

1. Apostle Town (Craig)

In *Apostle Town*, the title of the work does something interesting to the poem by making it sound as if it were an elegy for an Apostle, but the ‘Town’ at the end makes that much more ambiguous; the apostle could just be a reference as a metaphor to any person that was good and served to keep people together. I am leaning more towards the second of the two as the strongest reference in the poem is to an old, gap-toothed woman that used to be beautiful. This means that the woman was aesthetically charming in her prime and grew, grievously, to something ragged and worn. However, this is strange as it seems a rather shallow observation on the part of the narrator in that the grief inspired by the death of this great person is compared to something as seemingly irrelevant of the passage of beauty into, for lack of a better word, ugliness. It is interesting to note, as well, the inevitability of this passage with time (and thus age) as the death of an Apostle is just as eminent as the death of any other mortal. One thing that strikes me as curious, though, is the strong reference to gap-toothedness. In 14th century English literature, a gap toothed woman was associated with promiscuousness, and as she is old and her body dilapidated, the reference is likely made to the time of her youth- when she was beautiful. So the passage of physical beauty with age is parallel to the passage of sinful promiscuity into forced abstinence (for most). I only draw on the ‘sin’ reference because the title of the poem invokes a biblical reference. The fact that the wind blew all around making it difficult to communicate to one another suggests that this person was the glue to multiple relationships, as in between the two people that failed to speak on the roadside due to the wind. Their existence facilitated communication in a group as the Apostles facilitated communication to and from Jesus from the masses. This could easily be the mother in a family- the one that keeps everyone cooperating and functioning like Big Mama in the movie *Soul Food*. Sorry for that analogy, but it seems to be a character that everyone can relate to in some way. Also, it is interesting that the verbs are in the past tense, ie “The wind blew every day.” This suggests that the hard part was over; the wind stopped blowing. This is another thing that comes with the passage of time; the progression of grieving to accepting loss, and finally, to the reestablishment of every day life. Every day.

2. Town of Spring Again (tiffany)

I sat in front of my computer and googled Chinese philosophers and such for an hour and I could not find the speaker of the quote that begins this poem. So hopefully the person is not integral for the meaning behind the poem and the town. The actual quote coupled with the title of the poem/town alludes to the ideas of order and repetition. The idea that spring is coming “once again” and that it “is always like what it used to be” denotes a kind of regularity. And yet the rest of the poem seems to possess an anxious quality. Rain hissing down on windows is not a calm image; it’s a pretty threatening one, the opposite of spring. True, there are “spring showers”, but the word “hissing” obliterates any possibility of this. “Longings from a great distance” suggests dissatisfaction, a wish for more. I get a picture of people waiting by a window for sunshine to peak through rain clouds, maybe waiting for the spring that will inevitably come, but these people long for it like it might not come one year.

3. Lear Town (tiffany)

The first thing that I think when I read the name of this specific town is Shakespeare's King Lear who, to sum it up briefly, went insane and then met his death due to complicated family issues. And ties between Carson's poem and Shakespeare's tragic ruler can definitely be identified, thematically speaking. The story of King Lear takes place in the winter, he's the father of three daughters, he goes mad, and dies. There are references in the poem to death (bells clamoring followed by silence), madness, a paternal relationship ("as childhood / Precedes father"), and a tension throughout the poem. The tension is accomplished through the interesting and slightly confusing way in which the poem proceeds, utilizing the words "precedes" and "as" as connectors of concepts. There's a timeline created by the use of these specific words as well, which ends with the vivid picture of "the kill-hole". This is a pretty unsettling image because it brings death to the forefront and seems like a militaristic reference to me. Thus, this town seems like an allusion to the story of King Lear - mind games, failed relationships, and a hint of violent suggestion.

