Memoir

October 12, 2021

The Memoir bookstore features personal stories of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Books are listed in alphabetical order by title. Click the title to read more about each book. Missing your favorite book? Click here to send us your recommendations.

- AIDS Memoir: Journal of an HIV-Positive Mother
- Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope
- Believing in Magic: My Story of Love, Overcoming Adversity and Keeping the Faith
- Bleeder
- Body Counts: A Memoir of Politics, Sex, AIDS and Survival
- Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir
- Breaking the Surface
- A Burden of Silence: My Mother's Battle with AIDS
- Damaged Goods: A Woman Who Became Her Own Hero
- Delicate Courage: An Exquisite Journey of Love, Death, and Eternal Communication
- Dog Years: A Memoir
- The Epidemic of Our Time
- Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight, A Psychiatrist's Own Story
- Flight of the Beautiful Lie
- Good Things Happen Slowly: A Life In and Out of Jazz
- I Have Something to Tell You: A Memoir
- I Really Didn't Mean To Get HIV
- I Was Born This Way: A Gay Preacher's Journey through Gospel Music, Disco Stardom, and a Ministry in Christ

- In The Province of the Gods
- In The Storm Too Long: Refusing to Lose this Battle
- Inheritance
- Last Watch of the Night: Essays Too Personal and Otherwise
- Life Positive: A Journey to the Center of My Heart
- Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS
- Living Off the Edge
- My Journey as an AIDS Nurse
- My Pet Virus: The True Story of a Rebel Without a Cure
- My Unexpected Life
- The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and (HIV) Positive
- Never Silent: ACT UP and My Life in Activism
- Nowhere Else I Want to Be: A Memoir
- One Life at a Time: An American Doctor's Memoir of AIDS in Botswana
- Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned
- A Place Like This: A Memoir
- Po-boy Contraband: From Diagnosis Back to Life
- Positive: Living with HIV/AIDS
- Positive: A Memoir
- Positively Hetero
- The Pox Lover: An Activist's Decade in New York and Paris
- The PrEP Diaries
- A Sister's Tale: A Family Memoir
- The Sea is Quiet Tonight
- Slaves to the Rhythm: A Love Story
- Still Positive: a memoir
- The Surreal Life of the Eccentric Uncle
- Surviving HIV: Growing Up a Secret and Being Positive

- Sweet Dreams
- Talk Softly: A Memoir
- There is No Me Without You
- Timeless on the Silk Road
- Unprotected: A Memoir (Billy Porter)
- Unprotected: A Memoir (Rae Lewis Thornton)
- Voices in the Band
- We Are All The Same: A Story of a Boy's Courage and a Mother's Love

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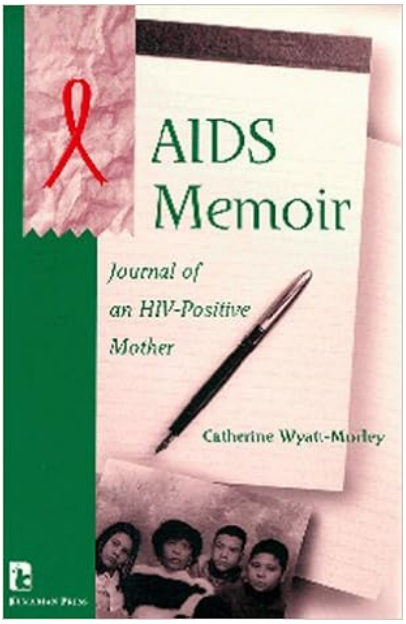
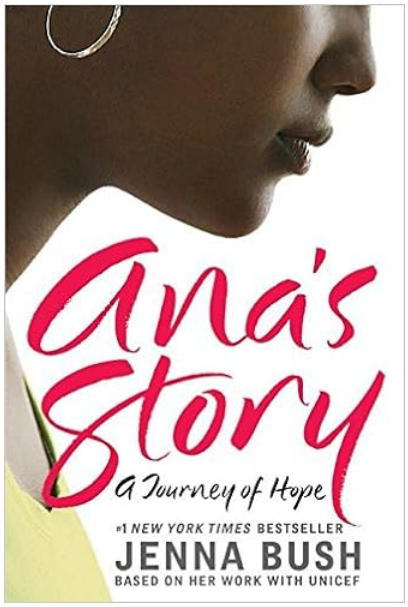


AIDS Memoir: Journal of an HIV-Positive Mother
by Catherine Wyatt-Morley

Catherine Wyatt-Morley, while refusing to play a victim, presents the physical, psychological and social reality of living with HIV/AIDS. Her story is one of love, faith and hope in the direst circumstances. Separating disease fact from fiction, she provides a rare view into an adverse world that must simultaneously be combated and embraced.

Available at amazon



Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope
by Jenna Bush Hager and Mia Baxter

Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope is a work of narrative nonfiction based on Jenna Bush's experiences while interning for UNICEF and documenting lives of children and teens she encountered through her work. The book focuses on Ana, a teenage single mother who is bravely living with, rather than dying from, HIV. Ana's determination has allowed her to overcome abuse and abandonment and fight for an education and a better future for her child. Inspired by the framework of one girl's life, it is also the story of many children around the world who are marginalized and excluded from basic care, support, and education. Jenna Bush sends a message of hope, inclusion and survival, and calls for youth involvement in helping other young people triumph over adversity.

The book includes approximately 45 full-color photographs taken by Mia Baxter, Jenna's friend and fellow UNICEF intern.

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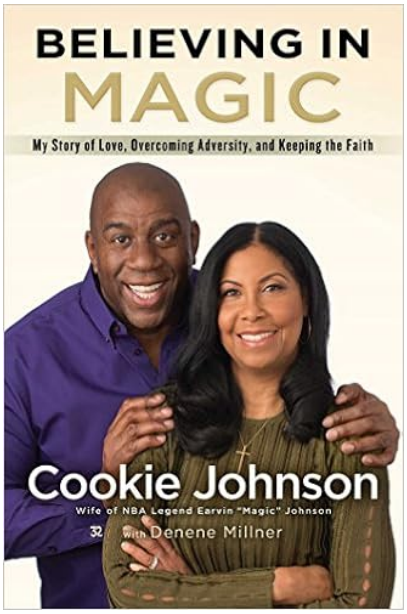

Believing in Magic: My Story of Love, Overcoming Adversity and Keeping the Faith
by Cookie Johnson and Denene Millner

In her new memoir, Cookie Johnson, wife of NBA legend Earvin “Magic” Johnson, shares details of her marriage, motherhood, faith, and how an HIV diagnosis 25 years ago changed the course of their lives forever.

On November 7, 1991, basketball icon Earvin “Magic” Johnson stunned the world with the news that he was HIV positive. For the millions who watched, his announcement became a pivotal moment not only for the nation, but his family and wife. Twenty-five years later, Cookie Johnson shares her story and the emotional journey that started on that day—from life as a pregnant and joyous newlywed to one filled with the fear that her husband would die, she and her baby would be infected with the virus, and their family would be shunned. Believing in Magic is the story of her marriage to Earvin nearly four decades of loving each other, losing their way, and eventually finding a path they never imagined.

November 7, 2016 will mark a quarter-century since the announcement and Cookie’s survival and triumph as a wife, mother, and God-fearing woman.

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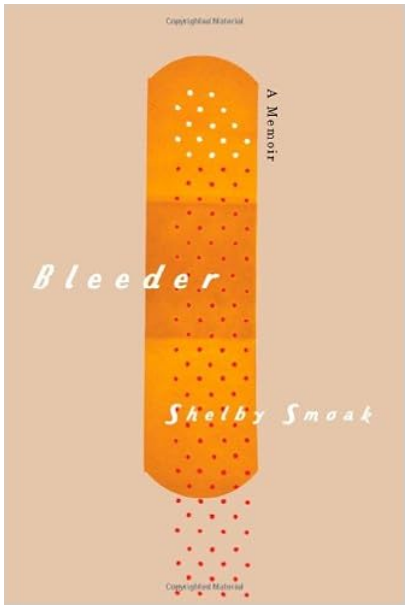

Bleeder: A Memoir
by Shelby Smoak

Finding true love and graduating from college are difficult quests on their own, but try tackling them while living with HIV in the early 1990s in North Carolina. Shelby Smoak, a heterosexual hemophiliac and talented writer, did just that—and he lived to tell the very entertaining tales in his memoir Bleeder.

