Museum of Sorrow (continued)

With each tragedy, it gets a bit denser with new names, new unsatisfying explanations and new photos of the deceased. The term “meme” here should not suggest a lack of seriousness or insincerity. Quite the opposite: The endless recalling of these bits of information and their proliferation throughout every channel of communication embed them even deeper into our consciousness. When we’re grasping for something to say, they are the things we touch.

The memes are also inert, but not for our lack of trying to break through to actually do something about the slaughter. The Parkland kids organized [nationwide marches](https://time.com/national-school-walkout-gun-control-photos/). State legislatures proposed expanded background checks, some of which even [passed](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/05/11/oregon-expanding-background-checks-to-almost-all-gun-sales-in-the-state/). But as time has gone on and the shootings haven’t stopped, those actions also get placed into the museum as reminders of just how hopeless all this feels. The next time this happens, we will all watch Kerr’s speech again.

What does it mean to constantly relive tragedy in this way? The names of places just pile up: Columbine, Virginia Tech, El Paso, Buffalo, Parkland, Las Vegas, Orlando, Roseburg, Marysville, Newtown and now Uvalde. There is the expectation that Uvalde will not be the last name on that list.

Museums and monuments, of course, commemorate the past. What I don’t know is if the museum of mass shooting memes suggests that we, also, have moved on to the task of just honoring the dead of the past, present and inevitable future.

Our response to these unthinkable tragedies almost feels reflexive at this point, rather than rooted in any actual belief that things can change. We witness the horrors of the present in which these massacres seem to happen every week, and while we still feel the pressing, manic need to do something, we also now know that nothing will be done. The desire for action, then, drags behind us — it is still with us but has lost its utility.

Helplessness is the sense that we will keep reliving the brutality of history over and over again. Tuesday night, while talking to my family, friends and colleagues about the 19 dead children and two dead teachers, I heard a despair that isn’t new but has increased in volume over the past few years. Nobody thought we could do anything about any of this; nobody even bothered to offer up a theory on how things might change. It was as if we were collectively giving up.  ~Jay Caspian Kang, Opinion

(gifted from subscriber https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/opinion/uvalde-texas-shooting.html?unlocked\_article\_code=AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACEIPuomT1JKd6J17Vw1cRCfTTMQmqxCdw\_PIxftm3iWka3DIDmwciOMNAo6B\_EGKeLRqY9c-miiWVNZadaQvQ\_tuz-lQeUxxTg3i6r21pKM4GQRn44SiQjFxmJvXQbEz9TKtMjHlJrx0nLD6tkOIO33tX6GPzX0rdgx6osFiIguv33ANk\_3GAfc1joclpYopApFxQTgGbCCY7bK\_W1glZoLwPlyL4RI2WupZRTjUgdWYjroHewlRAl7NJ2httSd-sJgPfYNKY9usakIoa8H8gr4OC2N3L4vPB5E5Q4Dck7UCoqfyRGMWvnaCpo1Qv6WmixNt&smid=url-share)