On The Rainy River Discussion questions

1. Summarize the reasons the narrator gives for opposing the Vietnam War.
2. What details in the story allows the reader to appreciate the narrator’s situation without knowing much about the Vietnam War?
3. Identify and list the emotional changes the narrator experienced throughout the story.
4. What does the narrator learn about himself through this experience?
5. What effect did O’Brien’s upbringing have on his emotional state? How does he describe some of the people in his community?
6. Some of the details in the story aren’t true (eg pig slaughterhouse, Elroy Berdahl and the Tip Top Lodge, and O’Brien almost dodging the draft). What effect do these stylistic features have on the reader’s experience of the story?
7. Research draft dodgers coming to Canada. How many came and how many stayed? Why did they come to Canada?
8. Discuss the role shame and embarrassment plays in our lives. Where do these emotions come from? What makes these emotions significant?