
The Five Stages of Grief

By [Kate Cantrell](#) | 1 November 2019

In the 1960s
when Elizabeth Kübler-Ross was writing
On Death and Dying
NASA was preparing to fly
an eagle to the moon.

This was before Chernobyl
before *The Challenger* exploded
before Lindy looked down the barrel of a gun
and said without knowing why it was
a dingo stole her baby.

In clamping jaws
we sleep restlessly
while the cult of the mourning rise early
to dress their wounds. And to worship
Cassini's sacred loop.

*

In the 1980s
when Elizabeth Kübler-Ross was building
a healing centre to administer hope
and other drugs, her husband divorced her
because she claimed to speak to the dead.

Her black-veil brides are calling
but you refuse to answer
asking instead
what if Reactor 4 shut down
for maintenance
and the O-ring closed
and the Chamberlains, exhausted,
turned back at the rock
and hired a van instead of a tent?

Between parallel ribs
in red desert sand
one woman buries her defence.

*

In the 1990s
when Elizabeth Kübler-Ross was dying
our daughters locked arms and sang
red rover red rover send someone over
and eventually she came.

Perhaps this is why she gave us
numbers instead of names—
she was a triplet—
and three sisters never take
the path of least resistance.

A biography of Earth confirms
light cannot escape a black hole.
I suppose what I'm trying to say is
grief is a lemniscate
that turns on itself.

This entry was posted in [93: PEACH](#) and tagged [Kate Cantrell](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Kate Cantrell grew up in Brisbane in the 1990s. Her short stories, poems, and essays have been published in several magazines and journals, including *Overland*, *My Darling*, *Swamp*, and *The Lifted Brow*. She writes regularly for *Times Higher Education*, and her journalism has appeared in *Bradt Travel Guides*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, and *The Independent on Sunday*. She teaches Creative Writing and English Literature at the University of Southern Queensland.

[More by Kate Cantrell on Cordite Poetry Review →](#)

Related work:

- No Related Posts Found