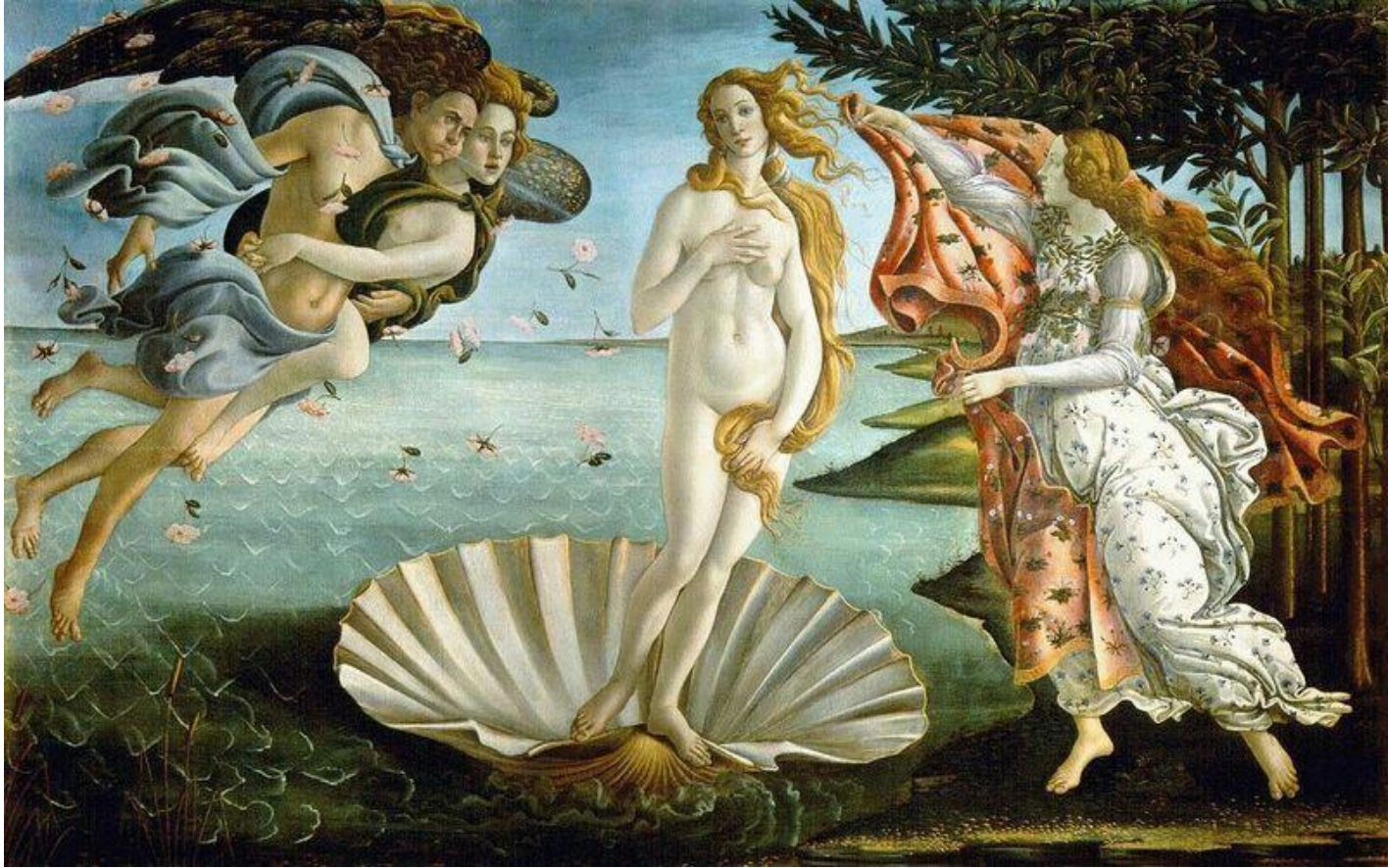


Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, 1480s



****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.

Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, 1480s

The ripple effects of grief can seem unrelenting. Rather than a pebble tossed into a pond, death can feel more like an asteroid hitting the ocean. The consequent waves envelope our lives and those closest to us. When a family member dies, unpredictability may ensue. All of our hearts have been broken.

We have lost a constant in our lives and, naturally, look to our spouse, siblings, or surviving parent to regain some balance and assuredness. Yet we may instead be met with more uncertainty. Our supportive loved one may now feel distanced, even guarded or angry. They may act uncharacteristically edgy or irritable with us. The person(s) we have always counted on may not be available. They are deep inside their own pain.

This can be a shattering awakening at a most vulnerable time. Scary even. Feelings of abandonment or isolation may be triggered. These are the currents of grief. We are not cast off alone into the middle of the sea, forced to fend for ourselves. But it may feel this way at times. And then, reliably, the wind shifts once more and gentle love, in one form or another, is blown our way.

Q.) How can you care for yourself during those times when you feel as though you are truly alone in your grief? What brings you comfort and reassurance? Grief regularly asks us to understand and practice self-care.