

"Notes" (p.155)

Point of View:

PTSD: Symptom 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Indications:

Symptom 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Indications:

Symptom 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Indications:

1. What did Norman do to himself in 1978?
  2. Basically what does Norman's letter to Tim say?
  3. What did Norman feel had happened to him in Vietnam?
  4. What does he ask Tim to do?
  5. What had O'Brien felt smug about?
  6. How did Tim cope after returning home from the war? (What did he do?)
  7. According to O'Brien, what are you doing when you tell stories about your own experience?
  8. What does he say about making things up in stories? (Using fiction to get to the truth)
  9. How did O'Brien feel about the short story he published from a chapter in "Going After Cacciato"?
  10. Ultimately, what "ruined" the story?
  11. What did Norman have to say about the story?
  12. How did O'Brien revise the story for *The Things They Carried*?
  13. Who was "in no way responsible" for Kiowa's death, according to O'Brien
- A. What is the effect of "Notes," in which O'Brien explains the story behind "Speaking Of Courage"? Does your appreciation of the story change when you learn which parts are "true" and which are the author's invention? Explain.
- B. Why does O'Brien include Norman's letter in the story?
- C. What does O'Brien say about storytelling in "Notes"?

## "In the Field" (p. 162)

### Point of View

At the end of "Notes," Tim writes: *In the interests of truth, however, I want to make it clear that Norman Bowker was in no way responsible for what happened to Kiowa. Norman did not experience a failure of nerve that night. He did not freeze up or lose the Silver Star for valor. That part of the story is my own.*

What do we learn from "In the Field" about "that part of the story"?

1. What is the platoon doing as the story opens?
  2. What was Lt. Jimmy Cross determined to do?
  3. Did Cross know who the young soldier was?
  4. How had Cross been trained to treat his men, and how did he prefer to treat them?
  5. What was Cross's opinion of Kiowa?
  6. What does Cross begin doing in his head?
  7. Who are the three soldiers who are searching for Kiowa's body?
  8. Which one is angry at Lieutenant Cross?
  9. Which one feels it's no one's fault?
  10. Which one is cracking stupid jokes about irony?
  11. How did Lt. Cross feel about being a soldier?
  12. Who came to Lt. Cross during the night and what did he say?
  13. When Cross notices the young soldier again, what does he realize is significant about the boy's movements?
  14. What were Kiowa and the boy doing just before the attack started?
  15. What does the boy believe about his role in Kiowa's death?
  16. What did the boy try to do when he saw Kiowa in the mud?
  17. What is your guess as to the identity of the boy?
  18. What is the young soldier actually looking for?
  19. Who found Kiowa's body?
  20. How many men tried to pull his body out?
  21. What did the soldiers feel besides feeling bad for Kiowa?
  22. What does Azar say to Norman Bowker about his jokes?
  23. What does Norman say about whose fault it was?
  24. Cross lists everything one could blame for Kiowa's death. But in the field, what must one conclude about the causes?
  25. Where does Lt. Cross imagine himself?
  26. Do you think he writes the letter to Kiowa's father or not?
  27. What point of view is used to narrate "In the Field"?
- A. Why is the young man not identified in the story? What is the character's purpose in the narrative?
- B. In "In The Field," O'Brien writes, "When a man died, there had to be blame." What does this mandate do to the men of O'Brien's company? Are they justified in thinking themselves at fault? How do they cope with their own feelings of culpability (guilt)?
- C. What, in the end, is the significance of the "shit field" story?