

Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, c. 1829



****First Question First****

What is *your* immediate response to this artwork?

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

Continue reading for another perspective and journal questions.

Katsushika Hokusai, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, c. 1829

It can be difficult to talk about grief. Setting aside our reluctance to reveal our tender wounds, just finding the words to express this tumult can be challenging. To do so, we often rely on metaphor. A “grief storm” sends us running for cover. “The dam broke” or “the waterline burst” hints at our unstoppable tears finally unleashed.

Grief can so often feel like it comes from out of nowhere. We can be floating along just fine one minute, then – BOOM – a “wave of grief” hits. All we can do is hold on. Ride it out. And know that it will settle. But we know that there will be a next wave, then another, and another. It may be gentle and last for only five minutes or tidal and last for days. Understanding this stealthy, sleeper wave characteristic of grief can help us prepare a bit; keeping Kleenex handy is a given. It may also be helpful to consider who we can ride these waves with. Who are the people in our boat, each with their own unique offerings that can help support us through these times? Whether in person, by phone, text or email, our loved ones can collectively help to keep us afloat.

Q.) Who is in your boat with you? Write about your comfort level with each loved one. Think about who to go to for specific support, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Each is necessary and of value.