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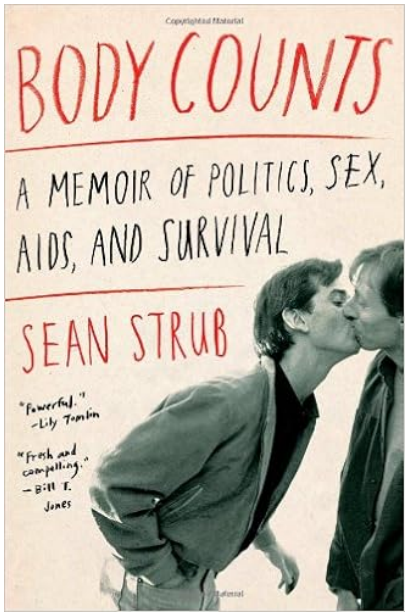

Body Counts: A Memoir of Politics, Sex, AIDS and Survival
by Sean Strub

Sean Strub, founder of the groundbreaking POZ magazine, producer of the hit play The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me, and the first openly HIV-positive candidate for US Congress, charts his

remarkable life—a story of politics and AIDS and a powerful testament to loss, hope, and survival.

As a politics-obsessed Georgetown freshman, Sean Strub arrived in Washington, DC, from Iowa in 1976, with a plum part-time job running a Senate elevator in the US Capitol. But he also harbored a terrifying secret: his attraction to men. As Strub explored the capital's political and social circles, he discovered a parallel world where powerful men lived double lives shrouded in shame.

When the AIDS epidemic hit in the early 1980s, Strub was living in New York and soon found himself attending "more funerals than birthday parties." Scared and angry, he turned to radical activism to combat discrimination and demand research. Strub takes readers through his own diagnosis and inside ACT UP, the activist organization that transformed a stigmatized cause into one of the defining political movements of our time.

From the New York of Studio 54 and Andy Warhol's Factory to the intersection of politics and burgeoning LGBT and AIDS movements, Strub's story crackles with history. He recounts his role in shocking AIDS demonstrations at St. Patrick's Cathedral and the home of US Senator Jesse Helms. Body Counts is a vivid portrait of a tumultuous era, with an astonishing cast of characters, including Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, Keith Haring, Bill Clinton, Yoko Ono, and others.

By the time a new class of drugs transformed the epidemic in 1996, Strub was emaciated and covered with Kaposi's sarcoma lesions, the scarlet letter of AIDS. He was among the fortunate who returned, Lazarus-like, from the brink of death. Strub has written a vital, inspiring memoir, unprecedented in scope, about this deeply important period of American history.

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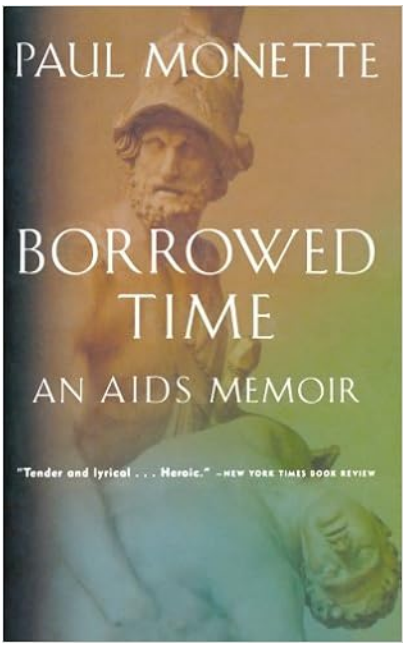

Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir
by Paul Monette

The first personal documentary about AIDS to be published, Borrowed Time remains as vividly detailed as the best novel and as lucidly observed as the fiercest journalism. It is a cry from the heart against AIDS as it was in the early stages of the plague and against the intolerance that surrounded it. In equal parts, it is a supremely moving love story and a chronicle of the deep commitment and devotion that Paul Monette felt for Roger Horwitz from the night of their first meeting in Boston in the mid-1970s to Roger's diagnosis a decade later and through the last two years of his life, when fighting the disease together became a full-time occupation. This is not a book about death but a book about living while dying and the full range of emotions provoked by that transition -- sorrow, fear, anger, among them. It is a document essential to the history of the gay community; vital for anyone reading about AIDS; and one of the most powerful demonstrations of love and partnership to be found in print.

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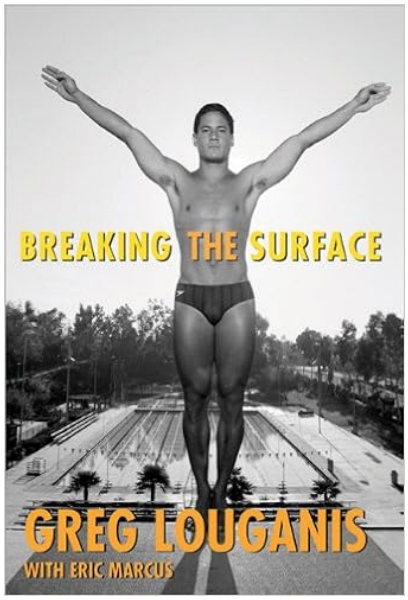

Breaking the Surface
by Eric Marcus, Greg Louganis

This is a new edition of Greg Louganis's 1995 #1 New York Times bestselling autobiography and Literary Guild Selection. It is the unflinchingly honest first-person account of a man breaking free of a lifetime of silence and isolation.

Born to a young Samoan father and Northern European mother, and adopted at nine months, Greg began diving at age nine, and at 16 won a silver medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. But despite his astonishing athletic skill, Greg struggled with late-detected dyslexia, prejudice toward his dark skin coloring and anguish over his homosexuality, which he felt compelled to hide. Being in the spotlight intensified his difficulties with relationships and substance abuse.

However, Louganis went on to win double gold medals at the 1984 and 1988 Olympics. His triumph at the 1988 Olympics came several months after he tested positive for HIV. This is the

haunting, searingly candid story of the world's greatest diver. This new edition includes a new foreword.

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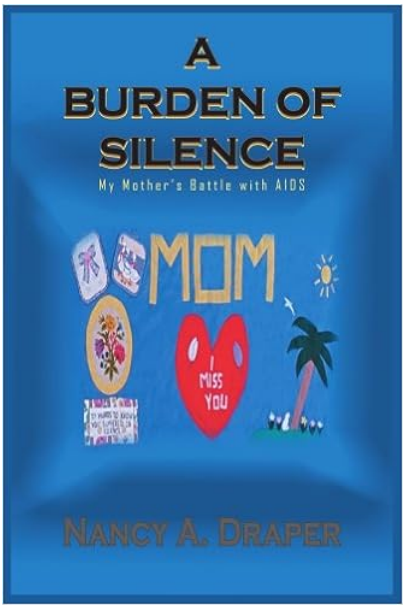

A Burden of Silence: My Mother's Battle with AIDS
by Nancy A. Draper

A Burden of Silence: My Mother's Battle with AIDS is an inspiring account of a daughter's devotion to her dying mother. This poignant story, about a 66-year-old woman who was transfused with HIV contaminated blood during heart bypass surgery, reveals her self-imposed shame and fear of rejection. She kept her illness a secret, except for a handful of family members. This remarkable woman's voice is heard through the words of her daughter who became her advocate and confidant. It will evoke emotions of faith, anger, inspiration, and overwhelming love. The holistic techniques described in this riveting story will help anyone battling any disease.

The moving account, which this brave woman urged her daughter to write, is a testament to the human spirit in the face of unspeakable circumstances. Draper weaves together the themes of strong mother-daughter bonds, the impact of caring nurses, and the pain at masking a deadly illness. A Burden of Silence: My Mother's Battle with AIDS is also a call to action for the cause of AIDS awareness that humanizes this often dehumanizing disease. The book questions why the government waited so long to respond to the AIDS epidemic, and attacks blood banks for not taking more responsibility in protecting the blood supply. Draper keeps her mother's memory alive through the panel she made for the NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt that travels throughout the world heightening awareness, and promoting compassion and acceptance of people with HIV/AIDS. A powerful message is sent to all who read the words on the panel; "It hurts to know you suffered in silence."

