

Lois Mailou Jones, *Jennie*, 1943



****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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I live in a rainy place. And it suits me. I drink English Breakfast tea with milk and feel nestled in pastoral green landscapes. Masterpiece Theatre and Mystery are my go-to indulgences. An anglophile of sorts. So, I was not completely surprised when learning the results of my DNA ancestry: I am 97% from the British Isles. But these are simply numbers, setting the broad background for my life. It is our family, however, who tells us our stories in all their colorful particulars.

When we lose a family member we lose more of our story. We may have had no prior interest in our family narrative, but now find ourselves grasping for details. How did we get here? Where is our family really from? A flood of questions may arise, questions that go back centuries or just to our childhood. Where did Mom's lemon bar recipe come from? Why has our family always been connected to the land? Some place in us recognizes that when we bury our older generation, we are also burying more of ourselves yet to be discovered. And we mourn our lost details, our lost familiarities, the mysteries that may help answer why we are who we are. We experience a break in the pattern of our ancestors.

Q.) What ancestor-related questions are emerging that beg to be answered? Write about these yearnings.