4. Town of Bathsheba's Crossing (martin)



<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/r/rembran/painting/biblic1/bathsheb.html>

Town of Bathsheba's Crossing

The title probably alludes to the name Bathsheba and not an actual crossing. This is a biblical reference to a woman named Bathsheba. She was a soldier's wife, and that soldier was off in battle. The king, David, noticed Bathsheba and seduced her. He ordered her husband to the front line in battle so he would surely die. After the soldier's death, David felt free to take Bathsheba as his lover and wife. This is a story of coveting, Bathsheba being a temptation, the object to be coveted by man. Then there's the constant mention of Rembrandt in this poem. He was an artist who worked and died in Amsterdam. Though he enjoyed financial success, his family all died before him, including his two wives and children. He painted a piece called "Bathsheba" which shows Bathsheba as she receives the message of King David summoning her. The next part of the title, "Crossing", can mean different things. Of course, a town can have a crossing between two streets or just a general town crossing. To cross somebody is to wrong them, so the poem might allude to how Bathsheba crossed her husband. Also, in more a stretch, Bathsheba is crossing her legs in the painting, so the poem may be about the contrast of a lady-like attitude with not so lady-like behavior, or perhaps the crossing of the legs signifying a resistance to infidelity. The beginning of the poem obviously describes the painting with the mention of a woman rippling with nakedness (wrinkles) and a letter, along with the mention of painting. Carson describes this painting as a "drop of life". With the way the lines end with periods, the reader can choose to read the poem line by line or to connect line to line. Many lines makes this possible like "he shows/ Him bewildered" and "As if just in/ From journeys." "Paints Rembrandt's stranger," could refer to Bathsheba as Rembrandt's stranger or the stranger actually doing the painting. Bathsheba's train of thought which Carson and the reader can relate to is described in the lines saying "A letter in her hand she is. Traveling. Out of a thought toward us." Bathsheba thinks about being unfaithful and travels out of that thought to actually do it, but she also travels toward us, bringing us the readers into the picture, so to speak. The language of the poem sounds sexual as well, with the word "inside" framing the beginning and the amount of "in" and "out" in the poem, along with "her foam arrives before her even when he paints Rembrandt's stranger." The gender pronouns specifically point to a tension there, so the reader can arrive at the connections Carson plays with.

5. Sylvia Town (Marina)

So I decided that it was just going to be about Sylvia Plath. Hey, she was suicidal and

stuck her head in the oven - that's *poetic!* The reference to burning also seems to hint that way, actually, starving and burning both can be easily related to a stove or oven or what have you. "Came green April" was a confusing line... I recall the character in Bell Jar was called something Greenwood, or so I have heard, having not read the book myself... or I could go into Sylvia Plath's biography where it usually says that she had a break from writing and then began again in April of some year that I can not evoke at this time. Then there are the eyes, which could be a pun on the 'I' s, and definitely signify distortion or disconnection of some sort. I could be completely and totally off with my assumption of Sylvia Plath, but I can't really think of any other famed enough Sylvias. Another thing about April comes from The Wasteland - "April is the cruelest month of the year" I think it goes (pardon my misquoting if any)... it's the beginning of The Wasteland. April as a destroyer, not a creator is presented in The Wasteland, and same thing happens in Carson's poem, which is why I kind of made the connection... Other than all the ramblings above, I am slightly confused yet intrigued to the extreme...

6. Town of the Dragon Vein (matt)

Recalling Carson's references to Chinese culture and literature in "The Anthropology of Water" as well as her citation of the Tao Te Ching in the introduction to "The Life of Towns," I quickly realized that the phrase "Dragon Vein" was probably a Chinese term and subsequently punched the two words into Google. According to "Feng-Shui Fundamentals," the energy that flows over mountains is called a "mountain dragon" and the pathway through which it flows is known as a "dragon vein." There are certain geological features that must be present in a mountain chain before it can be considered a "dragon vein," which essentially boils down to whether the mountains look like a dragon or not. "Dragon veins" are said to embody yang ("expansive," "initiating") energy. So, this is what Carson is most likely referencing (with that mention of "mountains" there can be little doubt). She draws a parallel between a dragon vein at night and a person's dreams. Carson seems to be describing a flow of energy, first between the mountains and some other entity (perhaps the dragons themselves?) and then involves the reader's dream experience. However, her unconventional punctuation has left some things unclear to me: the noise of the energy flow appears to be "withdrawn" early in the morning, yet later it has to be given back at night—I can't sort out the timeline and this confuses me. There is energy flowing, but when, and to who? I want to draw connections between the dragon vein and dreaming, I feel impelled to believe that the dream energy and the dragon vein are part of the same energy flow. However, since "Your nightly dreams. Are taps open reversely," that doesn't seem likely. From my understanding, a reverse tap doesn't produce liquid so sucks it up. This would fit with the energy likewise being "withdrawn" from the mountains, except for the fact that the energy is given back at night, when most people are sleeping. Carson seems to be toying with the Feng-Shui imagery, hinting with it but never being entirely coherent. This could be an example of the old Taoist saying "The Way that can be taught is not the Way." However, I can't help but think back to another quotation, from Angel:

WESLEY: "Feng shui."

