The Hunger

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Sex. It’s ironic that the word can mean something we seek from others and also mean something that defines us. My sex is male. My sex is infrequent (grin). But, like my virus, my sex is something that makes me who I am, and it keeps me searching for some kind of fit.

Sex in the era of AIDS, for those of us who live inside that aquarium, is a cloudy thing. Something pure, something we more or less understand, is suddenly overlaid (pardon the pun) with doubt. I wonder whether my disclosure will deny me the love I deserve or the sex I crave. I serosort, using HIV as a third gender to further narrow the possibilities. I negotiate everything from kissing to condoms with the same analytical single-mindedness with which I order Chinese takeout. Yes, I am cool with condoms for the kung pao. No, I don’t want to wrap the crab angels. Yes, I’d like the hot and sour. And it sometimes seems even less romantic than that. Oh, great—now I’m hungry.

But I tend to forget that it’s more than that. Sex, like HIV, is more than a goal, more than a menu. Sex is who I am. So is HIV. No negotiating that, really. I can choose, on my good days, to find comfort in that fact.

Sex, the drive, is tied into sex, the gender, and infused with HIV, which pervades both.

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