

***A Town I Have Heard Of (Mike)**

he title of the poem carries down into the first line, and if we join them together, they would read: "A town I have heard of in the middle of nowhere." The first line is in quotes, like it could have just been uttered by an outside person, hence it may seem as if the main speaker of the poem is *hearing* this line, and then the title "a town I have heard of" plays into that. Following this line, we have "Where./Would that be?" and this appears to question the statement in the first line. We have all heard of a town in the middle of nowhere, and Carson humorously implies that we are somewhere, no matter where we are. Line 3 has a double meaning to it. We could read it as: "Where would that be?" or "Would that be nice and quiet." Carson is using the caesura (like she does in other poems) to create double meanings in almost every line. Now, we feel like a town in the middle of nowhere would be a relaxing experience.

Carson continues using ambiguous punctuation in the next four lines, they could be read something like "A rabbit hopping across nothing on the stove", which would imply that the rabbit is hopping across nothing because he is *on* the stove and is being cooked. However, because of the strange fragmenting effect that the punctuation choice has, the lines could also be considered in a metonymous way, like "A rabbit hopping across" and "Nothing on the stove", as if those two things were just kind of side by side with no particular relation to one another. If the word "nothing" were to be attached to "on the stove", then that could imply that there's nothing to eat, starvation or perhaps death, and then the meaning one can get out of these lines if "nothing" was attached to the rabbit hopping across it, kind of overlaps with the second meaning that I just talked about.

And as for right now, I don't really have any idea what exactly to do with the rabbit and stove mentioned. I'm sure they're alluding to something, but it is a little confusing as to precisely what they may be alluding to...

Amendments

A Town I Have Heard Of (martin)

The first three lines could mean the speaker asking where the middle of nowhere actually is or asking where the middle of nowhere actually is then asking whether such a place exists AKA whether it can "be". The latter makes more sense to me since the former would make the third line redundant. Then of course there's your read of whether this middle of nowhere place would be nice and quiet. I agree with the view on the rabbit and the stove, Carson's talked about hunger within a family before in a town poem. I guess this middle of nowhere town is filled with people who cook rabbits to survive? Or the whole thing could be a metaphor for a town like that. It may be better to drop the whole physical town and just see the middle of nowhere as a state of mind. Then that could be compared to a rabbit hopping across nothing. This state of mind is something the author has heard of, as the title suggests.

A Town I Have Heard Of (casey)

For me a Town I have Heard Of is Carson is furthering Carson's message of perspective of perception, subjectivity, and resulting change due to having a position. Just hearing of

a town, an idea, further affects the speaker, after the entire poem is formed out of a dialogue. The remoteness of the town, not being there, never being there, but hearing of it makes it appropriate that the town is so empty. Why in a town the notable thing is a rabbit is hopping across nothing, on the stove. I think Carson is noting the emptiness of unfamiliarity, of someone else thoughts.

A Town I Have Heard Of (abby)

This poem seems to allude indirectly to dreams. People dream of a quiet, isolated place they can escape to, and by that I mean, people in general. Since it is a general feeling, most have “heard of” or THOUGHT about that feeling/dream. Since it is a vague place, existing in the mind it is hard to describe—“nice and quiet” seems to suffice because it is indescribable. But then Carson adds the specific imagery about the rabbit, which ties the scene down and makes the dream/fantasy place more real. And then to put “nothing” on the stove is to make the desired place lonely, not fulfilling, but this dual-image can work to further the satisfaction of the place by saying the RABBIT is on the stove. It does both, because either way, someone is not happy—either the rabbit or the lonely starving person that actually does achieve their dream of such a place of habitation.

A Town I have Hear Of (tom)

I see the double meanings here as mentioned by Mike. I do lean toward believing that the title is in fact leaning into the first line. I also think the first line frames the poem and gives it a feeling of emptiness. I think the whole thing speaks of a recluse’s haven. A place miles from nowhere known only to the rabbits gracing it’s empty streets. There is nothing on the stove denoting no time, no dinner to cook no company to feed, just nothing. Nothing to do, nothing to be done no one around, a place we all need to get to sometimes.

