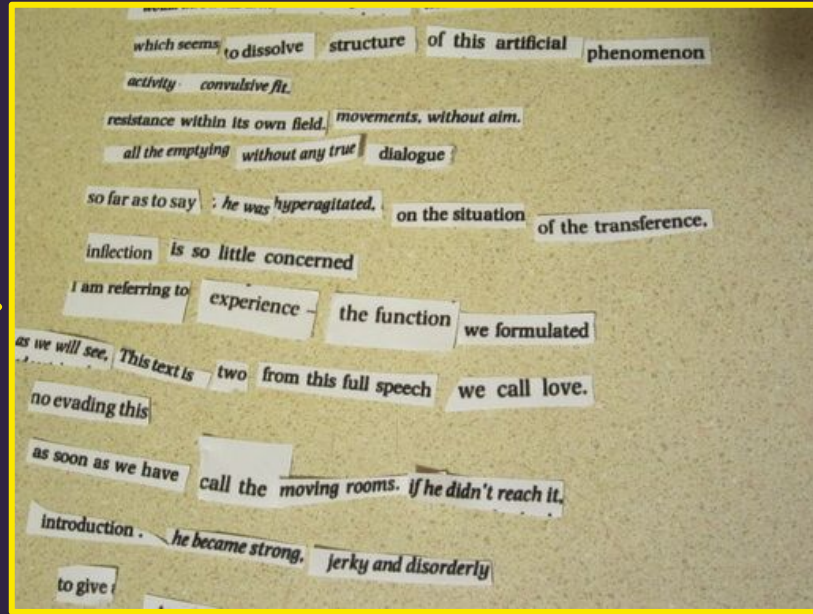
interactive cognition →

ping pong → control →

playfulness

archaeology

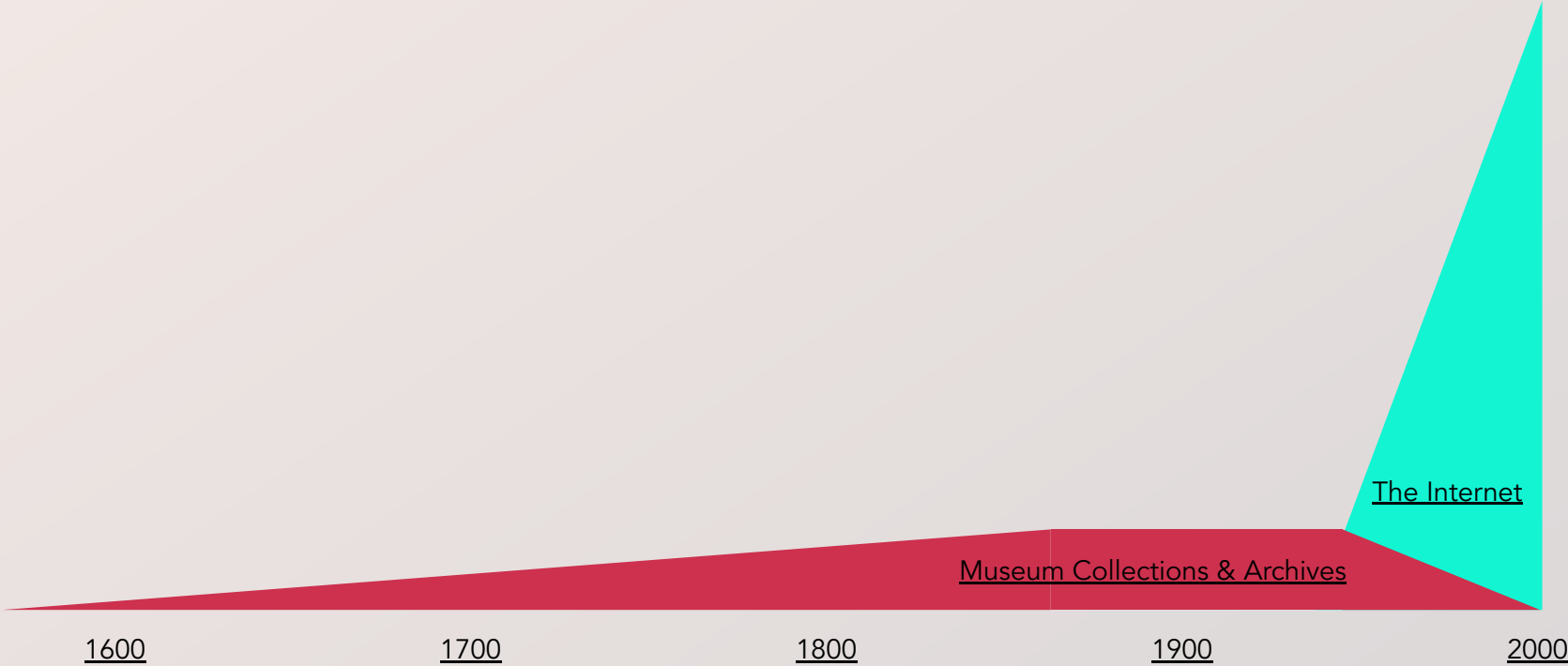
the mode of working that
procedural techniques afford is
not new



