

## **\*Town of the Exhumation**

**(abby)**

In “Town of the Exhumation,” the allusions seem to be playing off of the two definitions of the word “exhumation.” It means either “to remove from a grave; disinter” or “to bring to light; uncover.” The description of the fingers “coming down through the dark” gives the impression of a grave or of some secret place. The next line builds on both images because it states “to rip out my little dry soul my.” A dry soul would seem to be a body resting long enough that all the bodily fluids have dried up or maybe it means the more figurative “soul” of a personality that has no “life” as in enjoyment and sparkle. Commonly people do not inter “souls” but bodies, as the souls have moved on to the eternal peace or damnation that awaits. Because the soul is “ripped” out by “old mother fingers,” we do not get the impression of eternal happiness or peace. The last two lines, “Little white grin that meets. /At the back” could allude to the skeletal form of the body, the jaw bones going almost all the way around a skull and again highlighting the lifeless feel of the person described.

### *Amendments*

Town of the Exhumation (Allison)

The analysis of this poem seemed pretty complete, and I liked the idea of the poem alluding to a mother raising a skeleton out of a grave. I also thought of skeletons in the closet for some reason, like bringing out a deep secret or something to that effect. It's interesting that the title is of "the" exhumation, not "an" or something less specific. There is no specific instance comes to mind when reading this poem, except for what has been mentioned in the analysis already.

Town of the Exhumation: (courtney)

“Mother fingers” could also be a reference to the earth, as in mother earth. Soil could be coming into a coffin, worms could be crawling about (they are long and skinny like some people’s fingers, and they live in the earth), or the earth could be coming away from the grave—either wiped off the coffin lid with a hand or even muddy ground coming away reluctantly with a shovel, holding on to the other earth like it has fingers. Good work in correlating the skull and soil to the meaning of the poem and defining exhumation.

Town of Exhumation (casey)

Old mother fingers coming to rip my little dry soul. Overall the poem has a feeling of well exhumation. The fingers could be that of the exhumed, coming down, ghostly through the dark. Or as light comes through to rip out of sleep, the white grin of the day time light ripping the sleeper awake. The crack of a smile wrapping to the back. I couldn’t find any other connections other than the exhumation from death and sleep. I feel there is more but couldn’t really find it.

Town of Exhumation (mike)

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Town of the Exhumation Amendment: (matt)

I think this analysis really gets at exactly what I saw when I read the poem. However, I think you give the second definition of exhumation (to bring to light, uncover) something of a short shrift and spend all your time on the first definition. The poem seems to be playing with both definitions, for a buried corpse is something that has been hidden for a long time suddenly and horribly brought to life. Most bodies that are disinterred are in known graves, but exhumed here could also mean that sudden uncovering. A scary discovery by the "mother" of a secret long kept hidden.

Town of the Exhumation. (marina)

Since Abby touched on the double meaning of exhumation, I think I'm just going to pick one and go with that one, and the one I am picking is the one where dead peoples are being excavated from the ground (scary!). Dry soul and old mother fingers and a grin that meets at the back all suggest something skeletal. There is a contrast between dark and white, I think, maybe the dark ground that the dead body would be laying in a the light that is "sees" once it is exhumed.

Town of Exhumation (tiffany)

Another analysis that I completely agree with. I think that Abby hit all of the key points working in this poem. I believe that the exhumation working in this poem is one correlating to a grave because of the heavy references "coming down through the dark", "rip me out", and "little dry soul". I think that the relationship here is between a mother and her child. A mother, obviously, because the poem begins with "Old mother fingers", and a child because of the repetition of the word "little". "Little white grin that meets. / At the back." definitely alludes to the makeup of a skull. Now, two questions to ponder. This is the "Town of *the* Exhumation" so this specific occurrence is important, singled out in time, but why? I have no clue, but this uncovering of a dead body (skeleton) is really significant for some reason. This ties into my second question. Why is the skeleton/body being exhumed? As readers, we're not clued into the context. We don't know what's provoking this uncovering at this time. Hmmm.....

Town of the Exhumation (craig)

This poem, as mentioned by Abby, does seem to play on both definitions of the word "exhumation". The concept of digging up a body is implied by the first line, especially with "coming down through the dark" as if a darkness must be penetrated for this person to be reached. They are reaching to "rip me out" says the speaker, or perhaps "to rip me out my little dry soul", either way the person is being moved, perhaps against their will. But, "little white grin", while implying a skeleton does not imply a lack of willingness to be moved. This can also be looked at as a person trying to cheer up someone that is in a bad mood. As if "old mother fingers" is literal and a mother is threatening to tickle a

grumpy child, though they are angry and pouting as suggested by “my little dry soul” which sounds fairly childish and naively dramatic. A grin is the result, as if the spat was petty to begin with, but the child remaining stubborn, smiles, but keeps her back turned toward the person hoping to cheer them.

Town of the Exhumation (martin)

Exhumation meaning the digging up of a dead body, there could easily be a read where the dead body could be a dead soul. Carson’s language makes that possible, specifically “little dry soul” and “white grin” which isn’t just a body feature but an indicator of someone’s mood. The buried person was seemingly happy to be buried there, face down “meets at the back.” Perhaps the speaker was perfectly fine convincing herself of being dead to everything, but she was exhumed by who knows (old mother fingers I guess) and for the better. I say for the better because “little white soul” and “little white grin” seems a bit teasing to the speaker, suggesting immaturity on their part for acting the way they’ve been acting. Old mother fingers sounds like an old saying, or someone who’s been saying the same old thing and being like a mother, shaking a finger at what she knows isn’t the right thing to do.

Town of the Exhumation (monte)

Yes.

Town of the Exhumation (tom)

I sense a real darkness in this poem and at this point am wondering if Carson does not need professional help to work through some childhood issues. The most curious line is the second line which reads; “to rip me out my little dry soul my.” This line could be read as running into the following line yet I think Carson carefully places her punctuation. There is the, me, and the, my which is used twice alert me to something more going on here. Perhaps the second my can be read as an after thought, like a shaking of the head, a sigh or a person saying “my, my.” And at the same time the repeated word my draws careful attention to the fact that this is personal with the speaker. I am wondering if the speaker is talking about the death of a child.