

When despair is funny

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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Much of the most delightfully silly online humor follows a particular formula:

- A single good idea that alters or plays on a pop-cultural artifact
- Execution that relies on computer technology, but not too much--some simple Photoshop work, a couple lines of code
- Loads of nostalgia

One popular approach involves applying the same basic edit to a series of strips from a classic comic. A few years ago, *Garfield* proved to be especially fertile source material. In strips [missing Garfield and Odie's speech bubbles](#), strips [missing the pets themselves as well](#) and strips [generated randomly from three unrelated panels](#), a few insights emerged: Cats and dogs don't really talk. Jon Arbuckle is a sad and rather unstable man. And *Garfield* as originally published was never very funny.

This week saw a new entry in the field go viral: [3eanuts](#), which removes the final panel from classic *Peanuts* strips. According to creator Daniel Leonard (a recent Wheaton College grad), the originals "often conceal the existential despair of their world with a closing joke at the characters' expense. With the last panel omitted, despair pervades all." At last!

In other existential-despair-online-humor news, Salvatore Pane [highlights](#) a project by his student [Mike Rosenthal](#): an Atari-style video game version of *Waiting for Godot*. The joke's obvious without seeing it in action, but I laughed even harder when I watched the video. I particularly like that Rosenthal includes two different difficulty levels: