By the Waters of Babylon

1. Examine the painting on page 291. How do the primitive images and style of this work relate to the story’s **characters** and **setting**?
2. What can you infer so far about the **setting** of the story (lines 1-18)? Write details about the Dead Places in your chart.
3. Reread lines 30-39. Think about how the first-person point of view affects your impression of the narrator. What important inner qualities does he reveal?
4. Why do you think the narrator’s father allows the narrator to travel to the Place of the Gods, even though it is forbidden?
5. Reread lines 100-113. In what ways do the great river and the Place of the Gods resemble places you know? (Add to your chart.)
6. Think about how the first-person point of view helps create suspense. How might your interest be affected if a different narrator told of John’s journey?
7. Reread lines 157-163. What details suggest that John is a naive narrator?
8. Reread lines 172-179. What can you infer about the events that occurred at the Place of the Gods? (Add to your chart.)
9. Reread lines 187-196. What famous person do you think the “shattered image” depicts?
10. Reread lines 255-270. What does this “place of great riches” remind you of? (Add inferences to your chart.)
11. John’s “dream” is foreshadowed earlier in the story. Where in the story does Benet prepare the reader for this dream?
12. Reread lines 376-378. What idea about knowledge do you think Benet is trying to communicate?