***The Things They Carried*** Study Questions

**Directions:** Use key details and/or short quotations to support your answers.

**Chapter 4: “On the Rainy River”**

1. Why doesn’t O’Brien try to get out of the war by becoming a conscientious objector?
2. Why is O’Brien angry with the people who believe that the Vietnam War was justified (43)?
3. What is it he thinks they don’t understand?
4. O’Brien says that Elroy, the owner of the Tip Top Lodge, “saved me” (46). How did Elroy save him? From what?
5. Why does Elroy put four fifty-dollar bills on O’Brien’s door? O’Brien says the man knew. What did he know?
6. What does O’Brien mean when he says, “What embarrasses me more is the paralysis that took my heart” (54). Why is this story so hard to tell?
7. Why doesn’t O’Brien go to Canada? Why does he say, “I was a coward. I went to the war” (58)?
8. Why does O’Brien shift from the 3rd person perspective in the first story to the 1st person perspective in the following chapters?