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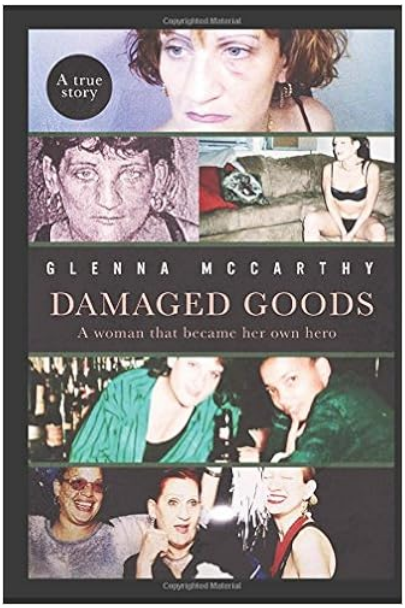

Damaged Goods: A Woman Who Became Her Own Hero
by Glenna McCarthy

“After you’re done reading Glenna’s story, you cannot help but admit she’s led a hard life. She’s gone through more than her fair share of trouble, in different ways. Some of it she invited; some she did not. To say that she had a troubled childhood would be an understatement. Cutting a long story short, she spent a considerable time working as a prostitute. She was a drug addict. Somewhere along the way, she caught AIDS and Hepatitis C. She successfully battled the latter, which she considers a battle won. A turnaround in such scenarios is rare. Glenna, though, felt it was imminent. Along the way, she met some good people. She managed to get the better of her paranoia and anxiety, successfully completing her bachelor’s degree in sociology. Now, she’s happy how things have shaped up. She knows the journey is nowhere near the end, and understands she’ll have to deal with new kinds of challenges, but they’re ones she looks forward to, unlike before.” - From the Introduction

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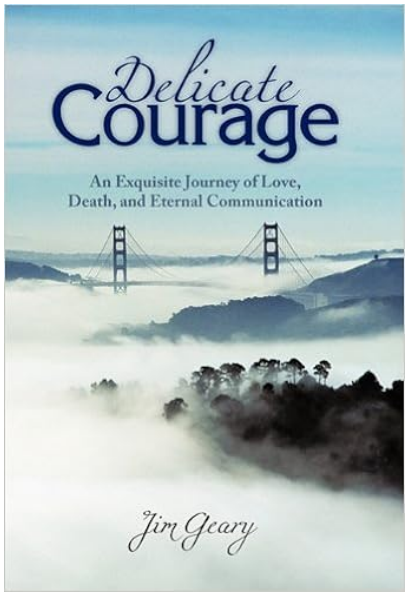

Delicate Courage: An Exquisite Journey of Love, Death, and Eternal Communication
by Jim Geary

Delicate Courage chronicles the true story of a young gay man who takes on a life of service during the AIDS outbreak in San Francisco and begins an unforgettable journey through love, death, and eternal life. In 1978, after JimGeary witnesses the devastating effects of the mass suicides at Jonestown followed by the assassinations of Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Milk, he decides to volunteer with San Francisco's Shanti Project—the same year he begins corresponding with Jess Randall, the man who would eventually become his longtime partner. Geary details how, fewer than three years later, he formed the first AIDS support group and spearheaded Shanti Project's development into one of the premier AIDS organizations in the world. As Geary tells the inspiring personal story of his revolutionizing of AIDS care, he also narrates his poignant crossing from joy to grief as his lover faces his own AIDS diagnosis. Geary's memoir concludes with journal entries and uplifting after-death communications he shared with Randall.

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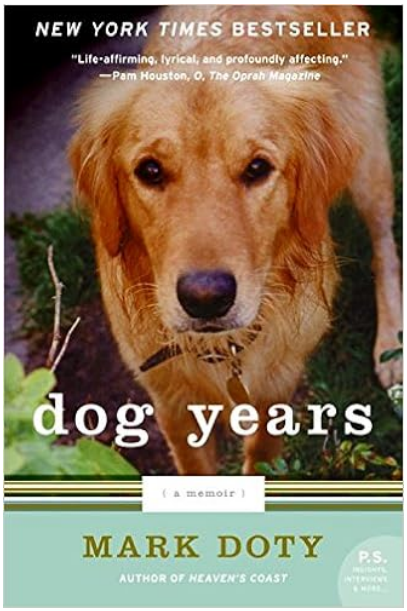

Dog Years: A Memoir
by Mark Doty

Why do dogs speak so profoundly to our inner lives? When Mark Doty decides to adopt a dog as a companion for his dying partner, he finds himself bringing home Beau, a large golden retriever, malnourished and in need of loving care. Beau joins Arden, the black retriever, to complete their family. As Beau bounds back into life, the two dogs become Mark Doty's intimate companions, his solace, and eventually the very life force that keeps him from abandoning all hope during the darkest days. Their tenacity, loyalty, and love inspire him when all else fails.

Dog Years is a remarkable work: a moving and intimate memoir interwoven with profound reflections on our feelings for animals and the lessons they teach us about life, love, and loss. Mark Doty writes about the heart-wrenching vulnerability of dogs, the positive energy and joy they bring, and the gift they bear us of unconditional love. A book unlike any other, Mark Doty's surprising meditation is radiantly unsentimental yet profoundly affecting. Beautifully written, Dog Years is a classic in the making.

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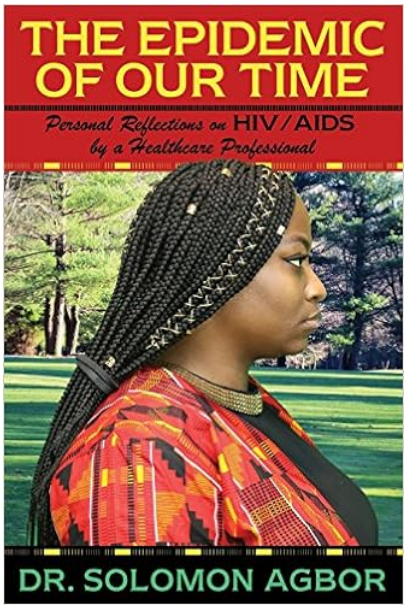

The Epidemic of Our Time
by Solomon Agbor

Although HIV/AIDS can strike anywhere around the globe, no region has been more affected by the deadly ravages of the epidemic than sub-Saharan Africa. Thanks to research and medical advances, the disease has changed from an acute to a chronic condition. Patients, however, still must battle on two fronts: the disease that destroys their physical bodies, and the stigma and discrimination that destroy their ability to cope and live normal lives.

The Epidemic of Our Time is a memoir of one man's journey into public health and a record of those who have been afflicted with HIV/AIDS. The book begins with the story of the author's cousin, a young woman who becomes infected thanks to choices she made to survive. The second half of the book features the author's story as an African immigrant in the United States treating patients infected with STDs, eventually focusing on HIV/AIDS. It was those patients who inspired him to treat the epidemic, and, armed with hope and a new treatment option, he traveled to nine countries for that purpose.

The author, Dr. Solomon Agbor, shares heartfelt stories of patients that will inspire, educate, and even amuse readers. At its heart, The Epidemic of Our Time showcases the courage of one determined doctor and his patients to battle the disease with everything they have.

After training in civil engineering in his native country of Cameroon, Dr. Solomon Agbor felt called to care for people instead of building bridges and buildings. He studied in the United States to become a registered nurse and physician assistant before earning a doctorate in public health. He works for the Behavioral Health Administration in the Maryland Department of Health.

Agbor's experience includes helping combat the syphilis crisis of the 1990s in Baltimore and joining AIDSRelief, a group of NGOs and academic and private organizations, which is funded by the US government to support the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV/AIDS in developing countries. He has traveled to Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Haiti, and Guyana, caring for and educating more than 600,000 patients. He and his wife, Alice, have six

children.

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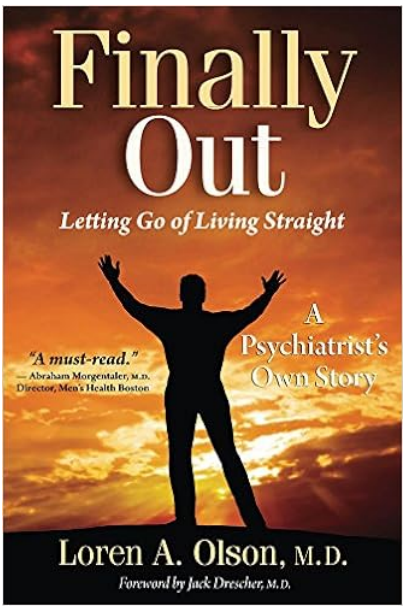

Finally Out: Letting Go of Living Straight, A Psychiatrist's Own Story
by Loren A. Olson, MD

In Finally Out, Dr. Olson answers that question and many others as he rigorously examines why some gay men live straight lives while struggling to come to terms with their true sexual orientation. He blends his own life experience with his psychiatric training, adding gay history for context. He then wraps it all into a complete and easily accessible understanding of men who resist thinking they are gay even while engaging—sometimes exclusively—in secret sexual activity with other men.

Available at amazon

Flight of the Beautiful Lie

by Jasmine Christine Ford

HIV doesn’t appear until the last chapters of this tell-it-like-it-is memoir of profound transformations. But as a Black transgender woman who survived childhood sex abuse, discrimination in the church and a career as a sex worker to pay for her addiction to plastic surgery, Jasmine Christine Ford knows about overcoming extreme obstacles and navigating HIV risk.

