

CHAIN REACTIONS  
(Mistaken Variations Fugue)

by  
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THE MISTAKEN VARIATIONS FUGUE

WOMAN IS IN HER BED, MAN IS IN A COMA IN A HOSPITAL  
BED BESIDE HER, BACHELOR IS LOOKING INTO A  
FISHBOWL, PHYSICIST IS AT THE PODIUM. THEY SPEAK  
THEIR WORDS AS IF IN A DREAM AND BEGIN TO DANCE.

WOMAN

Green-

MAN

Memory of an island and you.

PHYSICIST

Think of the smallest things you can-

BACHELOR

Little rocks on the bottom.

WOMAN

Yellow-

MAN

Fish, in a tank on my desk- floating.

PHYSICIST

A baby's fist, holding-

BACHELOR

Plastic coral, for color.

WOMAN

Red-

MAN

Shirt and white socks, the same load.

PHYSICIST

A grain of sand. A cell?

BACHELOR

Foil along back for privacy.

WOMAN

Green-

MAN

Mown grass and cuttings- rotting.

PHYSICIST

A molecule?

BACHELOR

Air filter, and pump... bubbles.

WOMAN

Yellow-

MAN

Post-it-note, with a manifesto on it.

PHYSICIST

An atom?

BACHELOR

A treasure chest.

WOMAN

Red-

MAN

Break lights ahead- stopping.

PHYSICIST

Electrons?

BACHELOR

Diver with air-hose.

WOMAN

You ever notice... a pattern?

MAN

These days are getting shorter-

PHYSICIST

In their orbits.

BACHELOR

Propeller on the bottom.

WOMAN

And identify it, for the first time?

MAN

You remember that first time?

PHYSICIST

Spinning around their nucleus-

BACHELOR

Tiny anchor chain.

WOMAN

A stoplight... right?

MAN

Eyes wide and the whole world new.

PHYSICIST

Made up of protons.

BACHELOR

No swimming sign.

WOMAN

Green-

MAN

Willow, on the edge of that lake.

PHYSICIST

Made up of quarks.

BACHELOR

No fishing sign.

WOMAN

Yellow-

MAN

This pen-light, examining my pupils.

PHYSICIST

Leptons, and gluons and so on.

Chain Reactions: Mistaken Fugue (c) Trevor Allen 4.

BACHELOR

No diving sign.

WOMAN

Red-

MAN

My eyes are still bloodshot, dilated.

PHYSICIST

There's where identity breaks down...

BACHELOR

No kidding... it's so small.

WOMAN

Go-

MAN

Have you seen me?

BACHELOR

I mean-

WOMAN

Speed up-

MAN

Do you still know me?

BACHELOR

Is there any room left for the fish?

WOMAN

Stop.

MAN

Would you ever?

BACHELOR

Look, this is nuts...

WOMAN

You don't even have to look-

PHYSICIST

At the smallest level... because-

BACHELOR

She knows it was a mistake...

WOMAN

You just know... the pattern.

PHYSICIST

We were mistaken... there is nothing.

MAN

Falling is a kind of relief-

BACHELOR

Right? Maybe I should get a dog.

WOMAN

Making a mistake is easy-

MAN

At least it's a forward momentum...

WOMAN

Like falling off a wagon.

PHYSICIST

There are no things... nothing solid.

BACHELOR

A little black Lab puppy?

WOMAN

Lying in bed-

MAN

This hospital bed feels like a raft.

BACHELOR

Chasing sticks and balls on the beach-

PHYSICIST

No little "sticks and balls," just waves.

BACHELOR

He'll have floppy ears and cute eyes-

WOMAN

Looking up at the ceiling...

MAN

I'm glad there are no mirrors in here.

BACHELOR

With feet too big for his body.

PHYSICIST

Measure the motion, plot the position.

MAN

My flying dreams have stopped-

BACHELOR

Howling at the moon-

WOMAN

It looks like the surface of the moon.

MAN

Do you know that I'm still...

BACHELOR

Pissing on the bed... so what?

WOMAN

I wish you were here. With me. I see...

PHYSICIST

Patterns emerge... interconnections.

MAN

Dreaming... what does that mean to you?

BACHELOR

Unconditional love, it's worth it-

WOMAN

Light, reflected through that window-

MAN

God, this feeble kind of exile is tedious-

BACHELOR

Isn't it?

PHYSICIST

The chaos dissolves into order.