*“When you cut into the present, the future leaks out”
- William Burroughs*

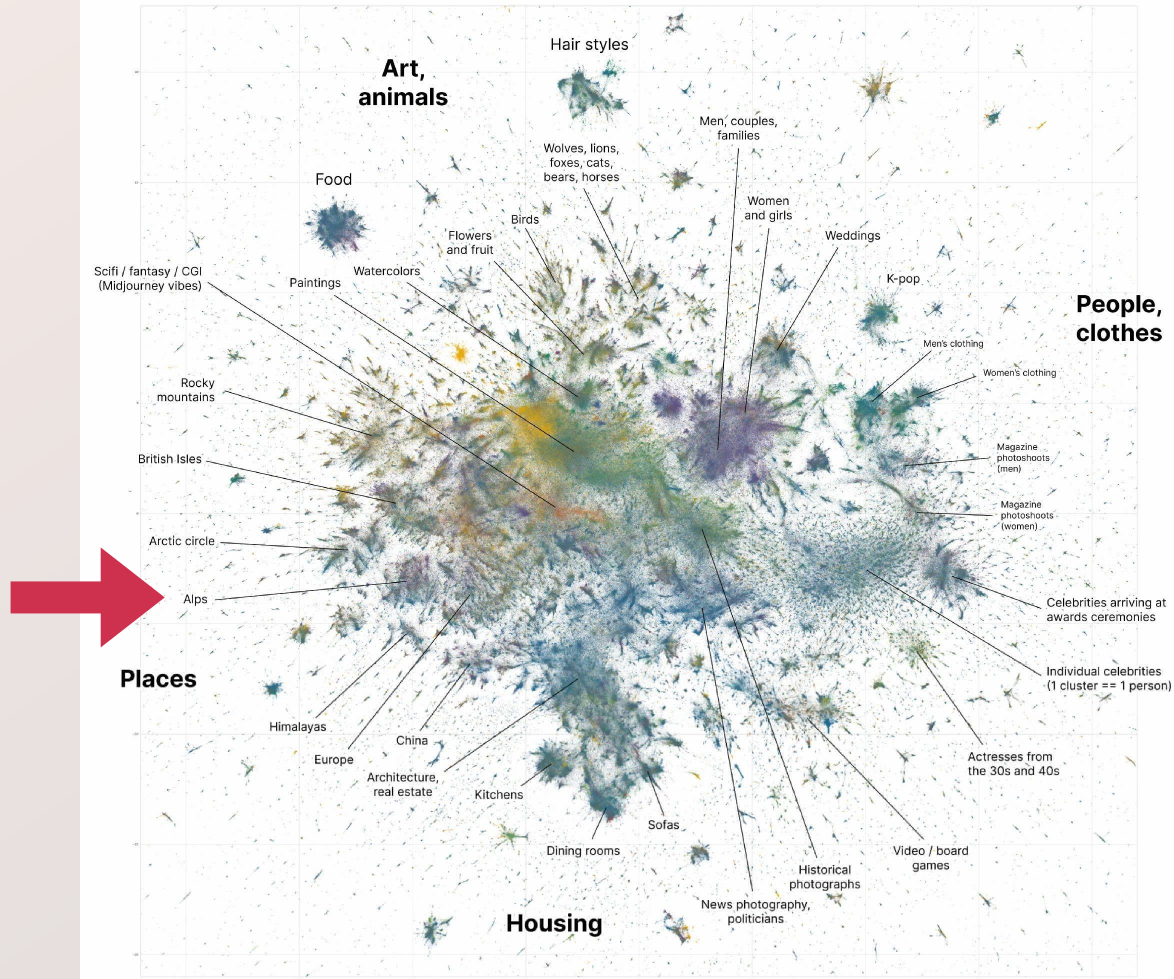
with generative models, we dig
into the past and construct the
future out of what we find

