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Writer/s: [Norie Neumark](#)

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Ever since it happened, I've been monitoring clichés. The score so far is...well, I'll let you know after this is finished. I began with the one that promised, 'Time heals all wounds.' I've been counting on that—counting days, weeks, months. Early on I had received a sympathetic email from a friend who said, 'It's been 12 years and I still can't believe it.' That had worried me, of course, but nonetheless, things were looking up for me after six months. Then suddenly everything collapsed, again—seven months and 14 days—well, okay, let's say seven and a half months later.

The yawning cavern, the great abyss of grief opened up and sucked me back in. I tried to work out why, looking back on the preceding days through my cliché-coloured glasses. Maybe it was prosaic—maybe I had been pushed over the all-too-close edge by the unexpected hissy fit of a colleague. His stream of vitriol proved the one that said 'you know who your friends are.'

The score so far—one true, one not so true.

Or perhaps what pushed me over the edge were the emails I had started to receive about someone I had known, very long ago, Sekai Holland—an opposition fighter in Zimbabwe. Of course it's not that she was the only concerned person. It's not that she was the only one to be brutally attacked and bravely fight on. But somehow the photos of her beaten and fractured body were so real, her vulnerability was so palpable. Over the next week, the images of Sekai distanced as they moved from my email to the television, but they haunted me still. And no cliché was able to impede my mind's strange connections between these images and another very different place, very different—yet also painful—body.

The other body was ordinary-seeming (to anyone else,

that is)—it was small and precarious and determined, struggling with aging and incapacity. 'I don't recognise myself' this other body used to say, even long before the point of vulnerability, and then she had stopped saying even that. Who knows when. Maybe it had been when she stopped looking in the mirror. Mirror clichés come to mind, but they are too hard to score.

However I do know how to score baseball and how to rate movies. 'About the Red Sox', it said on the DVD cover. 'Baseball is life' according to local wisdom and Don DeLillo and his movie, *Game 6*. She was an ardent Boston Red Sox fan. Our last outing together was going to a Red Sox game for her birthday. That may not mean much to most of you but just imagine a team that came perilously close to the final victory but just missed out, year after year, decade after decade—for nearly 90 years. But somehow their devoted fans never lost hope. And she was one of those loyal numbers. It's funny because she didn't grow up a fan like most did—'Still a New Yorker at heart' she always used to say, even after six decades. But maybe heart is where the home is. Unless it's broken? Broken by inconsolable loss that makes you unsure (again?) where home is.

'It helps to get it out,' promises another cliché, and so I stop counting and scoring and continue to write it down. Uncertain, as I go, whether what's happening is healing mourning or obsessive melancholia. 'Only time will tell' says my final cliché...if only time could still talk, even if not cure. But what could, after all, relieve the pain of the banal tragedy of a very old mother killed by an SUV running a red light—leaving me with no goodbyes, no final embrace, no last...no more...

*Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Norie Neumark.*