

Name: _____ Block: _____

Date: _____

Unit 1: Narrative Elements

“Where Have You Gone, Charming Billy?” by Tim O’Brien Study Guide
adapted from Holt McDougal Literature: Grade 9, p. 828

Directions: Answer the following questions as we read the text.

1. Reread lines 11-21, and consider O’Brien’s use of both long and short sentences to convey Paul Berlin’s thoughts. What effect does this stylistic choice create?

2. Reread lines 26-34. What specific features of the characters’ speech make this dialogue sound realistic? Be specific!

3. Consider Paul’s thoughts in lines 36-44 about what he will and will not tell his mother:
 - a. Why would Paul plan to tell his mother about how things looked and smelled but not about how frightened he was?

 - b. Why is Paul so focused on what he will and will not tell his mother?

4. In lines 52-63, what does Paul Berlin know about fear?

5. Identify the sensory details in lines 91-98 that O’Brien includes at this point in the story. How do these details contribute to the vivid, realistic style of this story?

6. In lines 118-122, whom is Berlin trying to convince he is not afraid?

7. Consider the following regarding lines 143-146 to help you understand why soldiers might avoid getting to know one another too well:
 - a. Why doesn’t Paul care that he can’t make out the man’s face or know his name?

 - b. Is Paul’s strategy of not getting to know the other soldier a good one?

8. Consider the following to help you understand Paul's giggling about Billy Boy's death in lines 174-182:
- Have you ever giggled nervously in a situation where laughter was inappropriate?
 - Why does Paul suddenly start giggling uncontrollably?
- c. What can you tell about Paul's own mental state from his sudden fit of giggling?
9. Billy's death is described in lines 183-196. His death is told in the form of a _____.
10. The following passage concludes the story with a kind of "resolution" of Paul's inner conflict. Answer the following questions:

240 The moon was under the clouds and the column was moving. The soldier helped him up. "You okay now, buddy?"

"Sure."

"What was so bloody funny?"

"Nothing."

"You can get killed, laughing that way."

"I know. I know that."

"You got to stay calm, buddy." The soldier handed him his rifle. "Half the battle, just staying calm. You'll get better at it," he said. "Come on, now."

250 He turned away and Private First Class Paul Berlin hurried after him. He was still shivering.

He would do better once he reached the sea, he thought, still smiling a little. A funny war story that he would tell to his father, how Billy Boy Watkins was scared to death. A good joke. But even when he smelled salt and heard the sea, he could not stop being afraid. 🐙

- What does Paul hope will happen when he reaches the sea?
- How does Paul imagine he will tell his father about the death of Billy Boy?
- How does Paul feel when he reaches the sea? Why?
- What is O'Brien saying about war?