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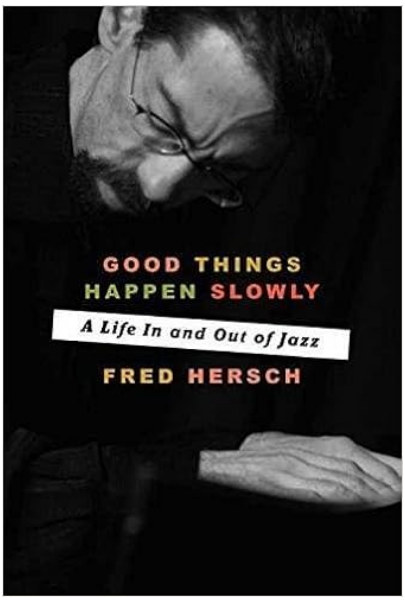

Good Things Happen Slowly: A Life In and Out of Jazz
by Fred Hersch

Jazz could not contain Fred Hersch. His prodigious talent as a sideman—a pianist who played with the giants of the twentieth century in the autumn of their careers, including Art Farmer and Joe Henderson—blossomed further in the eighties and beyond into a compositional genius that defied the boundaries of bop, sweeping in elements of pop, classical, and folk to create a wholly new music.

Good Things Happen Slowly is his memoir. It’s the story of the first openly gay, HIV-positive jazz player, and a deep look into the cloistered jazz culture that made such a status both transgressive and groundbreaking. It is a remarkable, at times lyrical evocation of New York in the twilight days of post-Stonewall hedonism, and a powerfully brave narrative of the illness that led to Hersch’s two-month-long coma in 2007, from which he would emerge to create some of the finest, most direct and emotionally compelling music of his career.

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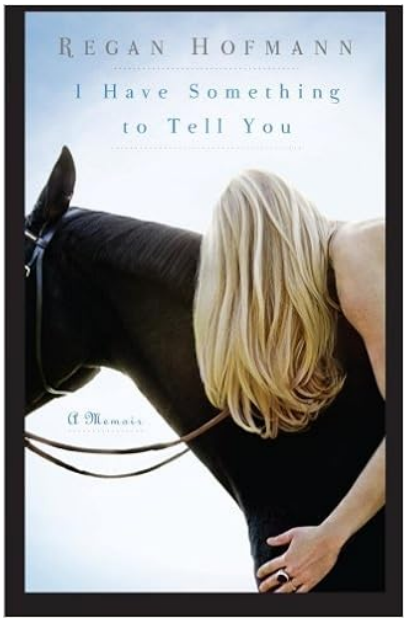

I Have Something to Tell You: A Memoir
by Regan Hofmann

For 10 years, Regan Hofmann lived a double life. To the world, she was a woman from Princeton who went to prep school, summered in the Hamptons and rode Thoroughbred horses. She had a great job, a loving family and friends and looks that made men turn their heads. From the outside, she seemed to have it all. On the inside, though, coursing through her veins and weighing heavily on her mind, was the truth: that she was HIV positive.

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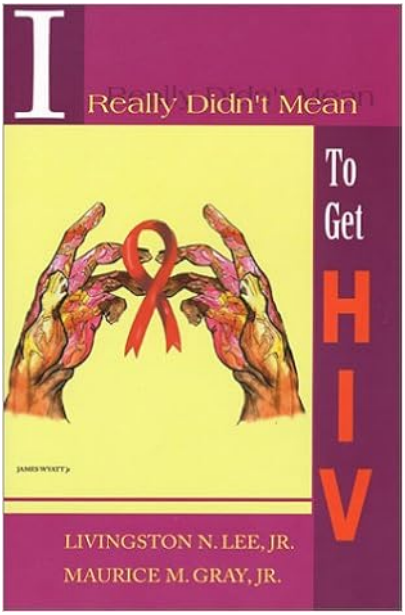

I Really Didn’t Mean To Get HIV
by Livingston N. Lee Jr., Maurice M. Gray Jr.

I Really Didn’t Mean To Get HIV is a book detailing Livingston N. Lee, Jr.’s 10-year journey first with HIV and now with AIDS. Brother Livingston (as everyone calls him), shares his testimony, his experiences and his life before and after discovering that he had contracted the HIV virus. His hope is that through his honesty in this book, those who are infected will find hope and those who are not infected, never will be.

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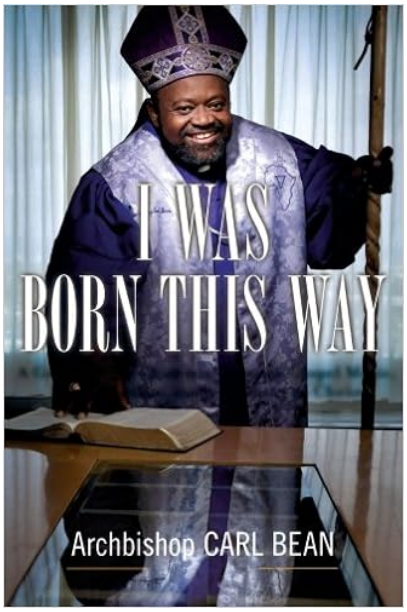

I Was Born This Way
by Carl Bean and David Ritz

I Was Born This Way: A Gay Preacher’s Journey through Gospel Music, Disco Stardom, and a Ministry in Christ Archbishop Carl Bean describes his route that took him from his childhood in pre-civil rights Baltimore to a successful career as Motown singer and then led away from that dream to a new one in which he helps the sick. His hit “I Was Born This Way” was the first openly gay hit song and instead of staying on the path to celebrity he founded the Unity Fellowship Church of Christ and now has congregations across the country.

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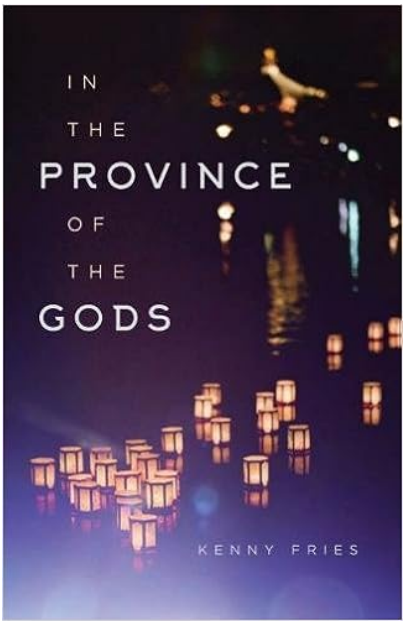

In The Province of the Gods
by Kenny Fries

Kenny Fries embarks on a journey of profound self-discovery as a disabled foreigner in Japan, a society historically hostile to difference. As he visits gardens, experiences Noh and butoh, and meets artists and scholars, he also discovers disabled gods, one-eyed samurai, blind chanting priests, and A-bomb survivors. When he is diagnosed as HIV positive, all his assumptions about Japan, the body, and mortality are shaken, and he must find a way to reenter life on new terms.

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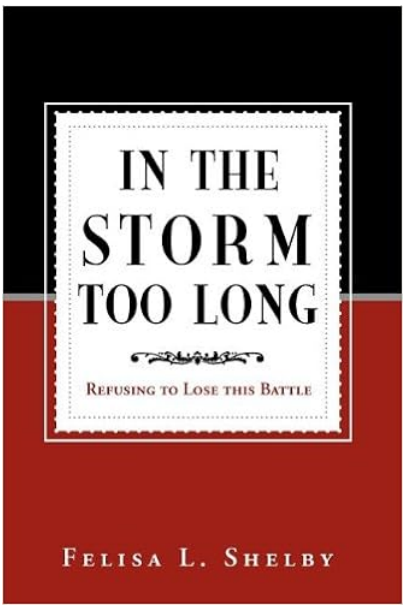

In The Storm Too Long: Refusing to Lose this Battle
by Felisa L. Shelby

An autobiographical account of how the author emerged from depression and thoughts of suicide

and learned to live with HIV.

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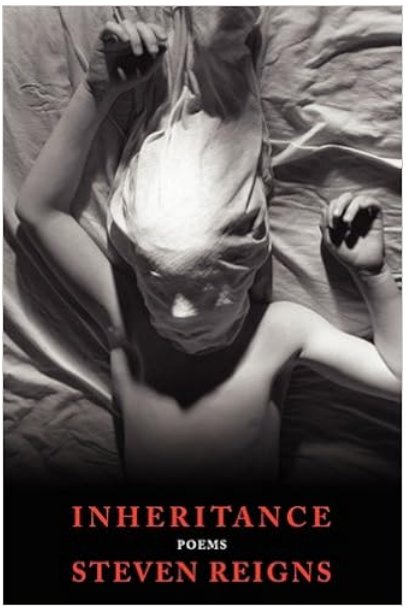

Inheritance
by Steven Reigns

Steven Reigns' poetry offers a gay life lived with pleasure and bitterness and companionability. As National Book Award winning American poet and memoirist Mark Doty so eloquently states: "To read this book is to meet a man alert to his times and the textures of the lives around him, a community observed with tenderness, wit and pleasure."

