

# *The Things They Carried*

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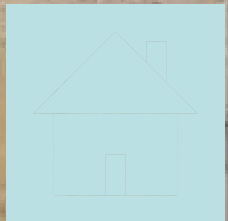
She begged us,  
With her child like screams  
Not to kill or harm  
The earth  
With all our bombs  
And hate.  
But it was too late  
The sky was filled  
With so much rage.

Author Unknown

# Introduction

Imagine spending twenty-four hours straight in a ditch that you had to dig yourself. Feel the cold rain that has been pouring down on you for the last two days. Hear the constant gunfire and mortar explosions that encompass your day and haunt your night. Picture your friends and comrades fall around you to enemy fire. Now try to imagine a way to communicate these experiences to your friends and loved ones.

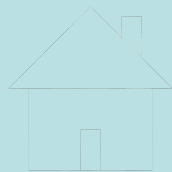
Many veterans were confronted with this same issue. They found solace in poetry. Today we start a journey to discover how poetry can express both the feelings and experiences of these war heroes. To attempt to understand why Tim O'Brien wrote this novel.



# The Task

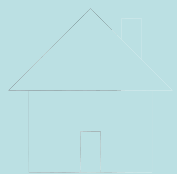
You will individually need to find two poems that create a mental image of what war was like. You must use these examples to learn how a poet can create visual imagery while also demonstrating the emotions of the situation.

After observing how the veterans described their situation you will then have to put the boots on yourself and weave together both fact and fiction to create your own poem. This poem should demonstrate both the emotional aspect of the situation as well as create a visual image for the reader.



# The Process

- First you must look through the poetic resources provided for you. You must find two poems that you feel demonstrate vivid visual imagery. After you analyze the poems you will have to use their words to create a visual representation.
- You must create two pictures in response to the poems. For one of the poems you will act as the photographer: literally representing the poem. For the other poem you will be the abstract artist and represent the emotion or tone of the poem that surround the speaker and audience of the poem. The pictures need to be colored and on separate pieces of paper.
- Use the provided template to construct your ideas on each of the poems. Poem Picture Template.
- Each picture needs to be accompanied by a page description on how the poem and picture relate to each other. Explain your initial reaction and understanding of the poem along with how you tried to illustrate that in the artwork.
  - What was your initial reaction to the poem?
  - What does the poem mean?
  - How does the artwork you created relate to the poem?
  - What are the tone, theme, ideas you think the picture conveys?



# The Process Continued

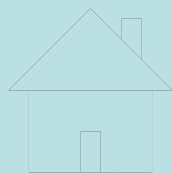
- After creating the visuals you will continue onto the second assignment —creating your own poem.
- Use the historical links provided to obtain information to include in your piece. You must include both factual informational and emotional content in your final product.
- This poem must be at least 23 lines of verse. Use creative judgment when determining the organization of the poem.
- Be sure to utilize the historical references to give realism to your poem. You may wish to include specific locations and battles fought during the war. You can choose to include actual troop numbers and or specific weaponry utilized. You should be knowledgeable of the kind of land being fought on and what forces were involved in the battle.
- Aside from factual information, remember from our reading that what allows people to connect to a war story is emotion. Failure to paint vivid imagery that emits emotional connections to the experience will result in a weak poem. (Think: story truth)



# Resources

- <http://lachlanirvine.tripod.com/poetry/id1.html>
- <http://www.angelfire.com/wa/warpoetry/Vietnam.html>
- <http://www.vietnambogeyman.com/>
- <http://www.vietnamexp.com/poems/poems.htm>

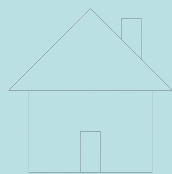
Use these links to find the two poems you will analyze and artistically represent.



# Resources 2

- <http://www.vietnamwar.com/>
- <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index.html>
- <http://www.vietnampix.com/intro.htm>

Use these links to search through historical information about the war to use in your own poem.



# Required Material

- Vietnam Veteran poems: 2 poems, planning sheet, accompanying artwork, a page written response (typed) for each picture/poem.
- Vietnam story-truth poem: poem and typed paper, one page in length, in which you discuss and analyze the process and the completed work. Answer the following questions:
  - What did you attempt to convey in your poem?
  - How difficult was the process of blending truth with emotions?
  - What is the most important image in the poem and why?
  - What is the most important emotion in the poem and why?
  - If you had to isolate the theme of the poem, what would it be?

