



Conversations with Tim O'Brien (Literary Conversations Series)

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On the strength of a National Book Award for his novel *Going After Cacciato* (1978) and a widely acclaimed short-story cycle, *The Things They Carried* (1990), Tim O'Brien (b. 1946) cemented his reputation as one of the most compelling chroniclers of Vietnam--and, in the process, was cast as a "Vietnam writer." But to confine O'Brien to a single piece of ground or a particular style is to ignore the broad sweep of a career spanning nearly four decades.

In addition to detailed discussions of all of O'Brien's work--a memoir, *If I Die in a Combat Zone* (1973), and seven books of fiction--the sixteen interviews and profiles in *Conversations with Tim O'Brien* explore common themes, with subtle differences. Looming large is the experience of Vietnam and its influence as well as O'Brien's youth in Minnesota and the expectations of a Midwestern upbringing. Interviews allowed the writer to fully examine the shifting boundaries of truth and identity, memory, and imagination in fiction, the role of war in society; gender issues; and the craft of writing. O'Brien approaches each of these topics and a host of others with a directness and an evident passion that will resonate with both readers and prospective writers.



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