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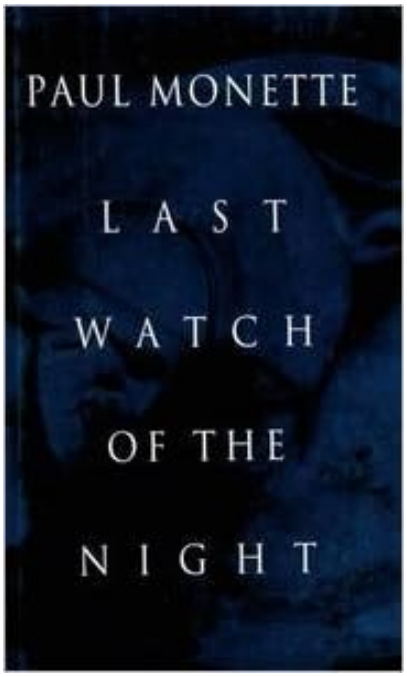


Last Watch of the Night: Essays Too Personal and Otherwise
by Paul Monette

With Borrowed Time and Becoming a Man—the 1992 National Book Award winner for nonfiction—this collection completes Paul Monette's autobiographical writing. Brimming with outrage yet tender, this is a "remarkable book" (Philadelphia Inquirer).

Available at amazon

Life Positive: A Journey to the Center of My Heart

by Nicholas Snow

In Bangkok, Thailand, Hollywood’s primo promo homo on the go-go Nicholas Snow is eking out a modest living as a foreign correspondent, actor and media personality when, in a moment of personal desperation, he makes a decision that changes his life forever. Decades into the AIDS pandemic and completely armed with the knowledge to protect himself, during a moment of passion with a man who is unaware of having HIV, Nicholas has a rare slip in his safer sex behavior and becomes HIV positive. What might have been the end of a lifetime of dreams turns out to be only the beginning of a remarkable journey that Nicholas himself chronicles in real time as he is living it. Part 12-step-program 4th-step inventory, part reality-show-on-paper, this is the painful yet triumphant saga of how Nicholas Snow uses his own mistake as an opportunity to empower millions of people throughout the world by disclosing not only his HIV status, but his experience, strength and hope as well.

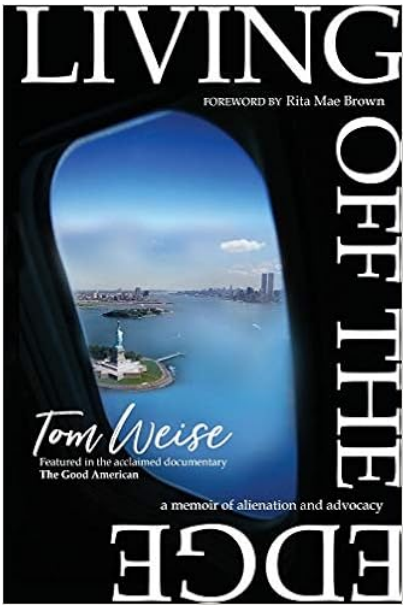


Living and Loving in the Age of AIDS

by Derek Frost

In this love story from across the pond, Derek Frost and Jeremy Norman—who in 1979 founded London’s legendary gay nightclub Heaven—enjoyed a glamorous life after gay liberation. But when Norman tested HIV positive in 1991 (Frost, by luck, remained negative), the duo turned their energy and know-how to global AIDS advocacy.

Available at amazon



Living Off the Edge
by Tom Weise

Tom Weise’s daring and controversial memoir Living Off The Edge recounts his struggles to survive and live happily in spite of what life throws at him. More importantly, his story exemplifies the life-learning drastic changes and lessons that shape us into really living in each moment.

Weise takes you through his turbulent years growing up in Germany, through a festering estrangement from his own abusive family, and a devastating early HIV diagnosis. Unknowingly, after moving to New York City, the author discovers that his HIV status prevents him from gaining a U.S. work visa, unintentionally making him an illegal immigrant. He turns to the oldest profession in history, and in doing so becomes an influential part in transforming it.

Weise is a man torn between two worlds, living a double-life in fear that running Rentboy.com, the largest online gay escort site in the world, while fostering two AIDS orphans could jeopardize everything he established in the U.S. in hopes of settling down.

In Living Off The Edge, he tells of the extreme difficulties of balancing his adult industry life with his determination to create a life of advocacy and activism. Not only does he fight for himself with constant immigration, health and even death threats, but he also champions for others and becomes a powerful force in NYC with his community service and charitable initiatives. Helping over 20 charities, supporting children with HIV, co-founding a gay homeless youth shelter, assisting undocumented asylum seekers in a detention center, and creating an adult industry escort support group addressing their life-support issues were just a few of his passions.

Living Off The Edge is an honest and daring life journey of ups and downs that gives voice to basic human rights as well as immigration, and LGBTQ rights, while reminding us that life is indeed only but a precious moment.

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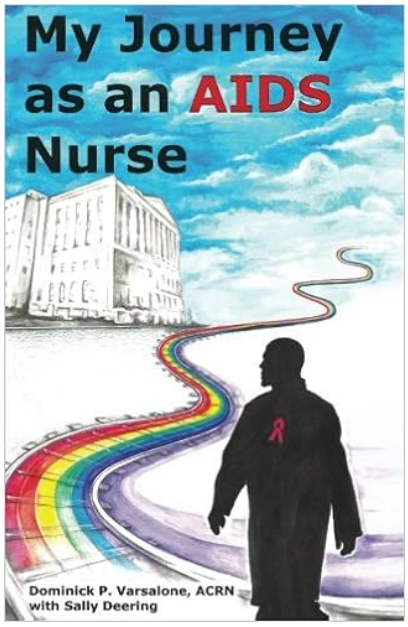

My Journey as an AIDS Nurse
by Dominick P. Varsalone

After enduring bullying by his brother and being sexually abused at age eleven, author Dominick P. Varsalone set out to prove to the world—and to himself—that he was not gay. Learning to accept his sexuality and finally coming out took him many years and undeniable strength.

In this heart-wrenching memoir, Varsalone chronicles this journey through his life's key struggles. After high school, he worked on the railroad, a male-dominated industry, where he faced persecution for who he was. His homosexuality made him the black sheep of his family, and the Roman Catholic religion of his parents repeatedly beat him down.

Called to nursing as a profession at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, he was able to get involved in caring for AIDS patients—some of them his close friends—and through their amazing

life stories, he experienced a new way of looking at the world. While conservative religion seemed to focus on the Bible's most hateful words, he learned that compassion, love, and care can be the true means of carrying out God's work.

One person can't do everything. But—as this story shows—when it comes to helping others, each of us can make a difference.

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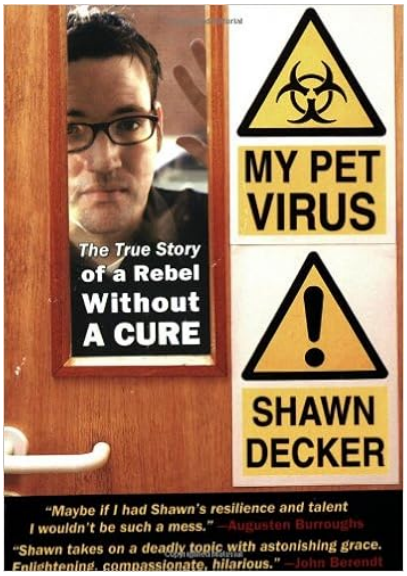

My Pet Virus: The True Story of a Rebel Without a Cure
by Shawn Decker

Shawn Decker, who has hemophilia, was diagnosed with HIV in 1987—and was promptly expelled from his Waynesboro, Virginia, sixth-grade class. Sound familiar? Two years earlier, another positive schoolkid with hemophilia, the late Ryan White, had been dumped from his Indiana classroom. Unlike the outspoken White, Decker, now 31, dummied up about the event and his status. Decker's mother, however, would not. She complained to the school, which eventually relented in time for Decker to start the seventh grade. Still, he navigated his entire adolescence—including his first, tentative romantic relationships and long sick leaves from school—without ever uttering the letters H-I-V. But soon after graduating from high school, he not only disclosed his status but he went national with the news, launching a sarcastic and upbeat blog about HIV called "My Pet Virus" (now on POZ.com) and contributing a regular column to POZ. Decker didn't just say AIDS, he devised a whole new lingo for it and hemophilia, coining terms like "positoids," "negatoids," "thin bloods" (those with hemophilia) and "thick bloods" (those without). He soon embarked on a career as an HIV educator, traveling the country at the side of negative HIV educator and "wife partner" Gwenn—whom he met while waiting in line to meet Ryan White's mother. Click here to read an exclusive preview on POZ.com of his outrageous chronicle of growing up thin-blooded in a thick-blooded world.

