Meditations provides a new game daily for distraction and inspiration

It can be difficult to find time to finish a video game, especially if you only have a few hours a week to play. In our biweekly column Short Play we suggest video games that can be started and finished in a weekend.

Meditations is unlike any of the other games we've featured in Short Play, because I can't actually tell you exactly what you'll be playing when you play it. Every day this year, starting on January 1st, *Meditations* gives you a different game to play. Each one is created by a different developer, lasts only a few minutes at most, and is only playable on that day. If you miss a day, you'll have to wait until next year to play it.

January 29th's Meditations *game*

This ephemeral aspect of *Meditations* adds an interesting dynamic, but, crucially, it doesn't feel like you're missing out on too much if you do skip a day (or week or month). *Mediations* is best experienced when you remember it's there, serving as a short distraction or non sequitur from whatever you were doing or thinking about.

Before loading each game there is a bit of text from the developer about what the game is or where the idea came from. It helps to set the mood for the games, since they can

sometimes be a bit abstract and hard to grok. But these descriptions also reveal the personal nature of many of these experiences. For instance, January 15th's text is just three sentences explaining how the middle of January was when the game's developer went to a waterfall in upstate New York to spread their mother's ashes. The game itself has you standing in a grayscale world near a very abstract-looking pond with a waterfall of black particles, as sounds of a waterfall play. You can stand there as long as you want until you finish spreading ashes.

January 15th's *Meditations* game

The game has simple controls, like most of those featured in *Meditations* so far. Usually you just need to hit a single key or click a mouse. The simplicity works, though, because these games are more about conveying a particular feeling, rather than especially complex gameplay. The January 15th game creates a sense of quiet contemplation about death. January 25th's game is more meditative, as you control a train as it passes through the changing landscape of the Australian bush and desert.

Meditations reminds me of the quotes that appear at the bottom of pages in my day planner. Some of these quotes offer a new philosophical way to look at the world. Some tell a whimsical story that's amusing for the sake of being amusing. Other times, they offer practical advice, like how to correctly launder a long-sleeve shirt to prevent wrinkled sleeves.

These quotes are short respites from looking at what I need to be doing next. They give me something else to think about. The daily games of *Meditations* have been serving a similar purpose for me. It has been a good distraction to take a moment in the mid-afternoon to focus on whatever the new game is that day, and experience whatever its developers are trying to convey. I

may not know what I’m in for, but I keep looking forward to it anyway.

Meditations *was created by 350+ people. You can get it here for free (Windows and Mac OS). It takes, at most, a few minutes to finish each day.*

https://www.theverge.com/2019/2/3/18202727/meditations-inspiration-indie-games-short-play