

**John Singer Sargent, *Marie Buloz Pailleron*, 1911**



**\*\*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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Excerpt from my journal:

*“What drew me to this image? The sadness in her eyes. Her tired expression, not tired from work, but from sorrow. Her eyes and cheeks are red as though tears have been recently shed. And then I noticed her dress, her closed posture. Is she in mourning? She is to me. I don’t know this work, so do not know the context, but she has come to represent how I can feel when I have to go out in society; my face, expression, posture may not give me away, but I can feel so vulnerable, so sad, so tired. Her hands are posed in such an unusual manner, as though she’s taking her own pulse. This sad woman with striking red hair, black lace with white scarf surrounded by soft greens of nature. She is out of her home, in society, but still withdrawn, closed-off, protecting herself in her grief. Maybe the trees and grass will soothe her, alone in nature.*

*What might it be asking me? When I look at her, trying to be in public with such a private face, I feel such compassion for her. And I realize she is me. Yes, at times I need to nudge myself out the door, but right now I often don’t. These are early days. And when I do go out, hold my own hand. Take my pulse first (is it really necessary to enter society, pragmatically, emotionally, etc?). And if I decide yes, greet myself with compassion, acknowledge where I’m at that day.”*

Q.) When you are feeling especially vulnerable around others, how can you give yourself compassion, holding you own hand in tenderness? What might you say to yourself?