Available at
amazon

My Unexpected Life

by Martina Clark

After her diagnosis in 1992 at age 28, Martina Clark found her voice as an advocate for women, becoming the first openly HIV-positive person to work for UNAIDS, the United Nations HIV agency. While revealing her personal struggles and triumphs, the memoir offers an accessible look at global advocacy and the work needed to tackle discrimination and misinformation within such agencies.

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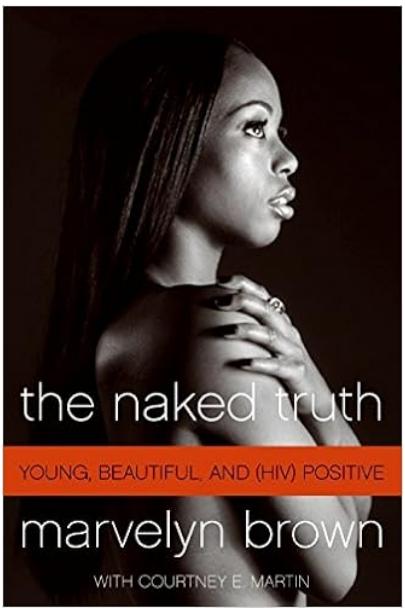

The Naked Truth: Young, Beautiful, and (HIV) Positive
by Marvelyn Brown

At 19 years of age, Marvelyn Brown was lying in a stark white hospital bed at Tennessee Christian Medical Center, feeling hopeless. A former top track and basketball athlete, she was in the best shape of her life, but she was battling a sudden illness in the intensive care unit. Doctors had no idea what was going on. It never occurred to Brown that she might be HIV positive.

Having unprotected sex with her Prince Charming had set into swift motion a set of circumstances that not only landed her in the fight of her life, but also alienated her from her community. Rather than give up, however, Brown found a reason to fight and a reason to live.

The Naked Truth is an inspirational memoir that shares how an everyday teen refused to give up on herself, even as others would forsake her. More, it’s a cautionary tale that every parent, guidance counselor, and young adult should read.

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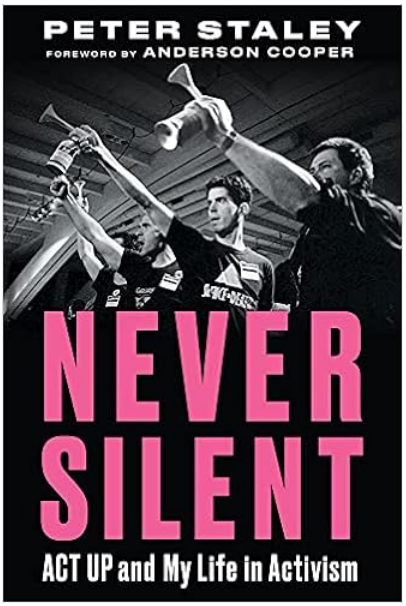


Never Silent: ACT UP and My Life in Activism
by Peter Staley

The previously untold stories of the life of the leading subject in David France's How To Survive A Plague, Peter Staley, including his continuing activism.

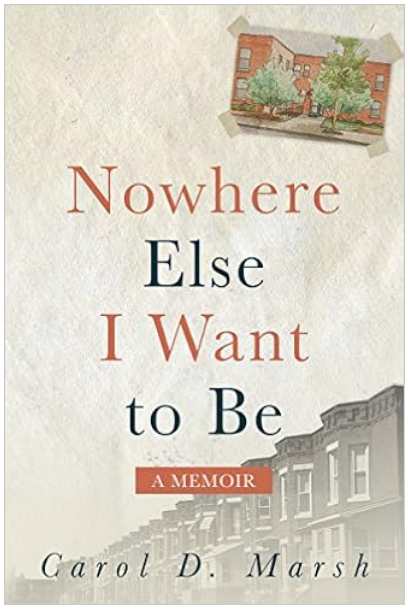
In 1987, somebody shoved a flyer into the hand of Peter Staley: massive AIDS demonstration, it announced. After four years on Wall Street as a closeted gay man, Staley was familiar with the homophobia common on trading floors. He also knew that he was not beyond the reach of HIV, having recently been diagnosed with AIDS-Related Complex.

A week after the protest, Staley found his way to a packed meeting of the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power—ACT UP—in the West Village. It would prove to be the best decision he ever made. ACT UP would change the course of AIDS, pressuring the National Institutes of Health, the FDA, and three administrations to finally respond with research that ultimately saved millions of lives.

Staley, a shrewd strategist with nerves of steel, organized some of the group's most spectacular actions, from shutting down trading on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange to putting a giant condom over the house of Senator Jesse Helms. Never Silent is the inside story of what brought Staley to ACT UP and the explosive and sometimes painful years to follow—years filled with triumph, humiliation, joy, loss, and persistence.

Never Silent is guaranteed to inspire the activist within all of us.

Available at amazon



Nowhere Else I Want to Be: A Memoir
by Carol D. Marsh

Carol D. Marsh founded, directed, and lived at Miriam's House, a Washington, DC, residence for homeless women living with AIDS. In this powerful memoir, Marsh recalls how she came to confront issues far removed from her own experience: addiction, poverty, and the institutional racism that permeates our society on every level. From the humorous to the tragic, the mundane to the sublime, Marsh offers a gripping view into a world where the stakes are high and love is pushed to its limit.

Nowhere Else I Want to Be is the story of the inspiring women who transformed Marsh's life. From Kimberly, who triumphs over a lifelong alcohol addiction, to Alyssa, who dies reaching out for the mother who abandoned her, Marsh witnesses the spectrum of human experience and the depth of the human spirit.

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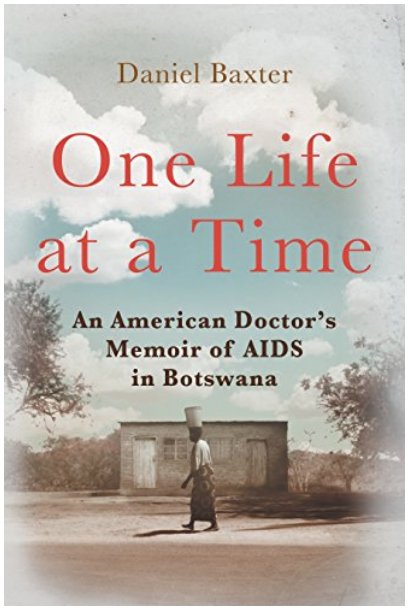

One Life at a Time: An American Doctor's Memoir of AIDS in Botswana
by Daniel Baxter

When Dr. Daniel Baxter arrived in Botswana in 2002, he was confident of the purity of his mission to help people with AIDS, armed with what he thought were immutable truths about life—and himself—that had been forged on his AIDS ward in New York City ten years earlier. But Baxter's good intentions were quickly overwhelmed by the reality of AIDS in Africa, his misguided altruism engulfed by the sea of need around him. Lifted up by Botswana's remarkable and forgiving people, Baxter soldiered on, his memorable encounters with those living with AIDS, and their unfathomable woes assuaged by their oft-repeated "But God is good," profoundly changing the way he thought about his role as a doctor.

Now, after caring for innumerable AIDS patients for eight years in Botswana, Baxter has written an urgent, quietly philosophical account of his journey into the early twenty-first century's new heart of darkness: AIDS in Africa, where legions desperately struggled to be among the spared and not the doomed. Part memoir, part travelogue, part chronicle of the zaniness of Botswana (one of the questions on his driver's license application was "Are you or have you ever been an imbecile?"), and part witness to suffering unknown to most Americans, his testimony is an unforgettable tribute to the many people he cared for.
Join Baxter on his life-changing journey in Botswana, as he recounts the stories of people like Ralph, a deteriorating AIDS and cancer patient who nonetheless always wore a smile, or Precious, a woman found sick and abandoned in the capital's slum, or "No Fear," a rude man in Baxter's gym whose descent he halted. After many years on the front lines of the African pandemic, Baxter realized that "one life at a time" was the only way to fight AIDS.

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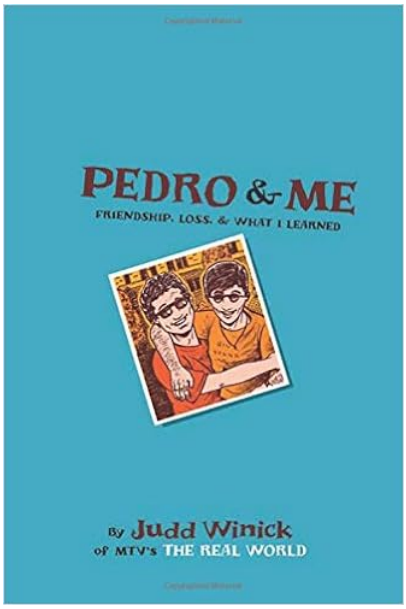

Pedro and Me: Friendship, Loss, and What I Learned
by Judd Winick

Pedro Zamora changed lives.When the HIV-positive AIDS educator appeared on MTV's The Real World: San Francisco, he taught millions of viewers about being gay and living with AIDS. Pedro's roommate on the show was Judd Winick, who created Pedro and Me to honor Pedro Zamora, his friend and teacher and an unforgettable human being. First published in 2000, Pedro and Me was a graphic novel pioneer. Its moving portrait of friendship and its urgent message have already reached thousands of people. Now, Pedro's story is reintroduced to today's graphically focused culture with a gorgeous, eye-catching new cover and a foreword from Judd.