GUNN: "Right. What's that mean again?"

WESLEY: "That people will believe anything."

Carson uses the imagery of Feng-Shui, but everything has a hint of the fantastic to it that, combined with what appears to be a deliberate lack of coherence, suggests that she is not taking everything about the “dragon vein” seriously. She uses this image of traditional Chinese mysticism to suggest powerful ideas about our connection with the world, about the nature of dreams, but it doesn’t appear that she actually believes. Which I believe helps this poem maintain the surreality that is invoked in the first line: “If you wake up too early listen for it.” Nothing seems quite real early in the morning and the poem uses its reference to dragon veins to capture that same quality.

7. Emily Town (Courtney)

This poem alludes to death, perhaps by foul play. The poem plays off of memories and “messages”. Death is evident in this poem because of the ominous sound of the lines along with words such as “haunts” “left” and “angels”. It is an ominous little poem because there is a period at the end of each line, which creates suspense and further adds to a feeling of death/dying (a period is the end of a sentence, death is the end of a life). “Riches in a little room. / Is a phrase that haunts” seems to imply that whoever the speaker of this poem is speaking about is involved with the death through foul play. Riches would haunt you if they were stolen from someone after you killed them: they would bring memories back, in a Poe-esque kind of way. The poem plays off of different settings “Snow or a library” almost as if to say that a death occurred during the winter in a library. “Emily” in the title ties in with the “her” in the poem—perhaps Emily is the killer. It also seems as though the speaker is speaking to the deceased person, a ghost.

8. Wolf Town (Krista)

The allusion I am picking up here is Native American and South American mythology. Bears, wolves, porcupine quills, salmon, eagles, and bone all come from mythologies in these traditions. Wolf is a trickster. Bears are power animals. Salmon is a life force. Eagles are wisdom. These are the only things I can think of, though I’m not sure where Tigers fits with this analysis. The venom in this poem makes me wonder if it isn’t a curse being worked on the usurpers of America and others who have come in throughout history and wiped out various tribes and peoples. Then again, it ends on a strange note that seems to reverse the hatred of the poem, or work a more subtle anger on the “them” of the poem. Chanting and a shamanic kind of rhythm add to my concept of a curse.

10. 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.

11. Memory Town (tiffany)

I’m unsure of whom the speaker of this poem is, but the underlying concept of the verse is clear. “Radioactive material” is an allusion to memory. Memories can be brutal, dangerous, if uncovered just like radioactive material. We, as a society, go to great lengths to make sure that toxic substances are buried deep so that they can’t contaminate anything. As people, we do the same thing with painful remembrances; we bury them, try to forget them so that they can’t come back to haunt us. And yet, the most random things can trigger memory – a smell, an action, a saying, maybe painting. I’m not sure if painting is an allusion to something. Painting could be the actual artistic act or “to describe vividly”, either of which could work in this situation. Both work as triggers and then the speaker of the poem asks how deep each memory needs to be planted to be forgotten, unable to do damage.

12. Luck Town (Courtney)

This poem alludes to the desperation of parents trying to provide for a family. It plays off of an almost biblical scene of a man preparing to kill his child for the “greater good”. “Digging a hole” is the first line, which ties into “A man struck gold”, the last line. These lines bring the poem in a circular path, more to the topic of mining. A miner digs for riches, to support himself and his family, if he has one. The man in this poem is digging to bury his child, the support his family. Perhaps he is forcing his child to work under harsh circumstances, to provide extra funds for the family (“food for his aged mother”). Or, perhaps he is making his son go to school to get an education and provide for the family once he is able. The act of simply burying his son alive wouldn’t provide any food for the mother, unless they were waiting for him to die to eat him alive, or he would attract a

hungry beast that could be killed from secrecy and taken home for a meal. In any way, the man somehow gets what he is looking for—strikes gold, by burying his son, which implies that he is able to get that food he is needing to get.

