

Example of critical thinking on the theme of unrequited love in the things they c...

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



"The Things They Carried" is a real-life retelling of the author's experience during his time in the Vietnam War. Love, is not the primary preoccupation in the book, it is remembering and making sense of the experiences endured during the hardship of this war. However, love does play a role in the book. Rather, it is the lack of love, or lost love searched for that is a central theme of the book.

One of the quotations that stands out in the book and is important to understanding the theme of love is when O'Brien writes, "' But the thing about remembering is that you don't forget" (O'Brien, 34). This includes past partners, past love affairs. The character Cross reminisces about his past love Martha. In a conversation that switches from coffee to gin, they recall Martha, who used to inspire feelings of affection in Cross by signing the poetry, she sent, " Love Martha." They only ever went on a single date where Cross touched her knee and the night ended with a curt remark from Martha directed to Cross when he made a comment about wanting to tie her to bed. Seeing Martha through Cross's eyes, we only get his impressions and feelings on her. It is clear that he believes that he loves her, and also just as clear that while she may return some sort of love, it is also just as clear that she does not love him as he does her. If she did, she might have responded differently to the overt romantic overtures that Cross made towards her. The loss of this love from Martha represents the loss of things that the war deprived the soldier's of their life.