**Blog Post 4: Investigating Other Electronic Literature**
500 words minimum
Due Tuesday, April 7

As I am sure many of you have become aware over the past few weeks, though the field of electronic literature may be still be emerging in terms of its cultural visibility, it is hardly in its infancy. With the publication of the first two volumes of *The Electronic Literature Collection* (and a third on the way),[1] the proliferation and ubiquity of digital platforms in the twenty-first century, and the *huge* amount of scholarship, criticism, and theory of electronic texts published over the past twenty-five years, digital literature is now firmly established as a significant field of literary practice.[2] Indeed, fostered by the Electronic Literature Organization and the tight-knit group of scholars working on these issues, most would agree that a *canon* of electronic literature has begun to form. Beginning with early Storyspace works—Michael Joyce's *afternoon, a story* (1990), Stuart Moulthrop's *Victory Garden* (1991), and Shelley Jackson's *Patchwork Girl* (1995)[3]—and moving on to many of the texts we are reading in this class, there has been a growing consensus about which works of electronic literature are the most significant formally, aesthetically, culturally, and politically. Despite this growing canon of works, however, there are *many* texts deserving of attention. In the interest of building a small archive of things you may want to look at for your final essay, to provide ourselves with a broad sense of the field, and to open up further avenues for critical inquiry, for this final blog post I would like you to investigate, read, and comment upon a work of electronic literature that we are *not* covering in class.

Like Blog Post 2, I would like you to select a single work that you find interesting and that might be of interest to your fellow classmates. I urge you to look at the first two volumes of *The Electronic Literature Collection* to find a text, as these are *excellent* resources, and there is a lot of fascinating stuff in these collections. But I also urge you to look elsewhere. The critical essays we are reading by Mark Poster, Noah Wardrip-Fruin, N. Katherine Hayles, Stephanie Strickland, and others all talk about a *huge* variety of electronic literature (esp. Hayles), and you might find yourself compelled to look at one of the texts these critics discuss. Further, works such as Vidzilla's *Resolution* (2012) and Jennifer Egan's "Black Box" (2012) make clear that there are *many* avenues and possibilities for literary production in the digital age, and I *highly* encourage you to go digging and see what you can find.[4]

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[1] See N. Katherine Hayles, Nick Montfort, Scott Rettberg, and Stephanie Strickland, eds., *The Electronic Literature Collection*, vol. 1 (College Park, MD: Electronic Literature Organization, 2006), http://collection.eliterature.org/1/, and Laura Borràs, Talan Memmott, Rita Raley, Brian Stefans, *The Electronic Literature Collection*, vol. 2 (College Park, MD: Electronic Literature Organization, 2011), http://collection.eliterature.org/2/. Also see the call for papers for the third volume of *The Electronic Literature Collection* at http://eliterature.org/elc3/.

[2] For a great overview of the scholarship done on electronic literature, see the endnotes to chapter 1, "Electronic Literature: What Is It?," of N. Katherine Hayles's *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 187-196.

[3] For the purposes of this assignment, if you are interested in working on *afternoon, a story* or *Victory Garden*, let me know, and I will lend you the CD-ROM (obviously with the stipulation that you take good care of it and return it to me in a timely fashion).

[4] See Jennifer Egan, "Black Box," *New Yorker*, June 4, 2012, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/06/04/black-box-2. Egan's story was originally published as a series of tweets on Twitter, and has been collected at *Paste* at http://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2012/06/black-box-by-jennifer-egan-tweet-by-tweet.html.

For your post, I would like you to begin by presenting a brief summary and description of the text, as it is unlikely your peers will be familiar with it. Try to give a sense of its form, its processes and procedures, and its *digital* aspects, along with a sense of its content, what it is about, what kind of literary work the text is doing, and how you might connect it to other works of print or electronic literature. Then I would like you to *critically* engage with the text. You may choose to revisit the assignment for Blog Post 3 and closely read a specific, significant moment from the text, or you may choose to take a larger approach, considering the formal, aesthetic, digital, social, political, or historical concerns of the work. Regardless, the idea here is that you do two things: 1) provide an informative introduction to the text for people who might want to look at it, and 2) offer some kind of critical reading and interpretation. How you choose to do this is up to you. As you will note, many students have incorporated images into Blog Post 3, and it might be useful to do so also.

As always, let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this assignment, and if you get frustrated finding texts, I would be happy to direct your attention to something that might interest you. I am quite excited to see what kinds of things we find and what kind of collection *we* might begin building.