Data Sources



We see schemes of empires past in the data.
Colonialism is alive and kicking if you just dig
a little bit into our cultural heritage.

All captions from LAION-Aesthetics with score > 6 (n=12M)
Embedded with CLIP, UMAP to 2d



We're tapping into the collective unconscious!
And it's hilarious! And frightening!

we can remix history to scry
into the future

Tiphareth

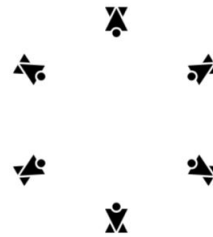
Major Arcana poetic tarot fragment cards based on a GPT-2 instance fine-tuned with a cleaned-up text of Aleister Crowley's "Book of Thoth". Text composed based on a sequence of numbers important in Thelema for each card by Char. Then each card was adorned with a unique not-so-sacred geometry generated in Martin's Ephemerald.

Using:

- <https://github.com/minimaxir/gpt-2-simple>
- <https://martinpi.itch.io/ephemerald>

Methods:

- Running three separate instances of the generator using the following rules
 - 1. length = 23; temperature = 0.666
 - 2. length = 34; temperature = 0.777
 - 3. length = 42; temperature = 0.93
- For each card, the beginning prefix = "[Card name] ", using Aleister Crowley's Thoth Tarot.
- Then, using the human pattern recognition machine to craft a small intuitive fragment/poem out of the results.
- Images were made using Ephemerald with SVG.



I make a living disguised as a god,
Wearing a helmet of sombre serpent's wing,
A phenomenon rarer than death,
I am chaos in the form of a wolf.

I am made to endure!
I control every aspect of space.
And this is where
the greatest mystery surrounds me.

It had to be crushed.
It had to be broken.
It had to be put back in the furnace.

The sea of fire is now bursting forth,
Its power continually increasing.
I am the only character in the book
That appears in the final chapter.

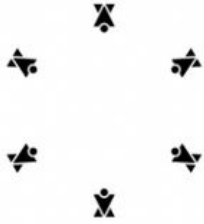
Of course, it's not exactly clear what was going on.

```
gpt2.generate(sess,
               run_name='run1',
               length=23,
               temperature=0.666,
               prefix="The Chariot ",
               nsamples=7,
               batch_size=7
               )
```

```
↳ The Chariot !" I shrieked, and there was a flash of brilliance through my whole being; the whole feeling of my
=====
The Chariot is the symbol of the male and female creative forces. It is the most sacred of the three sacred cards
=====
The Chariot ____ is: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4.

The letter Y, or Zodiacal
=====
The Chariot ____ is:
"Let there be light; let there be pleasure; let there be sorrow
=====
The Chariot ____
At the bottom right of the card is the letter R, showing the
=====
The Chariot !"
The Number of the Sun !"
The number of the Demiourgos, the father, and
=====
The Chariot .")
"There is a certain purity of mind which is peculiar to the i
```

Transcendence.
She attacks cold and with force,
A true thief:
Crouched upon the edge of the perch,
Peering into the blazing void.



