**“By the Waters of Babylon” Guided Reading Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_HR.\_\_\_**

**Directions:** The author, Stephen Vincent Benet, purposefully does NOT indicate aspects of setting to the reader. Instead, he uses clues in details, dialogue, objects, etc. to suggest the time, place, and mood so that the reader is discovering the setting as the main character discovers or uncovers truths about his world. Read carefully, and keep in mind that initial confusion is part of the writer’s PURPOSE. Answer the following questions in complete sentences, using details from the story when necessary.

1. What are the priests searching for in the “dead houses”?
2. Infer: What does this detail, as well as other descriptions, suggest about the time period, setting, and culture? (p. 576-77)
3. The priest says to his son “This is a very strong dream. It may eat you up” (Benet 578).

Infer a possible theme from this figure of speech. Explain.

1. List some of the signs the narrator observes on his journey east (p.578). What might these symbolize? What prediction can you make about his culture based on these new details?
2. The narrator says “It is eight suns journey to the east. . . (578). Make a prediction for time period at this point in the story.
3. Speculate: At this point, (p.579) why might the narrator be losing resolve to complete his journey? Does he give up, and what survival traits are revealed through his actions?
4. Using new details about the “ruins” as well as the identity of the narrator from pages 580-81,

re-assess your earlier prediction about setting. Explain if your opinion has changed and why. Use evidence from these pages to support your answer.

1. On page 582, what does John realize about the “place of the gods” that conflicts with his earlier beliefs?
2. Read the text aid, *Literature in Context*, to discover a clearer picture of the setting. Did you need this explanation to clarify the setting, or did you guess at an earlier point in the story? Explain.