

imagery: descriptive language that evokes sensory experience (sight, sound, taste, touch, or smell)

Writers describe sense experiences in order to convey or suggest ideas beyond the literal text. This extra layer of feeling is called the **connotation**. The verb form is to **connote**.

a piece of cloth

a piece of cloth

a dirty rag

a piece of cloth

a dirty rag

a dirty, red rag

a piece of cloth

a dirty rag

a dirty, red rag

the red rag, torn and dirty, was wet

a piece of cloth

a dirty rag

a dirty, red rag


the red rag, torn and dirty, was wet

**soaked with blood, the torn rag lay in a warm
puddle of gore**

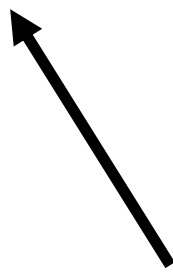
Example Passage from “A Prayer from the Living”:

We should have come into the town at dawn. In the town everyone had died. The horses and cows were dying, too.

I could say that the air stank of death, but that wouldn't be true. **It smelled of rancid butter and poisoned heat and bad sewage.** There was even the faint irony of flowers.



Positive connotation: flowers suggest a freshness, life, maybe even love.



Negative connotation: rancid butter and bad sewage connote spoilage and decay.

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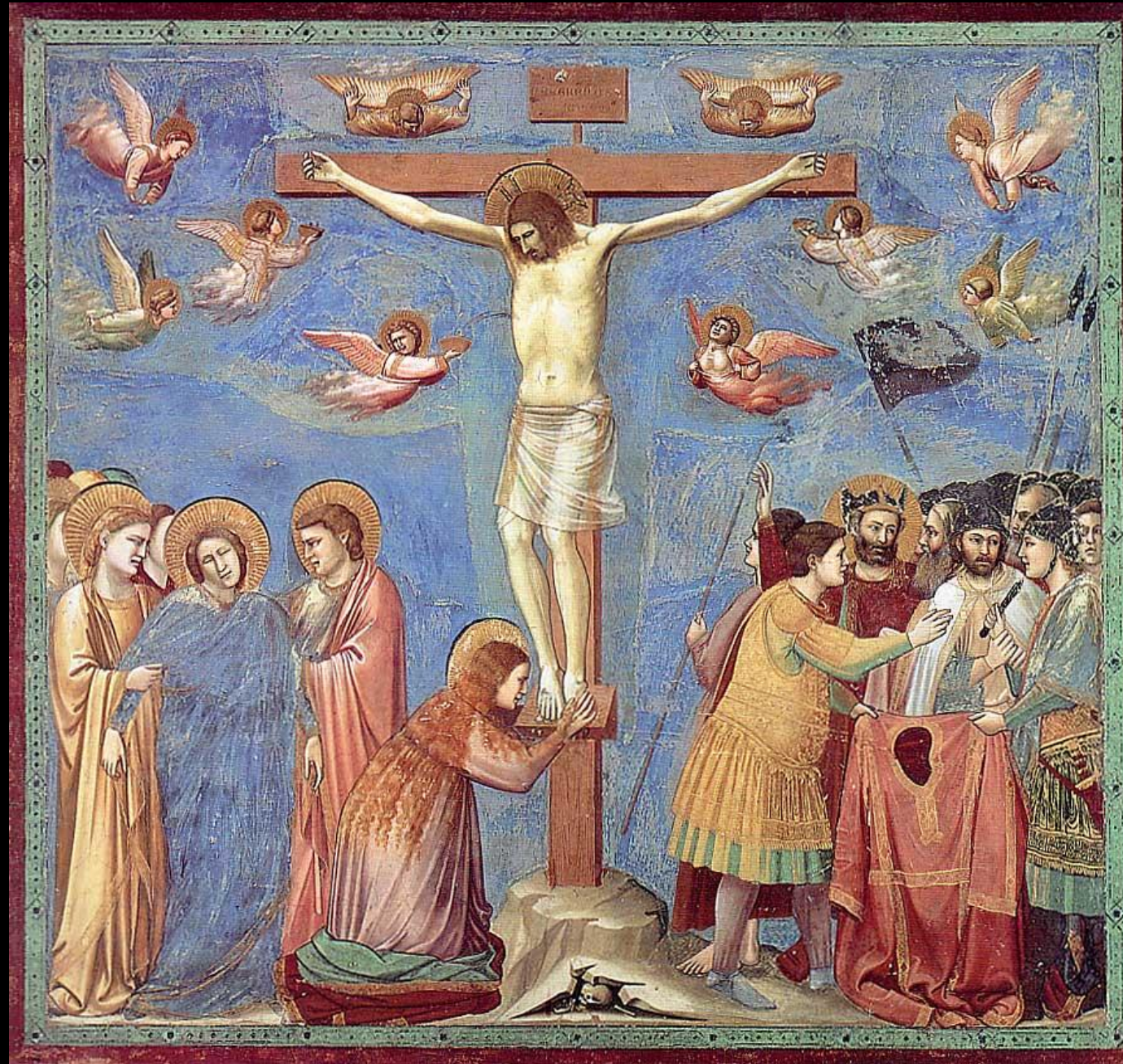
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Why would Ben Okri use descriptions that suggest two opposite things about death and dying?

