

By the Waters of Babylon
by Stephen Vincent Benet(p. 576)

Vocabulary: purified(adj), nevertheless(adv), priesthood(n), bowels(n),
boast(v)

1. What is most strictly forbidden?
2. Describe the narrator? Who is telling the story?
- *3. Why do you suppose the "spirit house" did not have the smell of a man?
4. What is like a "fire in the heart" of the narrator?
- *5. What is probably meant by "the Dead Places"?
6. At this point in the story, describe three of its locations.
7. The narrator says, "It was my voice that spoke, and not my spirit"(578).
What is the underlying meaning of this statement? Make a prediction.
8. How does the narrator decide to go east? Is his decision process scientific
or superstitious?
- *9. What do you suppose is meant by the "god-roads"?
10. As he looks south, what does the narrator see?
11. According to the narrator, what is worse than losing one's life?
12. What no longer provided strength for the narrator?
13. What could be the meaning of "bitter water"?
14. The narrator refers to the towers of the gods "looking blind". What does he
probably mean?*
15. What is the god "ASHING"?*