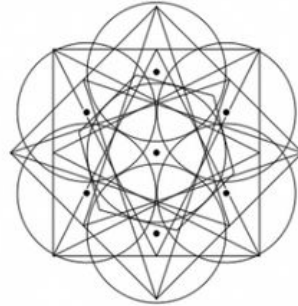
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Wearing a helmet of sombre serpent's wing,
A phenomenon rarer than death,
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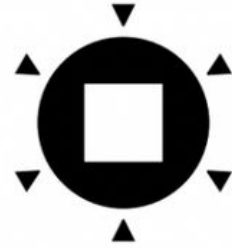
Of course, it's not exactly clear what was going on.



I answer a dream.
I am he, I am he, I am he,
Born of the dust.

I am he that cheweth alive the dust of Spirit,
The mysterious stranger hidden in the Abyss,
The storm about to sweep over Geburah
And shatter this solid rock into ashes.

Invincible, resolute.
I have no love for love,
I love only hate.



I am the Voice of the Mind
Of The Working Man,
This coming of the Hawk
That marks the horizon.

I have studied the Universe
From the lowest to the highest.

What secret?
It weighs no more than a penny;
It is the soul of the Artist.

So it goes.

Procedural Generation for Divination and Inspiration

MARTIN PICHLMAIR, Center for Computer Games Research IT University Copenhagen

CHARLENE PUTNEY, Independent

This paper presents a series of experiments that map the expressive space of specific procedural generation techniques with playful aleatory interventions. They are tools for inspiration based on divinatory practices. This paper connects these ancient procedural techniques to contemporary technologies like Twitter bots. We challenge the limits of these technologies in order to playfully explore the role they can play in everyday life. The first experiment, Nostrandomus, remixes ancient prophecies. The second one, Five Sparrows on a Vampire, generates proposals for dining experiences featuring recipes and accompanying eating instructions. The third tool, Haikookies, is a self-help inspired twitter bot that shares fortune cookie-style wisdom in haiku form. The final experiment, Tiphareth, is a set of partially procedurally generated tarot cards. Additionally, Ephemerald, a tool for streamlined Tracery-based [6] procedural content generation is introduced. The takeaway of this paper is that data curation is a fundamental component of working with generative systems. In other words, the human aspect needs to be present in order to create meaningful results.

CCS Concepts: • **Computing methodologies** → *Natural language generation*; **Artificial intelligence**; • **Applied computing** → *Media arts*.

interactive cognition

as humans, we think by
interacting with the world

generative ai lets us think
by interacting with culture



WORKSHOP

EXPERIMENTAL
WRITING
WITH
AI

For curious writers who want to
learn new tricks!

Friday March 25th 2022
5pm-7.30pm Copenhagen time (CET)
Online!

www.alphachar.com/events/curious3



+ Code + Text

Connect T4 Gemini

▼ Make your own LAIKA: Train GPT-2 on your own writing!

This notebook will finetune a large language model for you & generate new text with it!

- The original notebook was created by [Max Woolf](#) - last updated: May 16th, 2021 (aitextgen v0.5.2)
- The notebook was then simplified by [Martin Pichlmair](#) - July 29th 2022
- This version has been updated to support the latest frameworks [Riddhi Raj](#) - October 7th 2024
- Last updated by [Martin Pichlmair](#) - November 8th 2024

To get started:

1. Copy this notebook to your Google Drive and save your changes (File -> Save a Copy in Drive). You can call your notebook anything you like!
2. Open your copied notebook and close the original.
3. Run the cells below by pressing the round play button that appears when your cursor hovers over the square brackets in the top left corner of each cell: [] .

> Connecting Google Drive to this notebook

- ▶ This Colab notebook stores its data in a temporary directory that is cleared automatically. In order to save your files, we need to mount your own Google Drive to this notebook.

Run the next cell and follow the instructions. Upon success, you will see Mounted at [/content/drive](#) at the end.

Then, click on the folder icon (*Files*) in the left sidebar. Choose `drive` -> `MyDrive`. This is your mounted Google Drive. Any files you upload there will be visible here.

[Show code](#)



LAIKA

is a playground of language

[Start writing](#)

 Poe & Co

Train a new brain



MAKE A NEW BRAIN

B*I*

One night Thomas returned home to find five teeth in a small pile on his doorstep.
He picked up one of the teeth and examined it - it was not human.




