

Camille Pissarro, *Flowering Plum Tree, Eragny, 1894*



****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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We plant trees, apple or cherry, redwood or willow. Each December we bury our sorrow with every tulip and daffodil bulb. We sanctify them all with meaning; their potential growth, budding, and blossoming buoys us through winter. We may till some of our loved one's ashes into the soil. So, each April tulip brings a knowing smile to our face, feeling like a kiss on the cheek from our distant cherished one.

Putting our hands in the soil and nurturing new growth activates something in us beyond words. Without conscious awareness, we choose to be a part of the natural cycle. In our grief we say "yes" to this calamity of death if life is part of the bargain. We focus our love on these new life forms. Some might call them "memorials," defined to help us remember. But, who among us can ever forget the person we have lost? Perhaps what we are truly memorializing is the energy of life that flowed through them. What brought them into their beauty as human beings can now be witnessed in the pink cherry blossom, the red maple leaf, the sun-kissed daffodil. In this way, then, we might still feel a sense of them as we sit next to life growing.

Q.) How might you memorialize the life energy of your loved one through planting seeds, saplings or bulbs?