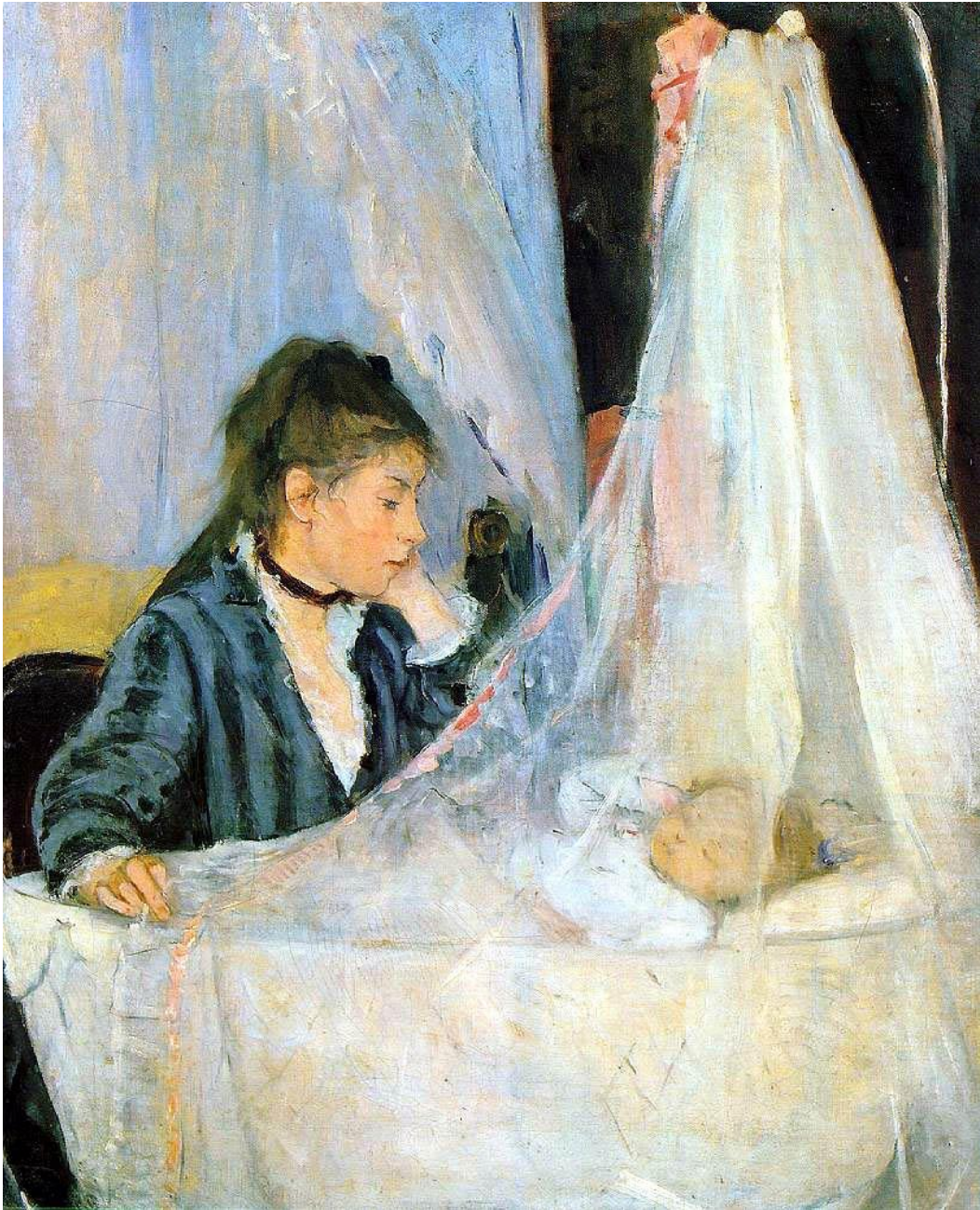


Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1872



****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.

Berthe Morisot, *The Cradle*, 1872

As we grieve our loved one's death, we may begin to recognize other losses interwoven in this event. Primary among them, the puncturing of the illusion of "forever." The sense of infallibility or indestructability may feel replaced by fragility. Watching our loved one's last breath leave their body can be life-changing in so many ways. We now know, for instance, just how easy it is to die. And we are all only one breath away from it. The veil between life and death may feel thinner, more like gauze. And this truth can be transformative.

This discovery can feel like landing on Mars. Death is no longer theoretical. It is not a planet out there. It is the inevitability of our existence. And, while fear may curl us up into a ball of self-protection at times, this new, vast exploration may also feel like fresh oxygen pumping through our lives. Finally, the hidden secret has been revealed. And looked at directly. No, we haven't gone blind in the process, as though death's rays can imprison us in darkness. To the contrary, looked at head on, death can begin to cradle our lives. Feeling the relief of not running away any longer, we may begin to befriend this new constant. And every ounce of our lives may begin to weigh golden.

Q.) How is facing the reality of death changing your life?