

O'brien, Tim (1946-) Encyclopedia Article

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Best known for his fictional portrayal of the Vietnam War, Tim O'Brien is an American novelist and short story writer who has been compared to Ernest Hemingway, Stephen Crane, and Joseph Heller. In *Going After Cacciato* (1978) and *The Things They Carried* (1990), the novels that established his reputation, O'Brien explores the horrors and ambiguities of war in a style that is eloquent, precise, and highly evocative. An intensely passionate writer, O'Brien has attempted to move beyond the tag of "war writer" by composing works that reveal the ways in which love and civilian life can resemble war. In his novel *In the Lake of the Woods* (1994), which portrays a defeated politician struggling with a secret past and imperiled marriage, O'Brien brings the fear and torment of Vietnam to the Minnesota wilderness.

Further Reading:

Herzog, Tobey C. *Tim O'Brien*. New York, Twayne, 1997.

Kaplan, Stephen. *Understanding Tim O'Brien*. Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1995.