BACHELOR

Maybe a cat?

WOMAN

The seasons must change up there too.

MAN

Outside the trees change clothes-

BACHELOR

They're self cleaning.

PHYSICIST

Probability coalesces into a point.

BACHELOR

I'll call him Shrodinger.

WOMAN

Red... green... yellow.

MAN

This wheel keeps on turning-

BACHELOR

Coming and going... in and out-

PHYSICIST

Reality comes into focus.

BACHELOR

Nah, too moody.

WOMAN

The pattern repeats... at intervals-

MAN

While this machine is still in me.

PHYSICIST

Interference patterns intersect.

BACHELOR

A turtle, a pig, maybe a parrot?

WOMAN

Yellow, red, green.

MAN

Pumping away, circulating-

PHYSICIST

To define a shadow... an outline.

BACHELOR

I just can't identify with fatherhood.

WOMAN

Close your eyes... it's still there-

MAN

Breathing with my lungs-

WOMAN

Like a mistake you can't undo.

PHYSICIST

A glimpse at the true nature of-

MAN

Life...

BACHELOR

Does she really want one?

PHYSICIST

The water... in which we all swim.

BACHELOR

And can I support us?

WOMAN

Light, through your eyelids, a shading-

MAN

Beating with my heart.

BACHELOR

The three of us on this salary?

WOMAN

Colors, filtered through them like-

MAN

Fluids... keeping me alive, still-

BACHELOR

She says...

WOMAN

Stained glass... membranes and veins.

MAN

Who's mistake was it? Who's fault?

BACHELOR

"It doesn't matter."

PHYSICIST

Matter is merely our minds way of-

MAN

Asking, 'Can you identify the body?'

PHYSICIST

Making sense of our perceptions.

BACHELOR

What's wrong with them?

WOMAN

Green, yellow, red-

MAN

I wish they would open my eyes.

BACHELOR

They grow up-

WOMAN

The clock runs down in the corner.

MAN

So I could see... the light again-

BACHELOR

And turn into... Teenagers...

PHYSICIST

Time is an illusion caused by-

BACHELOR

Shit. That means-

PHYSICIST

The passage of matter through space.

BACHELOR

I'm turning into my father.

WOMAN

Signaling outside in that blackness-

MAN

They want me to blink... but-

BACHELOR

I won't. "Make a good one."

WOMAN

That "Urban Beacon" is giving orders.

MAN

This meat is not me, I can't move it.

PHYSICIST

So, everything... is made of nothing-

BACHELOR

She didn't really say that did she?

WOMAN

Eyes open... and the pattern repeats.

MAN

I might as well be a brain in a jar-

WOMAN

In another order-

PHYSICIST

Nothing but patterns and waves.

BACHELOR

She knows-

WOMAN

Scarlet emerald and gold.

MAN

I can't tell how long it's been-

BACHELOR

How I feel...

WOMAN

I've made mistakes...

PHYSICIST

And nothing exists, but this relationship-

BACHELOR

I mean we talked.

WOMAN

Spinning on this ball of rock-

PHYSICIST

Between reality and our perceptions-

MAN

Time has no meaning.

BACHELOR

It's too soon.

WOMAN

Floating on my back I think of-

PHYSICIST

A perception of patterns, in this chaos.

MAN

The coming and going of years-

BACHELOR

I don't know if I'm ready.

WOMAN

All those polar opposites.

PHYSICIST

15 billion years ago Carbon formed-

MAN

Or is it minutes? I can't tell now.

BACHELOR

I like the idea of new life-

WOMAN

Sun and moon.

PHYSICIST

And it asked itself these questions-

MAN

Why am I here?

BACHELOR

Maybe I should start out small with-

WOMAN

Light and dark-

PHYSICIST

What am I? Why do I exist?

MAN

I think I'm still here-

BACHELOR

Like, a fish in a bowl. Or maybe two?

WOMAN

Yin and Yang and-

PHYSICIST

We are just now beginning-

MAN

So I must be...

BACHELOR

I've got nine months-

WOMAN

Now-

PHYSICIST

To find a answers to these questions.

MAN

Are you out there?

BACHELOR

God! That's a long time.

WOMAN

You and me-

PHYSICIST

In these patterns that we can detect.

MAN

I can still see your face... you know.

BACHELOR

But, my inner child still wants out.

WOMAN

I dream of a world without signals.

MAN

I'll only stay, as long as that's true. [BLACKOUT]