

Giotto, *Lamentation (The Mourning of Christ)*, 1306



****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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Grief can be all-consuming. Every thought and emotion may seem to originate from our loss. Every book, movie, or conversation may somehow refer to the death of our loved one. Just as all lines point to the dead Christ in Giotto's painting, so may it feel that every moment in our day leads directly back to our sorrow. Like the implied line of the gaze, we cannot take our eyes off this death we are grieving, not even for a moment.

But, what of their life? The shock of losing our loved one ripples slowly through us, at its own pace. Along with friends and family, we may need to replay the last months, weeks, days, hours of their dying time. All eyes may seem to be on these end days, the last days, the last breath. Was it a good death? Could we have done anything differently in those final days? Our loved one's death may feel so overwhelming that, for a while, it obscures their life.

As time goes on our focus may change. We may feel yearnings to reflect on and talk about their living rather than their dying. To tell more of their story, their *life* story. Who they were. How they lived and loved. While their death was an earthquake-sized event, it does not define their existence. We begin to shift our reflections to their life, the origin of our love.

Q.) Where are your thoughts and emotions focusing lately, on your loved one's life or more often their death? What would you like your community to know about your beloved who has died?