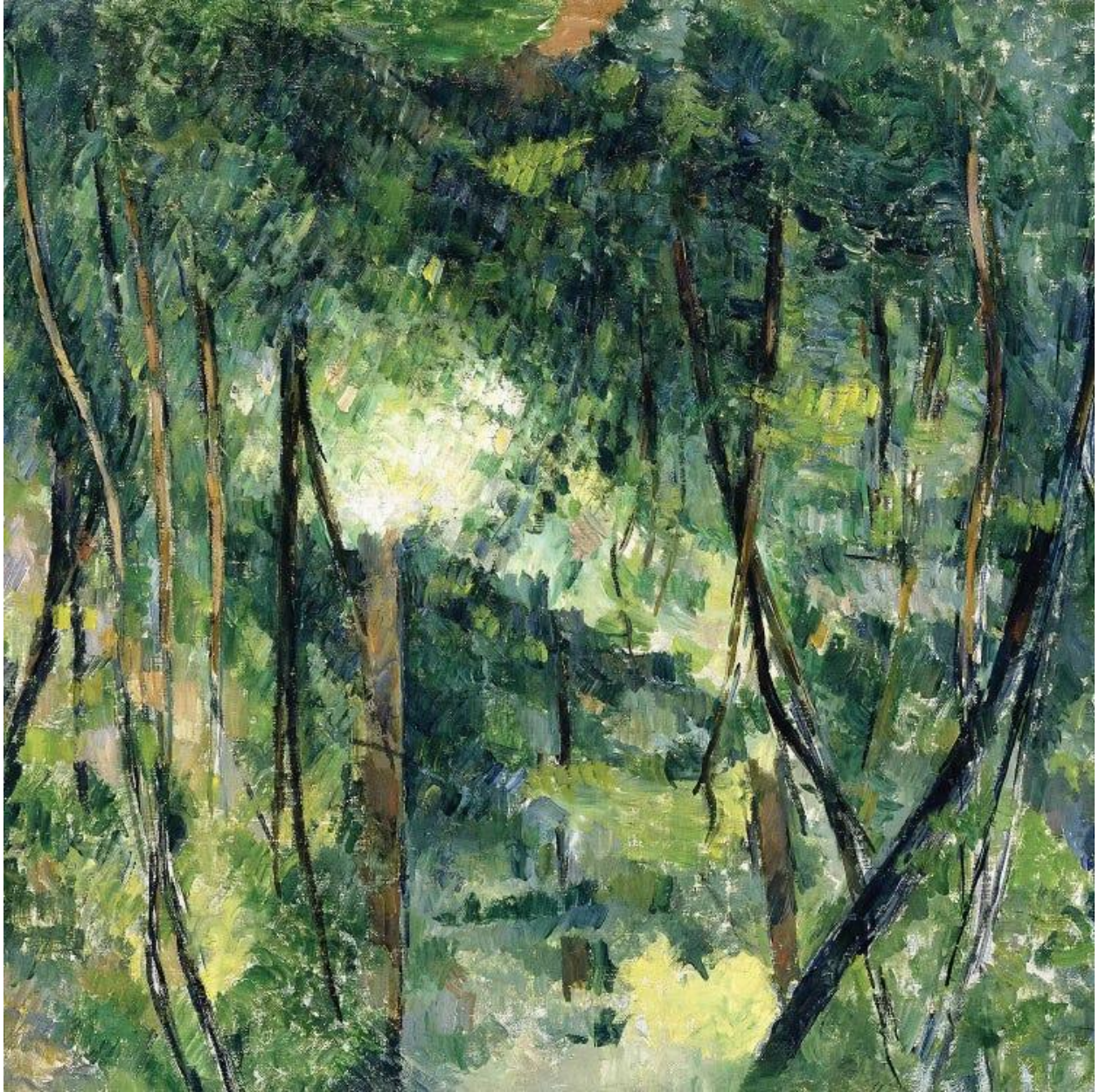


Paul Cezanne, *Undergrowth*, c. 1885



****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.

Paul Cezanne, *Undergrowth*, c. 1885

Undergrowth flourishes in indirect light. It is a protected place allowing just enough sun to reach below the canopy. Rain seeps in, wind is mostly quieted. And growth takes over. Untidy, out-of-control, luscious, verdant growth. All manner of life inhabits it, seen and mostly not. But we know it's necessary for the total balance of life's cycle. It is nature's retreat, covering itself as it shelters all.

Grieving who we've lost is an act of emotional balancing, as necessary to life as love. Perhaps it is our undergrowth cycle when we're called to retreat, allowing just enough light in to stumble our way through. It is our protective time when life out there feels too vulnerable to inhabit. Giving ourselves this cushioned space to mourn our loss can feel like lying down on soft moss. We may feel at loose ends, unfocused, listless, even despairing. It may be helpful, then, to understand this canopy of grief as a growing ecosystem rich in life. A natural life cycle.

Q.) Metaphorically speaking, does your wounded heart desire more sunlight or canopied light these days? Which light allows your grief to be acknowledged and supported?