

## **\*Town A-Roving (abby)**

In "Town A-Roving" we get a kind of narrative about God on his evening walk. In the first line we see an almost doubt in the existence of God, "There is no God but." Ignoring the period at the end of the line, we get "There is no God but God" a line straight out of the Bible, but with the pause we feel the hesitation and doubt, as if the person were saying "there is no God but there is evidence of Him." The following lines both serve to humanize God and illustrate his power by suggesting he takes a simple evening walk. In "roaring. / Leaves" we can see the wind, which holds an image of power, and God, who is also power. The "shudder forests" plays off the impulse that one gets when going into a deep dark forest and the image that the forest is shuddering as God passes through. The "crops going dark" could illustrate nightfall, or the actual death of the plants or a shadow passing over them (maybe God's shadow) which can show the power to bring life and death that He may possess. This is reinforced by the combination of words on that line, "The crops going dark the hearts." Which seems to illustrate that either the crops are going as dark as the hearts or that the hearts of the crops (and therefore the lives) are going dark, too. The "hearts. / Of gold as if they would break" seems to be an image of a good heart (which is stereotypically portrayed as a "heart of gold") going bad or perhaps, the good heart doubted God and is now fragile because it is not so good.

### *Amendments*

#### Town a Roving (tom)

I see the biblical reference here to, "there is no God but God". Some of Carson's poetry can be read as written line upon line taking note of the periods. I think though in this poem Abby has the right idea, which is to read it through disregarding the periods. I think there are further allusions to religious thought than what Abby has already pointed out. For instance God on an evening walk is suggestive of God walking in the Garden of Eden on in the cool of the day. In fact the entire poem may be an allusion to the story of the creation and fall of mankind. Also in religious thought to be in relationship with God or to obey His way of life is referred to as walking with God and perhaps this evening walk is an allusion to this as well.

#### Town A-Roving (tiffany)

I agree with Abby's first couple of assumptions/conclusions about this poem. There's definitely an ambiguity in the first two lines. There's the modernist approach where there is a direct statement - "There is no God" and then there's "There is no God but God". One is blatantly denying the existence of God and the other is in complete confirmation (sans the pause that Abby cites, which does create a feeling of doubt). The rest of the poem is indeed displaying God's power, the way that He can control the world, but I got a really ominous, slightly evil kind of God walking around. The language is heavy - "roaring leaves", "shudder forest", "crops going dark", and "as if they would break". It makes me wonder whether God is provoking this darkness upon the world he supposedly loves so much or if the natural world is somewhat frightened or intimidated by God and thus they react as such.

Town A-Roving (monte)

I could see how this is saying that when God is out on his even walk, or amiss, the forests shudder and the crops go dark and the heart of gold breaks... like stuff dies.

Town A-Roving (mike)

If there is no God but God out for God's walk does that he when not walking ceased to exist, or that he never stops working. He is God, he created the leaves, the trees, the crops, the hearts. Is God's walk life? I don't get any other specific references other as Abby's mentioning of the Bible. The shudder forests the crops, reverses the noun verb relationship that we already make. The shudder as a verb denotes a repulsion, or cold of coming night, as a noun it reinforces the foresting. As sin is allowed to tempt hearts into blackness, God on his walk allows it, as He allows night and day.

Town-A-Roving Amendment: (matt)

I get a much more negative view of this poem. I think you are right when you say that God's walk both personifies Him and demonstrates his power, but you seem to see that as more beneficial, as the poem being about the problems faced by a good person (heart of gold) that doubted God. However, when I read the words "roaring," "shudder," and the last two lines "The crops growing dark the hearts. /Of gold as if they would break," I get the impression of God being this terrible, malevolent force that nature recoils from and that destroys the hearts of good people. It seems almost a rejection of God, and with that line about "There is no God but God," a rejection of religion as well.

