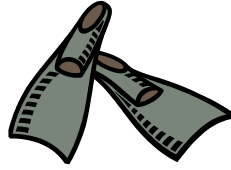


The Deep Dive: A Close Reading



***"Send guys to war, they come back talking dirty."
(The Things They Carried, 69)***

To truly glean meaning from a text, we need to dig deep, read again, and read again. Then throw it in a drawer for a while, pull it out later and read it again. In this way we can begin to really listen to the words and their connotations, to really examine them in context, and to really manufacture deeper meaning.

Take the above seemingly simple passage from Tim O'Brien's work. It's an easy one to gloss over and forget about. Let's not. Let's do a Deep Dive...

- What words are key? (send, guys, war, talking dirty)
- What issues are raised? What meaning?
 - Is it a male thing?
 - Who's doing the sending? Not volunteer. Bitter tone?
 - War= simple word, loaded with meaning (could use the entire book for this)
 - "Talk dirty" = lost innocence/ grown up (would "boys" be different than "guys"? Has narrator grown up so much that now they're just guys - can't even refer to them as boys anymore?)
 - What's it mean for the talkers? Are they forever tarnished?
 - What's it mean for those who have to hear this talk? Are they tarnished as well? Does it become viral? Rub off on rest of us?
 - When someone talks dirty, does it erode the listener? Children? Does it infiltrate, permeate the culture? Do we all suffer? Can we blame the talker?
 - Talking dirty = Being dirty? Are they disabled? Physically? Mentally? Emotionally? Spiritually?
 - Can we ever wash away the "dirty"?
 - Back home, we'd like the dirty talkers to just stay away, but who made them talk dirty? Didn't we?
- What about the structure? Mostly single syllables. Is this simple?