13. Death Town (tiffany)

I think that this is an interesting way to approach the eeriness of death because the intimidation is found in noise instead of silence. I feel like the speaker is unsettled whenever they pause because they expect silence (a natural result of death) but are confronted with noise instead. It kind of creates a claustrophobic situation, like the speaker can't escape from something...And then there's the "Its" in the second line. It seems as if this should be a contraction, short for "it is", but instead it's taking on a possessive form, which could be an indicator of the day's noise. I'm not sure what this would do because I'm not sure of what that noise could be. It could be the lack of noise. It could be noise despite death as suggested early. Not sure.

14. Town of Finding Out About the Love of God (monte)

What first struck me in this poem is that the first line uses the verb "had made" which is past perfect and means that the action was done and completed in the past. So the speaker committed a mistake before this day, and that mistake was completed before this day. I think that is important because the mistake is not something that is continuing into this day, therefore the mistake is at least not immediately directly responsible for the result stated in this poem. That result is that "my suitcase is ready." This means that the speaker is now prepared to leave, or go on the journey. The next line, "two hardboiled eggs" could likely be read as both renaming what the speaker's readied suitcase is, and also being the subject of the next line, "for the journey are stored." Hardboiled eggs are pictures of stagnant and greatly mutilated life. So the speaker committed a mistake sometime in the past, and now he is ready with his two-hardboiled eggs that are being stored – present progressive tense, insinuating that they have been there for some time. These preparations are stored in places where his eyes were like a current carrying a twig. I connected these four lines in my interpretation, because I made a connection between eyes and current. These preparations are stored in the same place that once housed the speaker's tears. These past tears are the things that made the speaker audible to you. I do not understand who the "you" could be in this line, if not God, as mentioned in the title.

This poem is saying that the speaker made a mistake at some point in the past, and it resulted in great sadness. Either as a result of the mistake or as resentment from the pain, the speaker replaced his tears with a lifeless condition – so as to not feel the pain again. This notes irony in the title, because if the "you" is God, then the speaker is in resentment of being made known to God, because it was not His love that brought the speaker there.

18. Town of the Sound of a Twig Breaking (Krista)

Obviously this poem deals with a kind of hunting. The Twig Breaking is a common theme/image of revelation. If a hunter breaks a twig it alerts the animal to his or her presence. If an animal breaks the twig it alerts the hunter. The poem is comparing the people of the town to hunters with knives “Their faces I thought were knives.” Working with that metaphor, the hunter in the last four sentences is listening to hard to the person who is under scrutiny it makes the person want to kill themselves. With the idea of prey, the death of the prey could be a gift, but the ominous word choices (“waited” “impales”) imply that it is more a spell of some sort. The prey somehow falls into line with the view of the hunter, the person being watched somehow falls into line with the watcher, and takes on the “knife” of the watcher/hunter. The knife could be anything, but I think this poem is alluding to judgements and perceptions of people regarding an outsider, or perhaps an insider who doesn’t align with the norm.

19. Love Town (Tom)

In *Love Town* I am not quite sure what the allusions are except maybe that what is being described is that which is loved, “running in wet corn” for example. In Love Town there is an interesting play between corn and braids. The poem which is really short reads:

She ran in.

Wet corn.

Yellow Braid.

Down her back.

The yellow braid here can assumed to be hair as in hair braided and laying on her back. The yellow braid can also be corn as corn is yellow and braided in appearance, and if running in a field of corn could be down her back. It is interesting that each line plays off of the other.

20 . Town of the Death of Sin

21. 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...

22. Desert Town

I felt that the main character of "Desert Town", the sage was an indian medicine man. Medicine men of many desert tribes including Hopi, Navajo, Apache, and many others often used long spiritual trips in the desert called spirit quests. These crucial spiritual experiences played a central role to a medicine man's powers and status in community. Medicine men also played the role of doctor for his tribe calling on his scientific and magical knowledge to heal people. There are several stories about extremely powerful medicine men having the ability to revive the dead through their magic. The connection between the medicine man's spirit, the land, and his responsibility to his people is inseparable.