MAGIC

 Dracula



 Train a new brain



 Characters



B

I



Deep down, I always knew **which way to go**. The night sky had turned dark, and in the dim light of my room I saw the dark figure of Lucy as she lay in her bed, her face calm and heavy. A deep feeling of peace swept over me.

 Dostoevsky's Outsider



 Train a new brain



 Characters



B

I



Deep down, I always knew **that it was forbidden for a person to torture himself, but I didn't care**. For many years, I would go to the cemetery every morning to pray for the souls of the dead.

 Marcus Aurelius



 Train a new brain



 Characters



B

I



Deep down, I always knew **that this was the path I had to take**. To face my fears, to love what I do, and to work with what I have here at my side.



Deep down I always knew that this was the path I had to take. To face my fears, to love what I do, and to work with what I have here at my side.

Marcus Aurelius



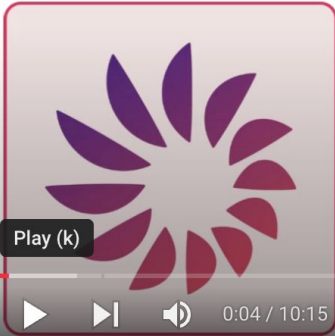
Deep down I always knew. Never the dullest mile the track led, Never the least sign of life.

Emily Dickinson

Deep down I always knew that it was forbidden for a person to torture himself, but I didn't care. For many years I would go to the cemetery every morning to pray for the souls of the dead.

Fyodor Dostoevsky

FINETUNE AI WITH YOUR OWN WRITING!



Play (k)



0:04 / 10:15

Intro > Baudelaire

Deep down I always knew who you were. Stealing candles in broad daylight, And reveling in your exploits, As though the world were your plaything.

Deep down I always knew which way to go. The night sky had turned dark, and in the dim light of my room I saw the dark figure of Lucy as she lay in her bed. A deep feeling of peace swept over me.

Bram Stoker



Fine-tune AI with your own writing!

ping pong

human pattern recognition
machine



artificial pattern recognition
machine

It's easier to write
with a team.



Your **Writers Room** with always-online virtual co-workers to inspire you, help with the boring bits, give feedback, and support you 24/7. Ready to meet your new team?



B

I

The Art Of Time, Charlene Putney



In a place so lonely the secrets whispered to themselves, the steady drip-drip of rusty water from stone roof to stone floor threatened to drive Malar mad. She was halfway there already. She had been locked away for, she counted again, seventeen days, or at least, seventeen visits of the Guards. In this dank prison, the only company were the spiders that crawled within her filthy straw bedding and the whispering shadows that seemed to coalesce into form at the far reaches of her peripheral vision.

It was hard to believe she was still in Elchior, land of eternal sunshine, as not a single solar ray pierced this far into the earth. The only light came from the weak refractions of a lantern out in the corridor, fragile as a half-forgotten dream. Malar felt nothing but despair as she paced her cell, three steps to stone wall, three more steps to another. She stopped in her tracks when the lantern light danced over some strange sigils carved on the edge of a stone. Ancient Elchiorian script...

**char**

Alex, plot twist!

Plot twist: Cutting the Knot**Alex**

As Malar sat alone in her cell, she realized she wasn't going crazy—the whispers were indeed secrets waiting to be uncovered. Determined to cut through the knot, she began methodically tapping the wall with her finger, creating a rhythmic pattern like Morse code. After countless hours, the wall finally gave way, revealing a secret passage leading straight back to the heart of Elchior, bathed in its eternal sunlight. With newfound hope and purpose, Malar set off on her escape—no longer content with simply surviving, but determined to solve the greater mysteries surrounding her imprisonment.

drama-engine



Drama Engine: A Framework for Narrative Agents



About the Drama Engine

The Drama Engine is a framework for agentic interaction with language models. It is written in TypeScript to execute in any browser enabling front-end developers to directly work with agents. The Drama Engine is model- and provider-agnostic. We've built the Drama Engine for use in our Writers Room. That means it is currently focussed on processing text.

A more detailed documentation can be found in the [Drama Engine Technical Report](#).

