The Poem Celestial Music

In this poem Louise Gluck talks about how her friend talks to God” but she “shuts her eyes” to God. The question of whether God exists is a major issue that divide people. In the poem Louise and her friend disagree about the caterpillar because of their beliefs about God. The poem also talks about marital relationships and how the two friends can still be friends even though they have their differences. At the end the two friends find peace and beauty because “the love of form is the love of endings.”

The poem starts off with two friends who find a caterpillar “dying in the dirt” and covered with ants. Its a disgusting sight but the friend says for Louise to just “wake up an adult like herself” and not be disgusted. This may be because the friend believes in God so death is no big deal. But the poet says she is “quick to shut my eyes” because, unlike her friend, she is just like a child. She also says “light causes sadness” and this could be because children are afraid of the dark but light could cause sadness if you see something sad like the caterpillar.

In the next part of the poem Louise and her friend are walking in the winter time in the woods and the trees are covered in snow. The friend is talking about how she hears celestial music when she looks up but Louise doesn’t hear it. Instead when she looks up she sees “brides leaping to a great height” which is really the snow in the trees. Why does Louise see “brides leaping” up in the trees? This could mean that she believes in marriage or that she doesn’t believe in marriage it’s about how you interpret the poem. Next she says she is “afraid for her” friend because she is “caught in a net deliberately cast over the earth.” This is the theme of fear that is in the poem. Just like she is afraid of the dying caterpillar she is also afraid about her friend. She could be afraid for different reasons, for example maybe her friend is in an unhealthy
relationship which could be the “net” that she is trapped in. Because even if you believe in God or are very religious you can be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship.

The last part of the poem is about how the two friends sit by the side of the road and watch the sunset and think and are “at ease with death, with solitude”. At this part of the poem they are sitting silently and they see the caterpillar again but this time the caterpillar “doesn’t move” because now it’s dead. The caterpillar could symbolize death, which is a major theme in the poem. So the two friends are sitting there and thinking about death and the sun is setting. Two other major themes are “form” and “endings,” which is another word for death. So the poet says “the love of form is the love of endings” at the very end of the poem.

The poet tells how her friend draws a circle around the dead caterpillar. This shows how the caterpillar is dead and can’t go anywhere so the circle shows that by surrounding the caterpillar. This makes a form or a shape and so Louise is thinking now about how there is a connection between forms or shapes and endings to things. It’s because when you completely form something you are done with it so that’s the ending.

At the end of the poem everything is very beautiful the rocks are shimmering and the sun sets and there is a birdcall. So that’s why Louise says at the end “the love of form is the love of endings.” It’s because even though you might not believe in God or you might be in a negative relationship you can still believe that there is beauty in the world just like the two friends find beauty at the end of the poem. Like Louise Gluck says, “The love of form is the love of endings.”

Works Cited

Note: This is a “D” paper because it has serious deficiencies in all three criteria that the rubric uses to define competence. The lack of a clear thesis to direct and unify the analysis is reflected in a general lack of coherence among ideas in the body paragraphs. In places, mere speculation replaces cogent interpretation, for example, in the statement, “[M]aybe her friend is in an unhealthy relationship which could be the ‘net’ that she is trapped in.” Pervasive grammar errors are another serious problem in the paper, as illustrated by the lack of a comma to offset the nonrestrictive adjective clause in the quoted sentence.