Town A-Roving (martin)

Another way to read that first part claims that God is only out for his own amusement, "There is no God but God out for God's." God's could just be what God controls, his "possessions", his will to do whatever. This view combined with all the ways to read that first part seem encompass most if not all the general views of God. The end suggests God leaves the hearts of gold out there. This is hard to catch since the verb "leaves" (which can be a noun with the whole forest setting) is set far apart from "as if they would break." This is a view which indicates God doesn't reward those with hearts of gold but leaves them instead, since he's afraid they will break morally. The ridiculousness of this is implied by the physical sense of something breaking, since the physical object is gold, and that doesn't break easily, much like a person with a true heart of gold. A broken heart can also be read into this, like a person who cares so much about everyone else his or her heart breaks. "Brake" even, as in stop being that way. Carson just plays with words like crazy in this poem.

Town A-Roving (marina)

"There is no God but God" is an obvious Islamic reference – the first pillar of Islam, in fact. A rather prominent symbol of the Islamic world is the Crescent, which is obviously also a symbol of the night sky. The reference in the next line to the evening walk, as in night, and the reference to getting dark later on in the poem as well as "gold" can tie in with the Islamic crescent, but then again this is just a thought. The poem has a lot contrast between the small and the grand, the light and the dark, for example, the evening walk is something small, but God taking one makes it big. Same happens with the

leaves and the forest.

The last line that talks about gold and breaking – as in breaking a heart of gold or the morning breaking with golden Dawn. I am definitely going out on a limb here, but perhaps this poem suggests that at night God takes a walk and leaves everything in the dark, and in the morning he comes back and it is light again.

Town A-Roving (craig)

I like that you pointed out the line “There is no God but God” but now it is difficult for me to see the line any other way. That is, it is difficult now for me to separate out “There is no God,” though it is punctuated exactly as such. It also may mean “There is no God but God out for God’s”. As if there is no God like the one when he is out for what is his, which may be vengeance. The word “shudder” suggests that the power presented here should be feared, though an underlying doubt in God’s existence is conveyed. I notice that it can either be seen as “roaring leaves” in the “shudder forest” or walking out in the “roaring” and he then “leaves the shudder forest”. It seems as if he leaves it to die, as “the crops go dark” suggests that they take a turn for the worse. Here the farmers with “hearts of gold” are suffering, their hearts breaking, likely because their crops died and they will have trouble surviving. Maybe locusts or bad weather ruined their crops, it appears to have been an act of God that took the crops. These acts of God take no pity on good men, much in the same way that luck does not favor good men. In this way, a parallel can be made between this poem and “Luck Town” in that no mercy or good fortune is paid by God- infact, his involvement in the matter seems arbitrary if present at all.

Town A-Roving: (courtney)

Good job with references to God on his walk and the power of God influencing nature. The first line could be read “There is no God—but God, out for God’s evening walk...”. This way, God is made into a human-like being, a regular person. He goes for evening walks (a-roving), just like many other people. Nature is roaring, shuddering, and going dark because it found out that God does not govern it, and it rules itself. “Heart of gold” could be a reference to die-hard Christians, who would be heart-broken if they knew there was no God.

Town A-Roving (casey)

If there is no God but God out for God’s walk does that he when not walking ceased to exist, or that he never stops working. He is God, he created the leaves, the trees, the crops, the hearts. Is God’s walk life? I don’t get any other specific references other as Abby’s mentioning of the Bible. The shudder forests the crops, reverses the noun verb relationship that we already make. The shudder as a verb denotes a repulsion, or cold of coming night, as a noun it reinforces the foresting. As sin is allowed to tempt hearts into blackness, God on his walk allows it, as He allows night and day.

Town A-Roving (Allison)

I liked this analysis of the poem: God going for an evening stroll and as He walks the forests and crops and dark hearts of gold breaking. The image that really stands out to me in this poem is the "hearts. Of gold" which are breaking. It's interesting because gold is not something that can be broken (I think.) I like that the analysis mentions that the hearts of the crops could be going dark or the crops themselves are just going dark. I like

the image too of dark hearts of gold-- those hearts that seem pure but are really unkind. It's interesting because in the Bible, God knows all, God gets angry, and God takes vengeance. This poem seems to bring to light that while God is all powerful, he can make even the forests shudder in fear.