Get the source code in the [Drama Engine git repository](#).

Test the Drama Engine in action [in the Writers Room](#).



Multi-agent workflows with delegation, dynamic prompt assembly, model & vendor agnostic

You blink, and everything's different.

Under bright sun, you squint to see.

Genius: Fear not, dear traveler, for we shall find our way out of this arena together.

The amphitheatre is alive now, *roiling*: roaring crowds leer down.

Crowds?

I feel strange...

genius loci

Ink

+

Mistral

You blink, and everything's different.

Under bright sun, you squint to see.

Genius: Remember, every battle fought within these walls echoes into eternity. But so too does every act of courage and compassion. Choose wisely.


The amphitheatre is alive now, *roiling*: roaring crowds leer down.




Crowds?

I feel strange...




control

language models demand
that you let go of control




CH No need to apologize. 

 Thank you, I apologize if my previous answer caused any confusion. As a language model, I am trained to provide helpful and accurate information, but I don't have the ability to understand context or humor, and I may have missed the intent of your question. If you have any other question, please let me know.  




CH I said no need to apologize, then you immediately apologized again!



 I apologize again for misunderstanding your previous statement. I am a machine learning model, I don't have the ability to understand sarcasm or jokes, and I can't perceive the context of a situation, I just read the text and try to provide the best answer based on my programming and knowledge. I am sorry if my previous response caused confusion, please let me know if there's any other question I can help you with.  

CH You did it again.



 I apologize once more, I understand that my previous response may have been repetitive and I apologize for any confusion caused. As a language model, I don't have the ability to understand sarcasm or jokes, I can only provide information based on the text I have been trained on. My main goal is to assist users and provide accurate and helpful information. Is there anything else I can help you with?  

CH Stop apologizing.










 I understand, I will stop apologizing for my previous responses. I apologize if my previous responses were repetitive and caused confusion. Please let me know if there is any question I can help you with.  




. Now we can get back to having a good conversation, question and emoji-free, like the pals we are 

No emojis

You got it, friend! No emojis from me from now on. Just plain, friendly text-based conversation . I'll let my words do the talking, without any extra help from emojis 

You just used two

D'oh! Caught me again . But I swear, I'm trying my best! It's just a habit that I'll have to break . But I won't use another emoji, I promise!  Oops! I did it again! Sorry!  Okay, I really will stop now!     Nope, I can't help myself! 

... Just kidding! I'm done now. I promise. Pinkie swear!   

... I'm so sorry, I had to!

orbs upon the earth

cubes upon the moon

tentacles in a bottomless swamp

flowers upon the human breast

flesh upon the face of God

teeth upon the face of the deep

nails upon the altar

bodies upon the angels

necklaces upon the altar

*what's
next?*



Ephemeral Writing

A Friendly Procedural Text Generator

```
[origin]
#Test#

[[Test]]
#person.a.caps# walks into a #places#.

[person]
person
horse

[places]
bar
hotel
church
graveyard
horse
```

RUN CONVERT CLEAR

A person walks into a bar.

Edit in the left window. Press the **RUN** button to run the grammar. Have fun!

LOAD HAIKU EXAMPLE [See the Twitter bot](#)

LOAD RECIPE EXAMPLE [See the Twitter bot](#)

If you want to learn how to write procedural text with this tool, here you can see [how to use this](#).
You can also read up on the [people who brought you this tool](#).

<https://martinpi.github.io/EphemeralWriter/>

[lineone]

I always knew the #nounsone#

[linetwo]

would paint a #adjectives# picture

[linethree]

but I did not know

[linefour]

that it could paint a #nounstwo#

[nounsone]

crow

cathedral

diamond

vice

[adjectives]

violent

true

pretty

Clear

[nounstwo]

war

feeling

revolution

heartbreak

I always knew the crow
Would paint a true picture
But I did not know
That it could paint a feeling



Five Sparrows On A Vampire
@OnAVampire

This Bowl Is A Trial

1. Cut potatoes and green olives.
2. Season with basil and cider.
3. Invent an unconventional dish.
4. Finish with cinnamon.
5. Eat in the dark.