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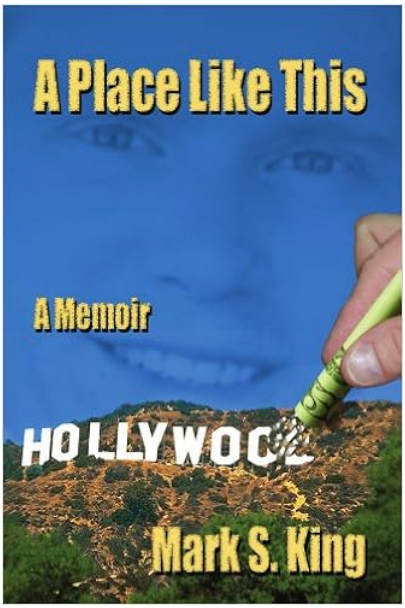

A Place Like This: A Memoir
by Mark S. King

Once you've won a car on a game show, been an actor, owned a phone sex company, been infected with HIV, slept with a movie icon and developed a drug addiction, you've pretty much done the Hollywood thing.

In this true, first-person account of the 1980's, Los Angeles transforms an all-American boy from an actor in commercials plugging fast food to a gay phone line worker pushing fast sex.

King experiences firsthand nearly every gay social milestone of an astonishing decade—drug use, the phone sex trade, the onset of AIDS, Rock Hudson, assisted suicide, anonymous encounters, the early development of AIDS organizations and activism, Magic Johnson's announcement—and shares his experiences with disarming humor and startling candor.

AIDS eventually converts King's plunge into sex and drugs to an increasing awareness of mortality—and a renewed search for meaning.

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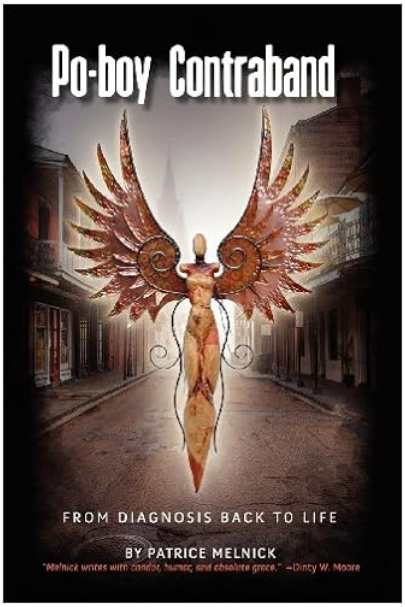

Po-boy Contraband: From Diagnosis Back to Life
by Patrice Melnick

Returning home from a stint serving in the Peace Corps in Central Africa, Patrice Melnick learns she is HIV-positive. She decides to live her life to the fullest, appreciating music, food, and literature--and finding love.

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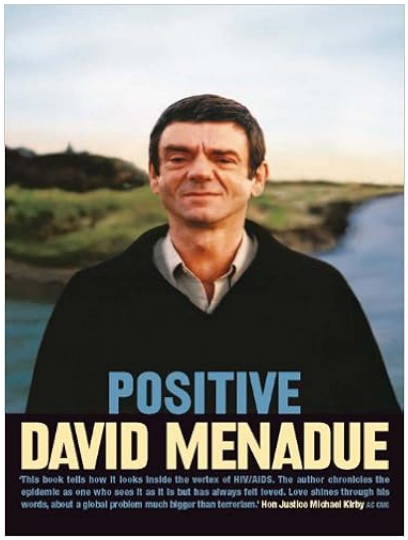

Positive: Living with HIV/AIDS
by David Menadue

This is an uplifting story of resilience, activism, optimism, and the ability to take things day by day. Journalist David Menadue, who was one of the first people to be diagnosed with HIV in Australia and has been living with AIDS for longer than almost anyone else in the country, shares his 20-year struggle with the disease and his inspiring efforts to lead a positive life.

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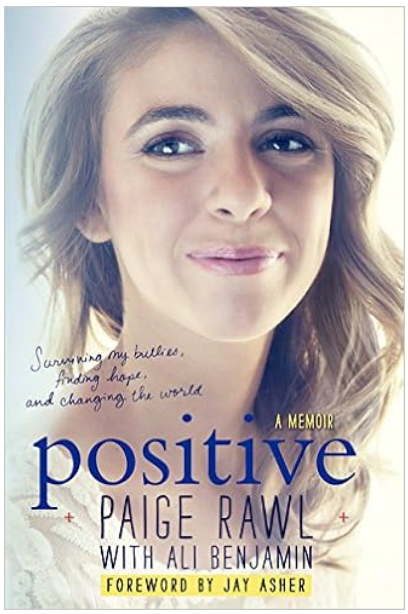

Positive: A Memoir
by Paige Rawl with Ali Benjamin

An astonishing memoir for the untold number of children whose lives have been touched by bullying. Positive is a must-read for teens, their parents, educators, and administrators—a brave, visceral work that will save lives and resonate deeply.

Paige Rawl has been HIV positive since birth, but growing up, she never felt like her illness defined her. On an unremarkable day in middle school, she disclosed to a friend her HIV-positive status—and within hours the bullying began. From that moment forward, every day was like walking through a minefield. Paige was never sure when or from where the next text, taunt, or hateful message would come. Then one night, desperate for escape, 15-year-old Paige found herself in her bathroom staring at a bottle of sleeping pills.

That could have been the end of her story. Instead, it was only the beginning. Paige's memoir calls for readers to choose action over complacency, compassion over cruelty—and above all, to be Positive.

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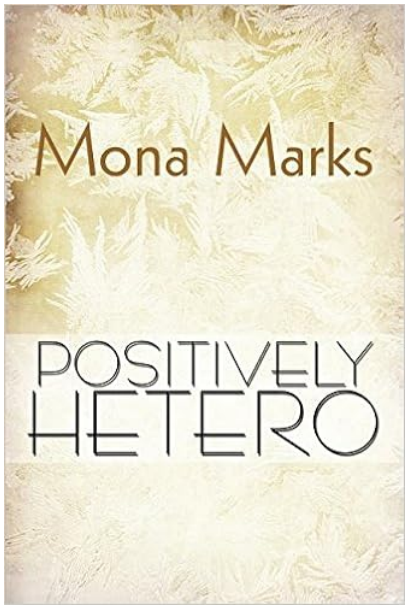

Positively Hetero
by Mona Marks

Mona was a working mother and wife until her world fell down around her with a divorce and a young daughter to raise. She was anxious but excited about a new start in a new city with a new job. And then the diagnosis came. She would learn to forgive, survive and face life's challenges head on.

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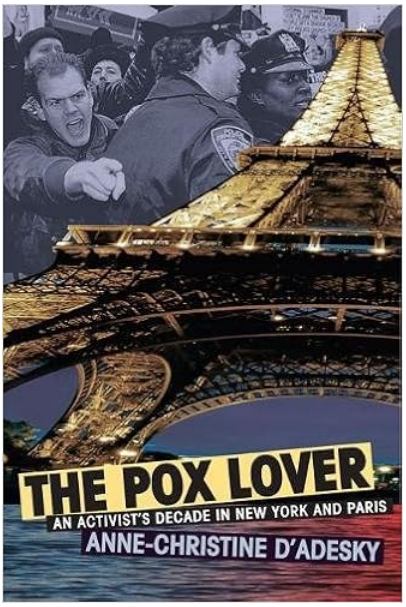

The Pox Lover: An Activist's Decade in New York and Paris
by Anne-christine d'Adesky

The Pox Lover is a personal history of the turbulent 1990s in New York City and Paris by a pioneering American AIDS journalist, lesbian activist, and daughter of French-Haitian elites. In an account that is by turns searing, hectic, and funny, Anne-christine d'Adesky remembers "the poxed generation" of AIDS—their lives, their battles, and their determination to find love and make art in the heartbreaking years before lifesaving protease drugs arrived.

D'Adesky takes us through a fast-changing East Village: squatter protests and civil disobedience lead to all-night drag and art-dance parties, the fun-loving Lesbian Avengers organize dyke marches, and the protest group ACT UP stages public funerals. Traveling as a journalist to Paris, an insomniac d'Adesky trolls the Seine, encountering waves of exiles fleeing violence in the Balkans, Haiti, and Rwanda. As the last of the French Nazis stand trial and the new National Front rises in the polls, d'Adesky digs into her aristocratic family's roots in Vichy France and colonial Haiti. This is a testament with a message for every generation: grab at life and love, connect with others, fight for justice, keep despair at bay, and remember.

