

If faced with the choice given to Tim O'Brien in "On the Rainy River," I would make the decision to fight in the war. Considering there's no guarantee I'd ever see any of my family, friends, or others I care about again by fleeing the country (along with the likely result of them viewing you as a coward upon return), makes it a gamble I wouldn't be willing to take (because what's life without the ones you love?). Although mutilating myself would allow me to continue living alongside my loved ones, the feeling of shame from ducking out on the draft while other innocent people died in my place would inevitably overwhelm me. While taking jail time is an honorable choice in comparison with the previous two options (due to the fact it can be seen as a way of protesting the war), I would rather spend five years just about anywhere else, regardless of the situation, than rotting in a cell. Reading *The Things They Carried* affected my decision on whether I'd fight in that it led me to the realization that most soldiers fight not for their nation or a cause; but out of compassion for their brothers beside them, their families back home that they love, and the hope that their children will grow up in a better world than they.