

In Twenty Years or So

Father John Misty

What's there to lose
For a ghost in a cheap rental suit
Clinging to a rock that is hurtling through space?
And what's to regret

- 5 For a speck on a speck on a speck
Made more ridiculous the more serious he gets?
Oh, it's easy to forget

Oh, I read somewhere
That in twenty years

- 10 More or less
This human experiment will reach its violent end
But I look at you
As our second drinks arrive
The piano player's playing "This Must Be the Place"
- 15 And it's a miracle to be alive
One more time

There's nothing to fear
There's nothing to fear
There's nothing to fear

Questions for Discussion and Writing

1. Interpret the meaning of the first three lines. What is "a ghost in a cheap rental suit" (line 2), and what **rhetorical device** is this an example of? In what sense is it "cheap"?
2. What does "a speck on a speck on a speck" (line 5) refer to, and what philosophical perspective does this expression suggest? Why do you think the speck is "made more ridiculous the more serious he gets" (line 6)?
3. What general point is the speaker making in the first six lines? What **rhetorical device** are lines 1-3 and 4-6 both examples of?
4. What, exactly, do you think is "easy to forget" (line 7), and why?
5. Based on the lyrics as a whole (and lines 8-11 in particular), what does the title refer to? How does the context provided by this reference contribute to the meaning of the rest of the lyrics?
6. Discuss the scene described in lines 12-16. What philosophical perspective on human life does this scene imply? What is the significance of "second drinks" and the song "This Must Be the Place"?

7. Given the overall pessimism of the song, why do you think the speaker insists “there’s nothing to fear” (lines 17-19)?
8. Discuss the contrast in **tone**, **subject**, and **style** between the first eleven lines of the song and the last eight lines. How would you explain the **paradox** presented by this contrast?
9. What do you think is the significance of the song’s ending (i.e., the orchestral swell followed by four glockenspiel tones)?