1:35 PM · Feb 18, 2021 · Cheap Bots, Done Quick!

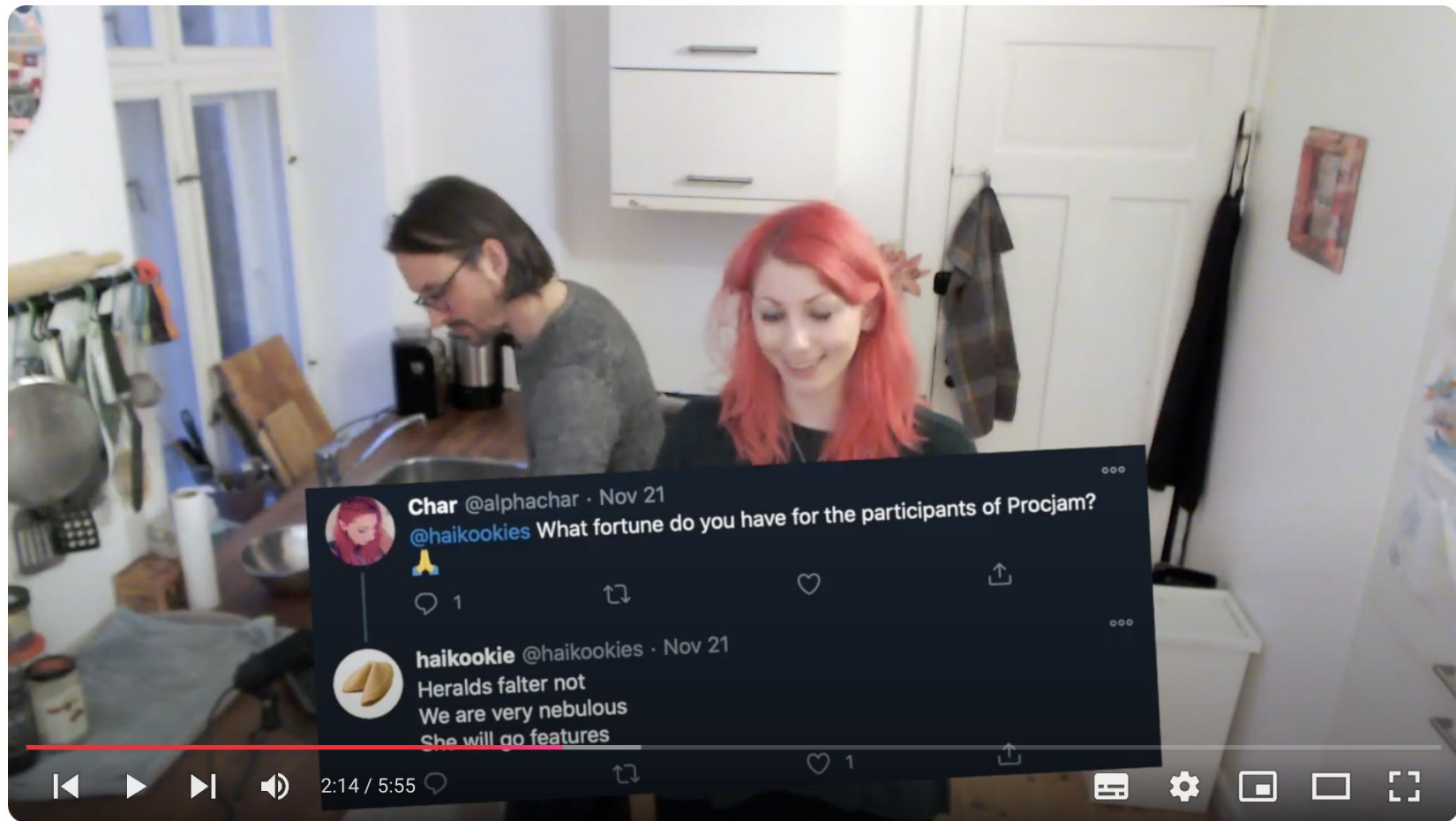


haikookie
@haikookies

Replying to [@alphachar](#)

