

George Braque, *The Portuguese*, 1911



****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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Time. The web of memory rising as tangibly as this moment. Our minds taking us places we haven't visited for years, decades even. The memories can be vividly real. The street we grew up on, our first apartment after newly married, our baby's first bath. The past may be more present now as we grieve who we've lost.

The Cubists understood that we do not exist only in the present. All that we've experienced in the past, all that we envision in our future are married into this moment. Artists like George Braque and Pablo Picasso described this sense of overlapping time in their Analytical Cubist paintings.

In *The Portuguese* the central darkened outline suggests a portrait; is that his mustache we see, and the sound hole of his guitar? Is he playing it today or is this a past memory? The monochromatic palette keeps us sifting through angles, shadows, intersecting lines. There is nowhere to stand. We are seeing the whole of his life simultaneously.

Grief can have us traveling all dimensions of time in a flash. Sifting through these past-present-future moments can leave us disoriented and reaching for our bearings. The fog of grief can feel thick with time.

Q.) Where in time are your thoughts taking you most? Write about this and the feelings surrounding these mental images. Is there a particular memory or future dream that won't let go of you right now?