The first line "Desert Town", "When the sage came back in." sets an entire scope of expectations for the poem. There is a sense of mystery drawn from the sentences ambiguous but pointed nature. It tells the reader who, when, and where, but still we don't really know when, who, or where at all. In the poem Carson emphasizes movement and direction, lending to the quest-like narrative of the poem. The poem contrasts meanings connotations and even tone to bring the reader in closer. "He propped up the disciples again like sparrows. On a clothesline." I like the contrast of disciples being propped like sparrows again, and by the way Carson breaks the line and punctuation but lets the meanings run through allows for various readings and interpretations.

I liked the contemplative voice of the poem that mused somewhat at those incapable of his vantage point. "To the cutting away ways." and "Inside him his bones by now liquid and he saw." Away ways, has the sound meaning and mental imagery to add to the poem. In examples such as these the poem speaks of the sage's powers.

23. Holderlin Town

The title alludes to the German poet, Johann Christian Friedrich Hölderlin. He wrote around the early 1800s and was one of the greatest German lyric poets melding classical and Christian themes in his works. As a man, Hölderlin was often suffering and pessimistic, lacking both money and recognition. He got more attention long after his death. The first line of Carson's poem directly addresses Hölderlin, "You are mad to mourn alone." This line is also relevant to Hölderlin's life because he was believed to suffer from schizophrenia or some form of insanity in his later years. Anne Carson writes this poem as her view on the person of Hölderlin. She responds to Hölderlin's attitude by playing to it. The tone in Carson's poem seems helpless, especially with the final line describing props hurtling past. She frames the poem with the word "you" to make sure the reader pays attention to the addressee. She seems to be saying, "Yes Hölderlin, the wells have gone dry, there's light but all the way at the bottom, everything's moving around you, and that's why you are going crazy." She agrees with his view to an extent, but calls Hölderlin mad to mourn his view of the world alone. Other people can relate.

24. Town of the Noon Stack (tom)

Town of the Noon Stack is a rather odd and short poem of five lines each line being one word, "midi". Each line is stacked upon each other which I think is why the title contains the word "stack". A midi is the interface between an electronic musical instrument and a computer. I am not sure that that is what is being referred to here or not, if so then it plays off of the word "noon" in the title in that a midi is in the middle of an instrument and a computer as noon is the middle of the day. I thought that perhaps midi was symbolic for midday or the middle of the word middle but if the later is the case the spelling doesn't match up, then again this is poetry. In Thomas Town it is the periods that threw me off. If the poem is read as one sentence it makes sense saying that each thought is always followed by another thought. The periods after never, other, and followed disrupt the flow and make the meaning allusive and perhaps that is the allusion. That the meaning which is there, is sometimes as allusive as the thought or the word that is at the tip of your tongue which though being there is so hard to find. The poem reads like this:

25. Town of Greta Garbo (matt)

Well, I'm not exactly a film buff, but I take it that Greta Garbo was something of a star in the 20s and 30s. I can see her being called an "idol" and, depending on when this poem was written ("Plainwater" was published in 1995), it could be in response to Garbo's death in 1990. If that's the case it describes something of an overreaction to the news, with damage to both the speaker's body and the world around her (?). Yet Garbo's movies will live on, perhaps these are the "sounds" the speaker was "hearing still hear." I have difficulty tying in the Greta Garbo connection any further without a better knowledge of her filmography. And I can't really find any other specific references (the speaker's body, the sky, and sound are all too vague and generic for me to really

consider). I wish I had more to say, especially considering the length of my previous “paragraph,” but the reference here seems much more clear-cut and I feel is actually peripheral to much of the poem. Hey, let’s talk about that! The only thing that appears to tie the title to the rest of the poem, in my mind, is the word “idol.” Otherwise, I have tremendous difficulty seeing any connection between the poem and Greta Garbo (though that may be because I’m a big fan of the Garbster). But the poem is not about the “idol” (Greta Garbo), it is about the speaker’s reaction to the idol’s leaving. Without the word “idol,” I would not have seen any reason to tie the last two lines to the title as well. It is that one word that drives the reference. An idol is something that is admired, but it is also often an object (a graven image). Being treated like an idol might actually be enough to drive one to leave. And certainly, an idol as an object can be lost, forgotten, or abandoned. In this way, Greta Garbo, the idol, is seen both positively, as a role model and negatively, as an object. Her leaving is also assigned a dual role, for it is the loss of a role model yet at the same time it shows that she is not merely an object to be idolized.

