

September Town (monte)

This poem is opened with the abstract noun “fear” that is defined as the result of the “sound of the cicadas.” I found it primarily important to identify what this means. The cicada is an insect that has a periodical life cycle and can only be found every 2-8 years (assuming the population is limited). So I believe that the “sound of the cicada” is the reoccurrence of something in the speakers past. The title, “September Town” also has reference of time, and September is a reoccurring event. This event is “out in the blackness zone,” which is the suppressed memory or the recesses deep in the mind. The speaker states that the fear is that these memories or ideas will resurface and “crush my head.” It is interesting that they will crush her head “flat as a piece of paper” and then some night the speaker will be expected to do that which he would normally do. With the reference to the paper, I do not believe that it is too much of a stretch to believe that the fear is that the speaker, as an author, is afraid of being hit with a memory or idea that will force him to write about them, because writing would be his “normal tasks.” However, the paper that this will be written on is redefined as the speaker’s head. So the speaker will have to come to terms with this memory and “write it out” on his head, or grapple with it until it is understood. As a response to this fear, the speaker then proceeds to “mend the screen door hiding my brother from the police.” It is as if the speaker is attempting to construct a barrier that will prevent the “sound of the cicadas” from returning to the forefront of his mind. The brother is an idea of something close to you, and this barrier is hiding that close thing from the police, who would seize it. However, it should be noted that a screen door couldn’t truly block the sound of the cicadas, so the attempt is futile.

Restated, this poem could read: One fear is that a concept locked deep in my mind will return to the forefront of my thought, and I will be forced to come to terms with it. So I will repair this barrier in my mind that holds this concept at bay, so that I might further delay the inevitable internal confrontation.

Amendments

September Town (abby)

I think the key here is the monotonous actions, daily stuff that the character in the book is doing. I agree with the repetition Monte highlights—obviously this isn’t TOO specific to September because there is nothing that signifies September ONLY. I think September was used because of this—no holidays are included in September and therefore cannot throw the reader into an intensive “what does THIS month mean?” mindset. There is the regularity, and then the break from that, at the last two lines about “hiding my./ Brother from the police.” Which throws off the regular feel, but somehow works with it because we are seemingly supposed to take all of this in stride.

September Town (tom)

Okay I see the reference to cicadas as being something in the speakers past. It is interesting to note it is around September that the Cicada surfaces. I see the mending of the screen door and the hiding of the brother from the police as the “normal tasks”. I think this is written to employ a sense of irony by equating hiding ones brother from the police to be a normal as mending a screen door.

September Town (craig)

Knowing what little I do about the life of Anne Carson, I must infer that this is in reference to her brother being constantly on the run from the police, though I cannot be sure that the stories in the book are entirely autobiographical. Anyway, it is interesting to consider the fact that she calls "mending the screen door" which hides her "brother from the police" a normal task. Though mending a screen door may be a normal task, doing so to conceal a fugitive is hardly normal. Also, is it something more than just patching the door of a tear-this would not hide a fugitive very well. This makes me think that they are sealing it so as to make it impossible to see through, which would also make it difficult for the house to breathe. I think this notion of closing off the view of the outside is reinforced by calling the outdoors "the blackness zone". It must be summer, as the cicadas are out. The reason the sound may be "crushing her head" is because she is a young student and wants to spend summer playing, though she is forced to proceed with "normal tasks." I think the notion of her being a student is supported by the reference to crushing her head "flat as a piece of paper," which ties her head, and thus her mind, to paper, much like a young student. Also, her being "expected" to help out suggests the presence of some authoritative figure, which to me seems like it would have to be parents.

September Town (tiffany)

This poem came across to me as a kind of representation of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" with the sound of the cicadas acting as the suspenseful heartbeat. But I'm getting ahead of myself. I connected September with the specific month that the cicadas are present in full force, thriving and making lots of noise. Obviously, the sounds of the cicadas is something that is pushing the speaker toward the last straw. There's something wrong in the beginning; the cicada sound is simply escalating this tension within the speaker. That's why he/she fear that the sound is going to "crush my head. / Flat as a piece of paper one night." The speaker then states that after this happens he/she will be "expected. / To go ahead with normal tasks. " This reveals that the speaker has responsibilities, perhaps a normal regiment they must tend to. However, this would be hard to do if your head had been crushed, emptied of sane thought. I feel like this speaker is hanging on by a thread and has to. He/she is like the last hope somehow. "Mending the screen. / Door hiding my. / Brother from the police." furthers the idea that the speaker is protecting/hiding something. It seems like the speaker is hiding his/her brother out of necessity, but the act is getting at his/her conscience. They are afraid of snapping soon.

September Town (mike)

Flat as a piece of paper and mending the screen door hiding, I found to be the two most influential portions of the poem. The way Carson characterizes the blackness, as a zone seems to carry importance it could represent the unknown, the negative, or even be a racial reference. One stretch is September Town is in a bad neighborhood and that the pressure of living in one, the pressure of the screen door which only stops small bugs, and cats, not police from crashing in. The screen door doesn't hide, it limits, it screens but doesn't truly conceal or confine.

September Town Amendment: (matt)

Alternatively, the crushing his head could be the memory or the fear destroying his mind

or otherwise preying upon him quite severely, yet he would still be forced to do what he would normally do with this terrible handicap, perhaps wondering what others (the police? His brother?) would think. This seems to be more terrifying to him than the actual damage.

September Town (martin)

This is a pretty full analysis, but some additions... "Flat as a piece of paper some night then" has meaning in the piece of paper, but also in the "some night then." It adds to the way you read the poem, the speaker thinking to herself that the thought will recur "some night" in the future. There may be more to September than just a reoccurring event. Any month could be used if that's the case. Either Carson has a personal reason for using September or there is some kind of seasonal significance to the whole thing. Sept – Ember... seven units of fire? I don't know, that's the biggest stretch ever but oh well.

September Town (marina)

This poem I think is making good use of unspecified specificity, that is, such words as "that" or "then" that seem to point at something certain, yet in truth it is not actually certain at all because that to which is pointed to is unnamed. Hence it is defining fear which is, as Monte said, an abstraction, which is being defined with lack of definition. It is kind of funny that the narrator is protecting someone from the police with the help from the screen door, which we all know isn't a very good protective device. Screen can also point to TV screen, but I am not sure where on Earth I'd go with that.

Courtney (none)

September Town (casey)

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September Town (Allison)

I like that the cicada is mentioned in the analysis, especially because that stuck out to me as well. I think it's interesting that the male cicada is the one who has "drum-like organs for producing a high pitched drone." The drone could be a police siren, which is why the speaker may be hiding her brother. I really like that the analysis ties the poem together in almost a narrative kind of way, which helped me as I was re-reading this piece as well. I would have liked a little more on the significance of September I think. The rest of the analysis about trying to hide and not being able to seems very astute, but I still don't quite know why the poem is about "September."