*Cruci-
fiction*

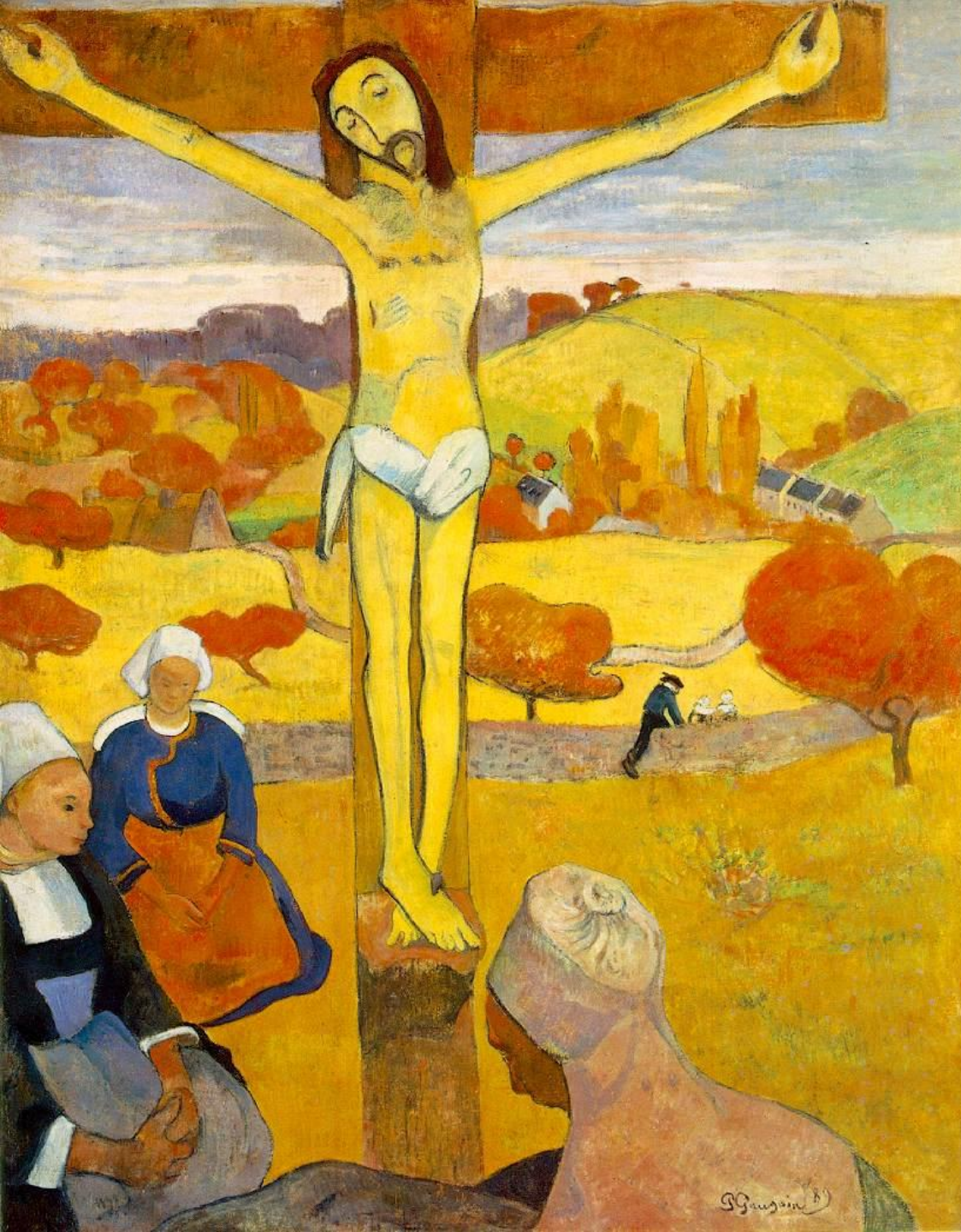
Giotto
1305



*Christ as the
Man of Sorrows*

Albrecht Dürer
ca. 1493





*The Yellow
Christ*

Paul Gauguin
1889

*Crucifixion
(Hypercubic
Body)*

Salvador Dali
1954