26. Town of Uneven Love (But All Love is Uneven)

27. 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.

28. 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.

29. Thomas Town (Craig)

The most interesting part of the poem “Thomas Town” is the way that the periods separate the poem into fragments with different meanings. The first line, “Hand and hand into his mind never,” indicates a loving relationship of some kind as the two people are referenced first as holding hands, but it is then contradicted as saying that the two never go into his mind hand in hand. This suggests that the relationship exists, but that he (I assume Thomas) had some kind of guard up; he would not let the other into his mind. He was holding back some of himself. It is impossible to say whether or not the other is a child, lover, wife, or husband for that matter, but it seems to work in all directions. Here to fore, though, the ‘other’ will be referred to as she (wife, lover, daughter or what have you; gender seems irrelevant). The line then is almost completely negated by the next line, which in context reads “into his mind never a thought came.” The lack of punctuation also allows double meanings, as if when they were hand and hand, he was occupied enough by her that no thoughts entered his mind “but that other.” The period at the end of this line functions in a similar way as the other, saying that she followed him as he thought of here. This suggests a very loving relationship. A loving relationship is also offered here in the contradictory interpretation previously mentioned, which demonstrated the mental block of Thomas. Here, as in “but that other followed,” it is suggested that though he had a block up, the other was willing to stick around and “follow”. Thus us a strong gesture of love; to accept the faults of the other and work on a compromise despite them. The two meanings here presented show both sides of a real loving relationship; the good with the bad, and the entire piece seems to be an illusion to the fact that no relationship is only one or the other.

30. One Man Town (marina)

First of all, could there be a more perfect poem for me to consider? The allusion to Magritte makes the title of the poem make more sense, I think. Actually, the title fits within the content as well as with respect to the Magritte reference - his probably most famous painting is "Son of Man", the word "man" then echoing the "man" in Carson's poem, plus a few of Magritte's paintings have just one male figure in the middle of surreal surroundings.

After just mentioning Magritte there's a name "Max" separated from "Ernst" by a period, which I found rather delightful. Max Ernst - the Dadist turned founder of surrealism, who in his last few years retreated to Arizona (ha!) and took up sculpting... hence the boulder, I think. And him knocking his head on a boulder - frustration? Frustration that today it's Magritte weather? That there's only place for one of them in the one man town, and

Magritte's got it... If the period is somewhat ignored than the poem is one sentence, and it can be interpreted this way. There's also a way to separate Max from Ernst, that is some Max said the first line, and the second line is a metonymy with an allusion to Ernst, whose name happens to be Max, so there is an allusion and there's sort of another reading. Or perhaps the desire to connect the two parts of one name transcends the hurdles of punctuation.

31. Tolerance Town

32. Judas Town (Allison)

"Judas Town," as far as I, uh, think, was probably the easiest for me to understand. The most obvious allusion for me to make was to Judas from the Bible, who betrayed Jesus for a mere amount of money. I think most people think of that Judas when they hear the name. The poem seems fitting to this theme because it is a poem of denial. It is not this or that, as opposed to making affirmations. I think what it is not alludes to the fact that this could be Judas from the Bible as well. It is not his heart he is thinking with, nor olive trees (which makes me think of olive branches, like a sign of peace.) Then dark wood used for the cross maybe? And a morsel of bread at the end, like the Last Supper. The most interesting, of course, is not I, because Jesus said someone would betray him and I (believe) Judas said it would not be him. So, hopefully, that is somewhat what the poem was alluding to.

33. Bride Town (Allison)

I have no idea what this poem may actually be alluding to. The only thing I could think of was a bride before her wedding having second thoughts about the whole thing, like a black cloud hanging over her on her wedding day. I would venture to say the Demander was simply time, since Noon is personified in the sentence along with it. I'm not sure if it's second thoughts about a wedding entirely or something else that is hanging over the bride of this poem. The line "It one cold bright" is what really gave me the hardest time. However, when this poem is read without the pauses, and "it" is put together with the second line, there seems to be a more complete thought. Read this way, "The Demander" seems like he could be a husband demanding his wife do something for him. I guess it could be alluding to that "traditional" bride role. The "Demander" seems so dark and dreary I almost see him, with the dark overcoat on all, as a figure of death (stereotypical Death who wears a hooded black full length robe.) There is also a Saint Bride of Ireland which may have something to do with this poem, though I'm not really quite sure what that would mean. She influenced many women mystics and important political figures in medieval times, but I didn't quite feel like that was what the poem was alluding to-- it felt more like it was talking about a wedding bride having jitters to me.

