

Speaking of Courage

In Speaking of Courage Tim O'Brien recounts the story of Norman Bowker driving circles around the only lake for some 40 miles around -- a small, algae infested lake that wasn't good for fishing or swimming but was still the pride of the town. As he drives, Bowker reminisces about the night the Kiowa died while simultaneously providing narration about the town he lives in.

In this exercise we'll be pulling out some passages about both Bowker's home and about the village on the Song Tra Bong river. Then, we'll be providing some basic analysis of them to begin to examine how they relate to each other.

Find three passages that describe Bowker's home town. Write them on the left side of the chart. Then provide a brief analysis of them on the right side. Do the same with three passages about the area around the Song Tra Bong River.



Passage	Analysis
Along the road the houses were all low-slung and split level and modern, with big porches and picture windows facing the water. The lawns were spacious. (137)	This passage suggests that the home that Norman Bowker returned to was on that was mostly unchanged by the war in Vietnam. People cared about comfort, relaxation, and beauty. The troubles of war did not trouble them.