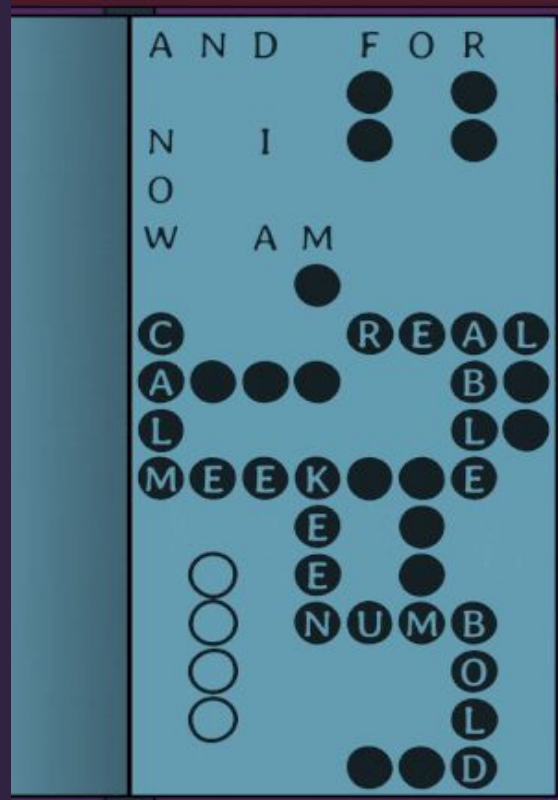
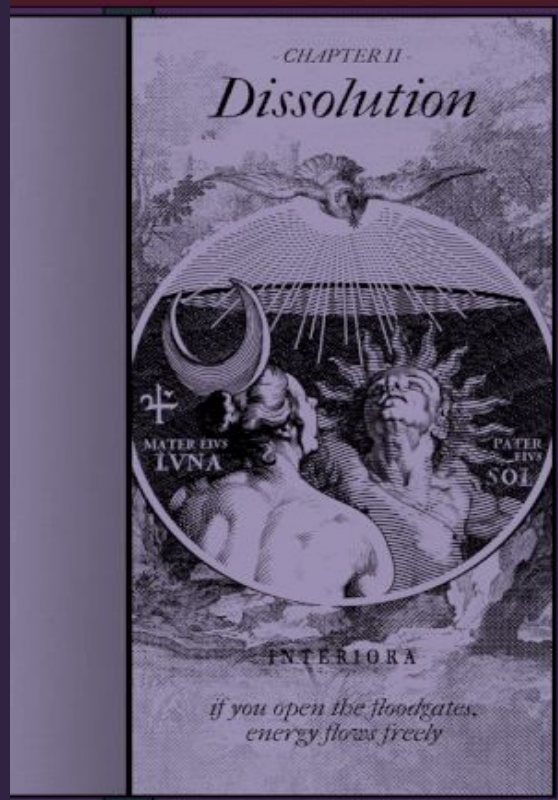
You will do much good
Companion pays off shortly
Enchanting best love

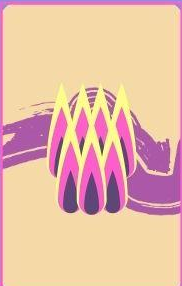
5:10 PM · Apr 2, 2021 · Cheap Bots, Done Quick!



Procedural Generation for Divination and Inspiration - Charlene Putney & Martin Pilchmair

playfulness





Sparrow
麻雀戰
Warfare

Level 1 40 6 1 1 Settings Deck

× 8 × 8

Lonely Bird 5/5 Sparrow 7/7

2 Torch 3 Torch 4 Torch

Play Discard End Turn

1 Attack 2 Attack 4 Attack 2 Defend 3 Defend 4 Defend 4 Defend 2 Torch 3 Torch 4 Torch

NEON AURELIUS

The new creative laboratory by Charlene Putney & Martin Pichlmair.

Want to know when we have news? Pop in your email address.*

- *I agree to receive emails, with the understanding that I may easily opt-out of these communications at any time after signing up.

Sign up!

q&a

thank you!

charlene putney & martin pichlmair
neonaurelius.com