The Way We Live Now: Sarah Schulman

Writer

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A monologue from her soon-to-be-produced play, The Child

The protease inhibitors have kicked in again, and I'm back at the gym on a regular basis. I'm the boss again, and no one is ever going to forget it. I write the checks in this community. For three years I kept everything in the apartment where José had placed it. I haven't bought anything new. I thought I was going to die and that this would have been the entirety of my life. Now I need to get rid of his stuff, but I don't want to. It represents my real life, my life with José, the only time I was not alone. How could I put that in a box?

At least my HIV is the same genetic material as José's. It's our child. My suffering is in front of me. It will always be in front of me. It lines the path of my future. My future is strewn with the consequences of my past: death, fear of death, absence, fear of absence, incredible pain, incredible discomfort, Hickmans, pills, torturous treatments, unpredictable diarrhea, adjusting my fucking medication, aches, joint aches, disfunctioning organs like my liver, fatigue, emaciation, terrible skin problems, rashes, shingles, mollusks on my face, thrush, rashes on my dick, itching skin, so much depression I can't get out of the bathtub, my lover's endless death.

The past is my destiny. I love taking my pills. I love leaving the office, going to the gym, having sex in the steamroom, going home, taking my pills and sitting in our chair in our house, the house where I spent the best days of my life. The most horrifying. The days that lay before me.

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