The night I lost you
someone pointed me towards
the Five Stages of Grief.
Go that way, they said,
it's easy, like learning to climb
stairs after amputation.
And so I climbed.
Denial was first.
I sat down at breakfast
carefully setting the table
for two. I passed you the toast—
you sat there. I passed
you the paper—you hid
behind it.
Anger seemed more familiar.
I burned the toast, snatched
the paper and read the headlines myself.
But they mentioned your departure
and so I moved on to
Bargaining. What could I exchange
for you? The silence
after storms? My typing fingers?
Before I could decide, Depression
came puffing up, a poor relation
its suitcase tied together
with string. In the suitcase
were bandages for the eyes
and bottles of sleep. I slid
all the way down the stairs
feeling nothing.
And all the time Hope
flashed on and off
in defective neon.
Hope was a signpost pointing
straight in the air.
Hope was my uncle's middle name,
he died of it.
After a year I am still climbing,
though my feet slip
on your stone face.
The treeline
has long since disappeared;
green is a color
I have forgotten.
But now I see what I am climbing
towards: Acceptance
written in capital letters,
a special headline:
Acceptance.
Its name is in lights.
I struggle on,
waving and shouting.
Below, my whole life spreads its surf,
all the landscape I've ever known
of dreamed of. Below
a fish jumps: the pulse
in your neck.
Acceptance. I finally
reach it.
But something is wrong.
Grief is a circular staircase.
I have lost you.

INDEX

Abend, S. M., 203–4
Adelman, Anne J., 23, 70
Afghanistan war, impact, 256, 269, 271, 272, 273, 275; on patients, 263, 272; on therapist, 216, 255, 257, 273
“After the Analysis . . .” (Schmideberg), 42
Alexander, Franz, 192
Almond, Richard, 130
aloneness, war impact on veteran, 271–72. See also therapist aloneness
American College of Psychiatrists, 268
American Journal of Psychiatry, 263
Americans, and war impact, 255–56, 271, 272
analysis. See psychoanalysis
analysts: Chestnut Lodge training and supervision of, 171–72; responses to psychoanalysis demise, 183, 195, 196n3. See also therapists
analytic community: loss in, 182. See also institution and communal response, to therapist impairment; therapist loss, of analytic community
analytic time: therapist mourning and, 90–91; time compared to, 90
Ananke, 277
Anderson, Catherine L., 23, 71
anosognosia, 26–27
“Appointment at Samarra” (Maugham), 73
Army Combat Stress Control (CSC), 263
Army Corps of Engineers, 230
artistic representations of loss, 15; O’Keefe and, 17, 28, 30. See also narratives about loss
attachment: loss and, 8, 200–201; in therapy, 200–201
Auden, W. H., 51
Baker, John, 9
Balint, M., 36
Barker, Wendy, 69
Barthelme, F., 101
Barthelme, S., 101
Basch, M. F., 27
Being and Time (Heidegger), 270
bereavement: overview, 5–10. See also mourning
Best Friends, 278
Biancoli, R., 59
Bishop, Elizabeth, 63–64
Body Artist, The (DeLillo), 24–25
Boris, Harold, 282
Boulanger, Ghislaine, 226–29