

**Edward Burne-Jones, *Portrait of Denis Mackail, Grandson of the Artist*, 1897**



**\*\*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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A young boy surrounded by darkness. Is it enveloping him or is he the light in his grandfather's life? He is not depicted as a gleeful or silly boy. He is not shown as carefree. But he is at the beginning of his life. Does his grandfather wonder what awaits his grandson or who he will grow to be? Does he see himself in those eyes? Does he recognize his own melancholia in that soft face?

We begin our lives not yet fully formed, but with definite sensibilities that influence our unfolding. Every parent with more than one child knows this, as we watch our newborn grow into their uniqueness, distinct from the other children. From what I've been told, I have been "sensitive" from day one, for example. Sensitive to the energies in the room, the terror in an animal's eyes, or any sublimation by one human over another. So, not surprisingly, my experience of grief is through this context, unique to my personality. As is each of ours.

Note: The young boy grew up to become a novelist. And he lived to be 79 years old.

Q.) How are your sensibilities influencing your experience or expression of your grief? How is your personality helping you? Or how is it getting in the way of tending to your sorrow?