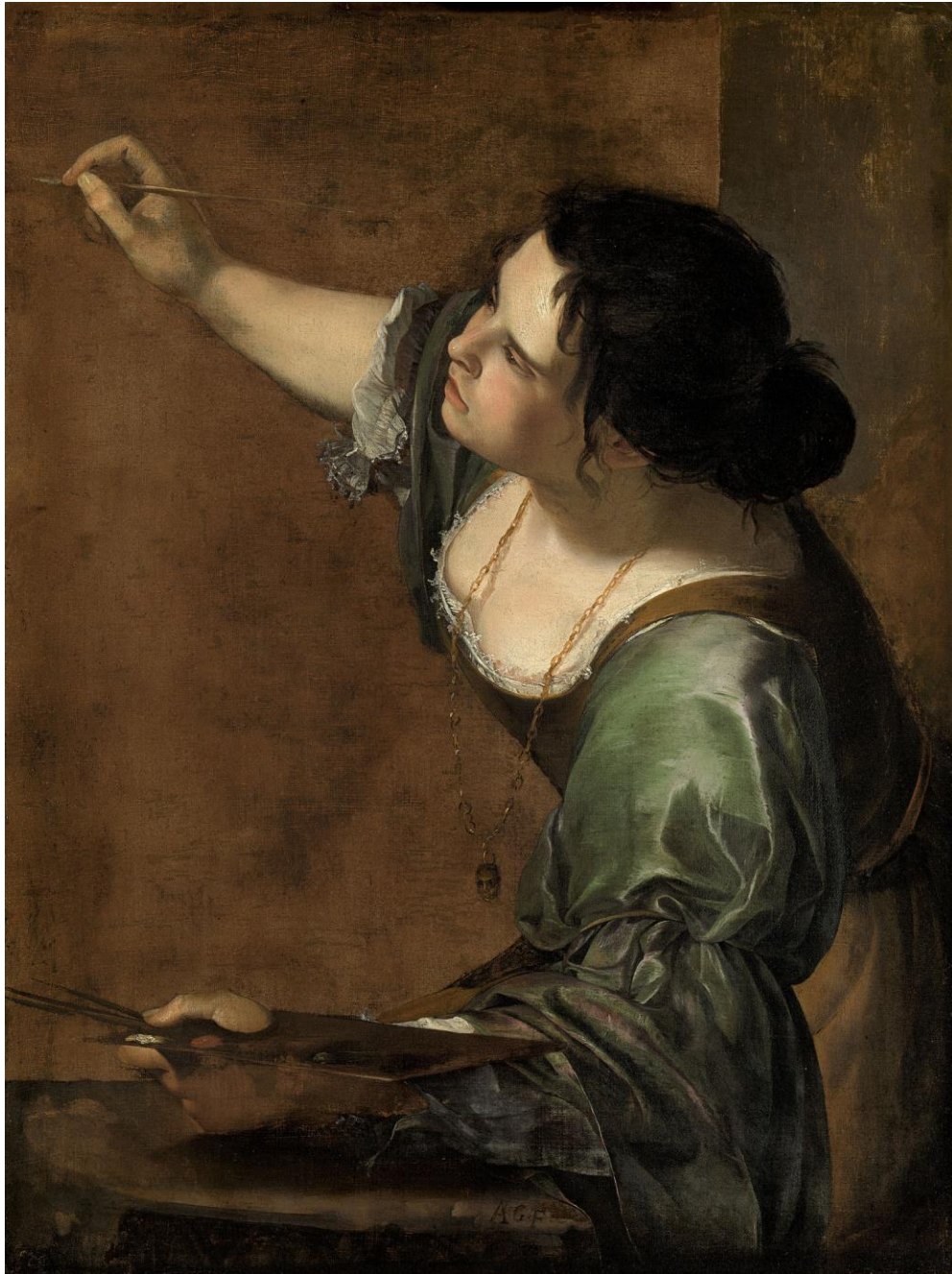


Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as Allegory of Art*, c. 1630



****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.

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as Allegory of Art*, c. 1630

We have heard it many times. And we may believe it to be true. “We create our own lives.” We have a dream, and we work towards it, becoming teachers, scientists, artists, explorers. Then death comes along and frustrates this dream. We had plans, so many plans. We were half-way there, on a roll. Then the cosmic STOP sign appears before us. These plans may have been career-oriented, going to university, or writing our first book. Maybe traveling the world or training with a chef. A sense of life-put-on-hold starts becoming familiar and eerily normal. Our dreams begin to feel like they are slipping away.

We did not plan for this or create it. We cannot plan for death. But we are asked to make room for it. We are not the same person we were before our loved one died. Death can level us for a time. It can also alter our perspective on our lives and what we ultimately want to do with them. Death and grief may be unplanned and unwelcomed, but they are an education that can change us forever.

Q.) How do you see your future dreams now? Has your loved one’s death changed how you look at your life and how you may want to go forward?