"How to Tell a True War Story"

For this week's blog post, I decided to wait and write about Tim O'Brien's "How to Tell a True War Story". In a previous class I had to read another one of his works called "The Things They Carried". This short story written by O'Brien is still one that I can remember precisely and honestly one of the reasons I had looked forward to reading this work by him. Similar to his other work, this story got me to think and feel things only few works have ever made me feel. The way O'Brien writes is so direct and personal, yet it seems to never quite be the whole truth. As O'Brien states, "in a true war story, if there's a moral at all, it's like the thread that makes the cloth. You can't extract the meaning without unraveling the deeper meaning" (O'Brien). His story has so many layers that it caused me to reread certain parts over and over again to capture exactly what he was trying to say.

O'Brien’s "How to Tell a True War Story" is a work that is set up in a way that feels as though he is truly trying to tell us what a true war story is, but everything he says is beyond what we could really imagine without actually experiencing it ourselves. It reminds me of the poem “Dulce et decorum est” as with both stories, the reader can grasp what the author is trying to say, but is still hard to fathom and grasp exactly what it is like to be in those situations. We can know the facts, but is it really the truth? As O'Brien states, "you can tell a true war story if you just keep on telling it" because possibly if you tell it enough times maybe you will begin to believe it too or can finally make sense of it yourself (O'Brien). Based off of his story, I can only imagine the complex emotions and thoughts connected with war as even in such descriptive and thought-provoking writing, I can only begin to grasp what it's like and what really happens. These complex emotions and thoughts surrounding something as unfathomable as war is as O'Brien puts it, a story that "makes the stomach believe" (O'Brien).