

Alice Neel, *Westreich Family Portrait*, 1976



****First Question First****

What is *your* immediate reaction to this artwork?

Trust it. Write about it. Use the guide sheet for help.

Continue reading for another perspective and journal questions.

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To love someone does not necessarily mean to like them. Love can be complicated. Grieving the loss of someone we love who may have made our life chaotic or even hellish may feel like stumbling in the dark. How can we feel so many contradictory emotions at once? Sadness, relief, guilt for feeling relieved, anger for feeling guilty.

It can be a churning time. Emotions may surface that feel dislocated, as though originating from a distant place and time. This person may have injured us in some way. Or burdened us with their expectations. They may have put the responsibility of their well-being onto us. A lifelong relationship of push and pull. And then they are gone. Where does all that tension go? All those many words we wanted to say to their face, but it felt easier to just keep going along.

We love them, but

Q.) Write about these complicated grief feelings. What would you like to say to this person now? If a prompt would be helpful, finish this sentence, letting yourself go where you need to: I love you, but