*The Things They Carried*

Creative Response

*For this assignment, your goal is to convey some IMPORTANT aspect of your life. This writing should be well edited, fully developed, and should matter. Do not choose a topic of no consequence – be willing to reveal some aspect of yourself. One of the important themes in The Things They Carried is the idea that stories that get closest at capturing the truth of a moment are not always told exactly as they occur. They are embellished. This is your chance to embellish a story in order to capture the truth about whatever it is you’re trying to convey. The story should be true, but small details can be changed to convey the ‘truth’ or for creative purposes.*

**Option A/The Things They Carried:**

“They carried all they could bear, and then some, including a silent awe for the terrible power of the things they carried” (O’Brien 7).

*Write a piece from the point of view of something that you carry. This thing should convey something about you.*

**Option B/On the Rainy River:**

“And right then I submitted. I would go to the war – I would kill and maybe die – because I was embarrassed not to” (O’Brien 57).

*Write about a moral emergency that you faced, and a decision that was made for all of the wrong reasons. This option should include a symbolic setting, like the river in Tim Obrien’s story – where America was on one side and Canada was on the other. The setting should be used, in your story, to facilitate the difficulty of the decision. Be sure to include the reasons that were in your mind in the moment. Better if you can think of a time that you decided something to avoid embarrassment – or hastle.*

**Option C/On the Rainy River:**

O’Brien says that Elroy Berdahl “offered exactly what I needed, without questions, without any words at all. He took me in, he was there at a critical time – a silent, watchful presence” (O’Brien 46).

*Write about someone who has played such a role in your life. Convey their importance through story. Show them being there instead of telling about them being there.*

**Option D/How to Tell a True War Story:**

“A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth” (O’Brien 80).

*Write a story that is that is not true, but that gets closer at capturing the truth than the true story does*.

**Option E/Enemies & Friends**

O’brien tells the story of the relationship of Lee Strunk and Dave Jensen. In one chapter, he tells a story that shows them being enemies, and then in the next chapter, a story that shows them being friends. *Write about someone who has been both friend and enemy in your life. Convey both aspects of your relationship with two different stories.*