

Marinus Adrianus Koekkoek, *Strollers on Forest Path*, 19th C.



****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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Our sister's husband dies. Our husband's mother dies. Our child's best friend dies. We now walk parallel paths, at times intersecting. We grieve the death of someone we love. While our relationship may not have been intimate, we nevertheless feel the loss. But we especially grieve for our sister, our husband, our child. Their hearts are shattered. We see it in their face, hear it in their voice. Their world may feel precarious to them now, the road ahead untenable. Our commitment is clear, we will do all we can to support them and carry them through this colossal time in their life.

We will try to remember that they have now entered a shape-shifting grief. We endeavor to give them a soft place to land, a gentle tone of voice, a loving touch, a limitless ear. For however long it takes to see them through this most acute grief into the lifelong sorrow of their loss, we will be there for them. This is our internal, full-throated commitment.

A quieter commitment may be made to ourselves, however. It does no one any good to ignore our own grief. We have lost someone who was dear to us as well. They may not have been our north star. We may not have seen ourselves reflected in them. They may not live in our psyche or under our skin. Yet, we carry our own sadness. So, we learn to walk both paths with love.

Q.) Are you on two paths of grief now, your own as well as grieving for a close loved one's loss? Write through this process. Who do you want to be for your grieving loved one? And how can you acknowledge and honor your own loss, even if it feels small in comparison?