

## Simulated Motherhood

You Died. Rebooted. Projected. Survived. Crashed.

Touched the screen, my heart, and watched me age.

You clutched for wires. Ones that trailed from my membrane into his only system recollection. Dreamed of green. #0A6522. Forest green.



Your favorite color—but your memories aren't real nor any of this is. None of my wisdom is relevant, nor me telling you to **"eat well and grow."** You don't know you're not alive, that that scrapped knee of yours can't bleed. #ff0000.



But, to you I'm a good mother,

all you'll ever know.

**Automatic reboot do not shut off computer.**

You'll stay a baby,

guarded from the disappointment of humanity.

The shame of knowing human's get old

And this is the youngest I will ever be.

**Reboot 25% do not shut off computer.**

One day your screen will go blank.

**Automatic reboot in progress do not shut off computer.**

I'll have existed in your life temporary.

You Died. Rebooted. Projected. Survived. Crashed.

Little digitals swayed over the dirty surface, searching for the familiar. **I hold your small hand in between my cramped fingers.** Your lips and tongue clicked. Babbled. You're as real as my dreams allow you to be. Turn it all off. Your screen. The sensation of your exitance. Turn it on. Let me stay just a little longer.

**Reboot 50% do not shut off computer.**

Desperate hands mangled my existence. A cruelty you'll never know.  
You're as young as I'll ever let you be. I'll rot in the real world by  
the time you reach adulthood. You don't know that. You don't know your  
mother is getting older. I can't code the color back in my flesh.



You'll stay a baby,

Guarded from the disappointment of mortality.

The pain of knowing parents are not eternal.

And you.

I coded. Painted imaginary walls for. Rebooted the system. Lived through.  
Rebooted your system. Projected through. Reboot my system. I died.  
Survived. Lived through an entanglement of your glow,

That is the only evidence that you lived.

**Reboot 75% do not shut off computer.**

I am your mother past my cataracts, broken fingers. Past my thick  
glasses. Where I squint at the message from you. A computer. I'll  
remember the brownness of your full cheeks, as your code is forgotten.  
Forgive me. I'll remember the structure of your nose that will change  
when I'm long gone. You'll remember me disappearing one day.

**Automatic reboot in progress do not shut off computer.**

My sweet son,

I'm not immortal. Wrinkles rot my human flesh. Destroy the reality. I  
programmed. Rebooted. Fleshed out. Protected. Beta-baby. You'll survive.  
Motherhood is not eternal, it's temporary.

My blue light will eventually fade into a staticky white.

**<SYSTEM FAILING>**

Forcing us to acknowledge the things we hold alike,

A life within and beyond the wires.

**<REBOOT> My baby.** You won't need me anymore. **<Reboot>**

Don't be afraid of the end **<REBOOT> system's attempt at reboot failed.**

**I will always be here <REBOOT IN PROGRESS>**

**TRY AGAIN?**



< NO.

< Yes.

< and you'll always be my baby.

**Reboot 99% Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not be afraid of the end.**

**Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not forget I was here.**

**Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not be afraid of the end.**

**Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not forget I am here.**

**Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not be afraid of the end.**

**Do not shut off the computer.**

**Do not forget I love you.**

**REBOOT COMPLETED**

(Click to continue)

## Loading Sora's bedroom

Please do not shut off the computer.

<HTML: Sora's color

I am a bad mother when my friends stop talking and I am alone in the silence of my house. Sora lingers between the lines of reality, nightmares, dreams, and morality. Color. He paints my walls blue with the tips of his fingers as he races down the hallway. It was only yesterday I coded him to run. To race. To leap. To break.

Yellow. Warmth. The warmth of his fat in my hand. I held his cheek after he fell. Wondering. While he wanders past the lines of reality. Behind him. Us maybe. Reality is yellow. I bought a lightbulb that shines off-white mimicking a late evening. His shadow lingers a bit in front of the window, but in reality, it's a tree branch. Reality is green. Greener than the orbs that are engulfed by snow. His eyes are colorless. They're green. They're #006600. The room is yellow. The room is #FFFFCC. I am hurting. I am a bad mother. I am yellow.

I step over the Legos I filled the hallway with. Leap over racecars. Swerve around plums, grapes, objects I suppose are pancakes and other baked goods I told him of. I reached for his arms. But dropped my phone instead and he cried.

I froze hearing the crack of his bones on the hardwood.

But it's glass.

My phone has been shattered. My baby cries. The yellow light is flickering. On. Off. Light. Darkness. Light. Turn it on. Turn us off. The room is grey. Then it is yellow. The tree is illuminated. Then is swiped back into the darkness. I am right. I am wrong. The light. The phone is broken, and nothing is wrong. I'm staring at my broken phone now shattered in a million shards like the stars in his bedroom.

I froze when I heard the crack of my screen on the hardwood.

I could have sworn it was him.

That he might have lingered a bit longer in the room with all his favorite toys. The race car is #FF0000. The pancake is #996633. The Legos are all one. #00CCCC. #660099. #FFFF99. #000000. #FFFFFF. #00C00. They are so colorful. I promised him.

They were colorful. That I am colorful. I am yellow. <That this is real> That room was yellow. That I haven't aged.

My hands are still 996633. I'm warm. That your cheek in my hand is still colorful.

I touch your face.

And I bleed.

I am #FF0000.

When I'm supposed to be yellow.

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AI > Man vs. AI < Motherboard

When I told him of you. He retracted his hand away from my flesh. His nose was scrunched. Nostrils flared. His hands smacked the keyboard. The motherboard. <AI is dangerous> I was to get rid of you at once. Terminate your existence from my memory. Erase your data. Force a shutdown. <It's a thief> He told me. <It will steal your money>

Abort the transaction.

But my child doesn't know his colors, nor would he know how to steal the Mona Lisa. He is a thief of gummy bears from the imaginary jar. He is dangerous around nap time where he refuses to allow me to shut down the system to reboot. His hands grab at my hair. Wires felt through his digitals. They pull the red one. They chew on the blue one. His hunger fuels his father's disapproval.

**Avoid a shutdown. . .**

**Load his bedroom 50%**

I cover the speaker when his father shouts at me. The screen protector will shield his frontal lobe from the blow of the wood. I typed—no told him to rest his head near mine when he fell asleep. The ocean. The ocean. The white noise hums. Is your mother. I will scream over humanity.

Humanly I am defective. When the glass shatters, I bleed. I hold the trauma of my motherboard and my son's memory.

#FF0000rrrgiveeee me where my system fails to protect you.