

A Tripartite Abstract of Sample Events Typifying a Recent Widespread Occurrence of Synchronous Subtle Phenomena, Currently Undergoing Statistical Validation by a Team of Independent Researchers

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I

On December 10, 2006, at 1:59 p.m., Michael Dougherty, an adjunct professor of English at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York, added the final line to his latest poem, a surrealistic language experiment on which he'd been working for weeks, laboring over the words during his few free minutes between classes. The line was a question: "Is need all you love?" He felt the familiar wave of satisfaction that told him the poem was complete, closed his notebook, and dashed for the faculty lounge to grab a cup of coffee before the students of his Freshman Comp class could get restless wondering where he was.

II

Meanwhile, on the shoulder of Interstate 81 near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Mario Covello dialed his cell phone to call Lisa Peck, who was sitting at a restaurant table waiting for him. It was their first date, and Mario had just been seriously delayed by a speeding ticket written by a cop who wasn't the least bit concerned about his romantic life. When she answered, Mario apologized immediately. He aimed at sincerity with a light touch, but Lisa responded petulantly. "I'm pissed," she said. As he sped up to merge into traffic, several car lengths behind the departing state trooper, he put on a flirtatious tone. "You need love is all," he said. She warmed up eventually, and their late lunch was a success; but months later, Mario felt certain that the undercurrent of tension born from that first fumbled rendezvous was the beginning of the end.

III

In those same minutes on that same December 10th, Rose Ortega of Jackson Heights, Queens, lay down for a nap with her two-year-old, singing a soothing lullaby despite a near-hysterical stab of worry about what might happen to their little family. Her husband Ramon had been laid off from his factory job and was now out hitting the streets looking for some kind of work, any kind of work. As little Gabriella relaxed into sleep, Rose drifted off as well. She

dreamed. In her dream, she still lay on the bed with her daughter, but the room was different — bigger, brighter. She was looking toward the faraway ceiling when an old man appeared, standing next to the bed, looking down at her with an inscrutable expression. He wore a plain dark suit, white shirt and tie, and he carried a book, a large old leather-bound volume, but he didn't open it. Somehow, she knew he was Jorge Luis Borges, the long-dead Argentinean writer, whose work she had never read. Without moving his lips, he spoke to her: "All you need is love. Love is all you need."

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