34. Town of the Little Mouthful (Allison)

Okay, this poem. Wow. I tried to come up with any kind of pop culture (or any culture) references to "little mouthful" that I could think of, and couldn't think of a one. I tried Googling the term and all I found was an essay by someone named Tom Regaan whose thesis was to have children kill animals so they won't want to eat meat anymore. The only thing I could think of when reading this poem was that the lines are broken up in this piece work as lines that stand on their own. However, when read together, for the most part not only is this a coherent sentence, but it's a little bit of a mouthful. The whole thing seems to make sense until the last two lines of the poem, where the meaning becomes (for me at least) pretty unclear. The thing would be grammatically correct, but it wouldn't actually form a sentence. I guess going back to the pro-vegetarianism thing as well, "cut" is a pretty strong word to use. Bows and arrows are obviously weapons, which could kill an animal if you were hunting I suppose. To go further off on this tangent, the essay (which I only skimmed) seemed to think if children went hunting for their own food and had to kill these animals, they wouldn't want to eat meat anymore. And read as one complete sentence, "To cut through" could be like skinning, cutting the fat of meat or any other preparation of the food that could all be pointing toward a pro-vegetarianism statement. If it is about meat and not eating it, I never would have figured that out on my own. I would have stuck to, hey, if you said this real fast, it's a mouthful!

35. Freud Town

The title pretty much gives away the allusion in this poem. Unfortunately for me, I didn't know a single thing about Freud, so this poem really didn't make any sense to me on the first read. After researching Freud on some various sites (Wikipedia.com being the most helpful) I learned more about Freud and tried to inject some of my newfound knowledge into the poem.

Carson begins this poem with "Devil say," a phrase that is continually repeated throughout the rest of the poem. Usually, the phrase is separated into two words by the caesura, but not in this opening line. Instead, the phrase is followed by "I am an unlocated." The "Devil" appears to be addressing the "I," forcefully telling it to do or become something. It is possible that the "Devil" is referring to Freud's theory of the unconscious mind. This being the unconscious mind is separated into three sections: id, superego, and ego. Id is the completely unconscious part of our mind that we are unable to control, and is focused around gratifying our most primal desires. In this poem, it seems like the "Devil" could be alluding to the subconscious desires subtly influencing our thinking. This brings us back to why "Devil" is cleverly separated from "Say" in the rest of the poem (leading up to line 10). By suppressing the phrase "Devil say" Carson might be trying to illustrate the concept of Id. However, at the end of line 10 and 11, she decides to keep the phrase intact. In line 11 we have "Devil say the mind" and we get the feeling that "the mind" has discovered the evil desires of Id/Devil. These lines only make

sense if we consciously remove the caesura Carson has placed at the end of each line. If we do this, the lines read, “Devil say the mind/ is an alien guest I say/ Devil outlived devil in.” Our minds naturally try to make sense of the poem by omitting the punctuation, and, like the “I” in the poem, it seems we have finally gained control over the “Devil.” However, like Freud’s theory demonstrates, our id controls our actions and thinking even if we think we have superiority over it. The “I” in the poem has finally realized the effects of the Devil/Id and is determined to master it, but the “outlived” in the last line is “Devil” spelled backwards. Even when the “I” tries to submerge and control the innate desires of their self, they cannot—they are too ingrained and powerful.

36. Town of My Farewell to You

I found that the repetition in this poem made it very difficult to search out meaning in the majority of the text. I researched the reference to a thousand blue thousand white but couldn’t figure what if any historical significance the reference had. I think that the repetition and meaning of the words punned on a drawn out farewell. To the extent that Carson repeats the phrase I feel she is commenting on the everlasting elongated nature of a farewell. The listlessness that flows through the line gives the poem an undeniable melancholy that is personalized, town of farewell to *you*. Two arms extended blowing down the road, draws out the poem even farther, as if the departed is still slipping from a final embrace. Blowing down the road, finalizes the length of the poem, ever extending and reaching but never filling the gap between the speaker and the *you* of the title