A Town I Have Heard Of (tiffany)

I think that Mike is right on in suggesting that the title of this specific poem says a great deal about the poem. I think that it suggests quite a bit about the speaker of the poem. The reader gets a sense that this town is something important, otherwise it wouldn't be spoken/written about, right? And the parentheses around the first line do, as Mike states, suggest that the speaker heard someone describe this town and is quoting that individual. And I agree with the ambiguity of the following questioning. The next lines could be read as "Where? Would that be nice and quiet?" or "Where would that be?" It seems like the speaker longs to be in this town, but he/she is unsure of exactly where or what it is. "Nice and quiet" seems soothing and correlates with "in the middle of nowhere". The last lines create another ambiguity in the poem - multiple readings. Either "A rabbit hopping across. Nothing on the stove." or "A rabbit hopping across nothing. On the stove." The first reading would further the idea of nothingness in this town. A rabbit hopping across what? We're left hanging so we're not sure. Unfinished, incomplete, and thus a reflection of nothingness. Also, nothing on the stove would denote a kind of starvation, as if the town could yield no food because there's nothing there...The second reading would suggest that the rabbit is hopping across nothing because it is on the stove cooking. I'm a little partial to the second interpretation, but with Carson you never are completely sure of the intention. Ambiguity.

A Town I Have Heard Of (monte)

I think it is important that the ‘would that be?’ is a question – and seemingly as if the answer is no. there is no place in the middle of nowhere.

A Town I Have Heard Of (mike)

For me a Town I have Heard Of is Carson is furthering Carson’s message of perspective of perception, subjectivity, and resulting change due to having a position. Just hearing of a town, an idea, further affects the speaker, after the entire poem is formed out of a dialogue. The remoteness of the town, not being there, never being there, but hearing of it makes it appropriate that the town is so empty. Why in a town the notable thing is a rabbit is hopping across nothing, on the stove. I think Carson is noting the emptiness of unfamiliarity, of someone else thoughts.

A Town I Have Heard Of Amendment: (matt)

Something that I don’t think you’ve noted is the connection between the fact that there really is no town in the middle of nowhere just as the rabbit is not really hopping, but both of those are metaphors that only exist in our minds—in reality the town is Bucksnort, Tennessee (for example) and the rabbit is being cooked, but the metaphors immediately conjure up images in our minds that come very easily and color our perception of the actual thing. The difference between having heard of something and actually being there, of the mental impression from the metaphorical description and the actual object). Also, as for the rabbit, it should be noted that rabbit is not generally considered a common meal in the United States. The people who might eat rabbit are either those able to afford buying/hunting something unusual to try it out and those who can afford to eat anything else. When I think of someone cooking a rabbit, I immediately think they’ve killed it and are eating it because they have little money for food. Which fits right in with the image of a town ““In the middle of nowhere.””

A Town I Have Heard Of (marina)

Since Mike is obviously perfect in every way possible, which of course he is totally not I am not going to wound his poor little soul any more than I have already and thus will refrain from commenting.

I’ll just say that it starts out with a rather obvious cliché, thus maybe suggesting a reference to something everyone says but nobody really knows, kind of like every other line in the poem – we all know what they mean but together they have too much meaning and no meaning at all (monte-style) at the same time. I guess the rabbit could also be some Alice in Wonderland reference...

A Town I Have Heard Of

This town seems to incorporate both meanings that could come with a town in the middle of nowhere; that is, a comfortable solitude as well as segregation from society. If the reference to the rabbit were about it being cooked, this could be because the town is in the middle of nowhere and a long traveling distance to a grocery store. This could also have the effect of a home being surrounded, peacefully, by animals, as if the lies were broken up into two metonymous parts. It is comfortable in that rabbits are hopping all over the place, and nothing being on the stove can reference the fact the nobody is cooking (doing chores) as opposed to only being a reference to starvation. I don’t think it

gives Carson enough credit to think this is the only meaning behind “nothing on a stove”. It also could mean that a rabbit literally is hopping across an empty stove, implying that the house, and likely the town, have long since been run down and abandoned. This would offer the solitude previously mentioned, but with none of the comforts of a town.

A Town I Have Heard Of: (courtney)

The rabbit could definitely be on the stove, “hopping”, or boiling in hot water, which makes a motion like hopping when it really gets boiling. Or the stove could be hot, dry ground in the middle of nowhere, near the town, and the rabbit is hopping over this ground—which has no vegetation on it (nothing). Good job figuring out that the title carries down into the rest of the poem, like the first line.

A Town I Have Heard Of (Allison)

I felt that this analysis was pretty complete. Like many of the other poems, there isn't much that is obvious to allude to. (Judas Town or Sylvia Town seem much more obvious, for example.) It's true that we've all heard of towns in the middle of nowhere. What's hard to separate is the fact that every poem in this section has the word "Town" in some way in the title. If the word is ignored, the meaning changes slightly, though I'm not sure how much. If it is a town though, it sounds like an abandoned town because nobody's cooking on the stove if a rabbit is hopping across (which is addressed in the analysis.) I guess I really don't have anything to add, mostly because I don't quite understand the poem either.