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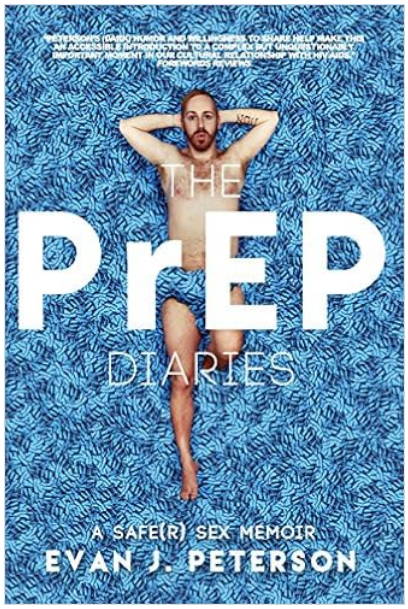

The PrEP Diaries
by Evan J. Peterson

The term PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) has become part of our dialogues with not only personal physicians but friends and lovers. The gay, bisexual, queer and transgender community is exploring Truvada, the first daily pill prescribed to HIV-negative people that prevents transmission of the virus, while the straight world catches up. Author Evan J. Peterson first wrote about his experience taking PrEP for The Stranger back in 2014. Since then he has chronicled his life in the same clever and sardonic tone; readers of The PrEP Diaries will enjoy Evan's stories about sex, intimacy, and the wild new frontiers of queer life in an increasingly PrEP-savvy world.

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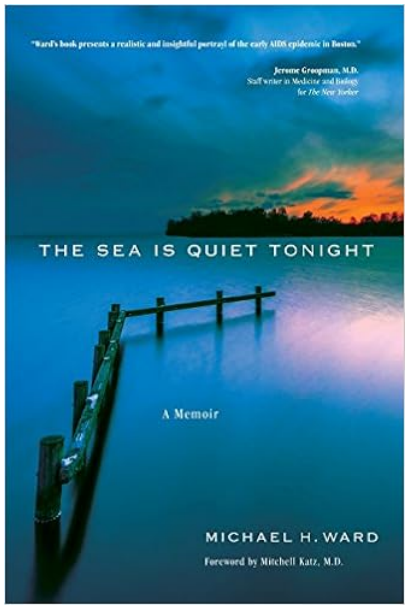

The Sea Is Quiet Tonight: A Memoir
by Michael H. Ward

“In this insightful and inspirational memoir, Michael Ward returns to the early years of the AIDS epidemic, when so little was known and so few who were diagnosed survived. He chronicles in candid detail his partner Mark’s decline and eventual death. By looking back on these devastating events, the author not only honors a generation lost to the illness but also opens a vital window onto the past, before medication helped save lives and when HIV/AIDS was usually a death sentence.” - From the Synopsis

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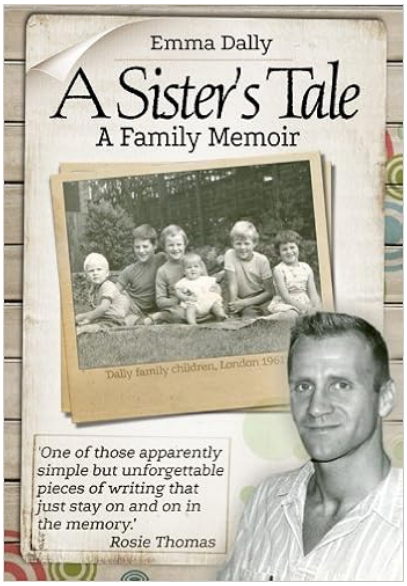

A Sister’s Tale: A Family Memoir
by Emma Dally

In December 1993, John Dally flew from New York to London to be admitted to the hospital suffering from pneumonia. It is an illness that signals the beginning of a grueling journey to his death from AIDS. For John’s siblings, it will be the death of another brother; for his physician parents, the death of another son in his mid-forties. In this moving account of John’s last month, his sister Emma describes the impact that AIDS has had on her, his friends, and his family. Endearingly honest, it is a tribute to loving sisterhood as much as to a young man struck down in his prime.

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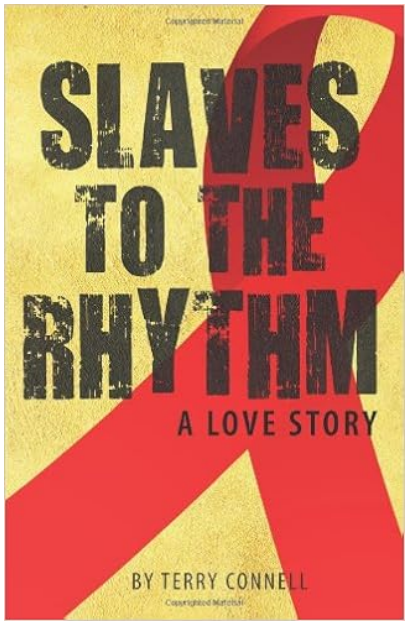

Slaves to the Rhythm: A Love Story
by Terry Connell

When Terry Connell read his father's version of their family tree in 2010, he noticed his late partner Stephan had been edited out of it. That absence motivated Connell to publish Slaves to the Rhythm: A Love Story, a memoir of his life with Stephan, who died of AIDS-related illness in 1993. In 1994, Connell completed the first round of edits to his manuscript and began sending it to publishers. While they were impressed with his story and writing, no one seemed willing to take on the subject of HIV/AIDS. At the time, there was very little talk in book publishing about HIV. Agents and publishers told Connell there was no market for his kind of story. He had a small victory when both The Philadelphia Inquirer Sunday Magazine and the Philadelphia Gay News ran a chapter of the book. After a year of struggling to get Slaves published, he decided in the mid-1990s to put the manuscript away. Thanks to the advent of digital book publishing technology, that wasn't the end of the story: Connell has self-published his work nearly two decades after writing it. The book reveals how he grew up in a Roman Catholic family, how a relationship built on love and respect helped him come out, how he lost the love of his life to the virus and how he overcame his loss. In short, the book tells the story of his family tree, unedited.

Available at amazon

Still Positive: a memoir
by Julie Lewis with Jenny Koenig

On the day she was diagnosed with HIV and thrust from the confines of her suburban mom bubble into the scary and unpredictable world of AIDS, Julie promptly found herself fighting for her life and rights amidst a disease she never imagined would hijack her future.

With three young children, her family began making every effort to create lasting memories while simultaneously managing the debilitating side effects of early meds. They hid her illness for four years, fearing her children would suffer stigma and discrimination often experienced in the early days of the disease.

Her diagnosis began a path of advocacy, faith, and positivity despite her life's detour. Now, Julie advocates for better healthcare outcomes for women through the personal stories and reflections from her life. Her health journey creates space for those walking through their own family or medical crises to be seen and supported.

"Some books tell you what to do or offer an outline for life... this book does not do that. The stories that make up Still Positive offered something different and impactful. ... I couldn't put it down."
—Danielle Eylander, Amazon Reviews

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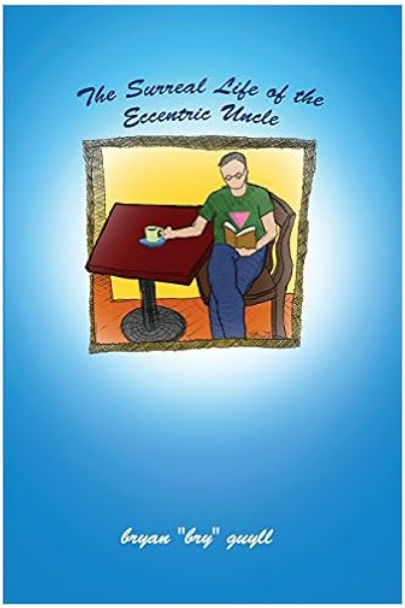

The Surreal Life of the Eccentric Uncle
by Bryan Guyll

"My book is about my amazing life in the gay world. It has the adventures I'd experienced before and after my seroconversion of HIV. These stories include my incredible friends and the life's lessons they taught me. I also include tips in between each story of what you, the reader, could possibly use. I speak of sites, history, quirky tidbits, danger, adventure and even the bizarre. I

can’t forget about a scandalous murder - disturbing. The one priority for me is to include gay education, history and HIV/AIDS. This must include a tribute to those who lost their lives to AIDS. I want you to read into each story my compassion, reality, awareness, knowledge, thought, encouragement, creativeness and humor. The one thing that should stick out is my direction of hope. I’m bringing you the lost art of imagination back. My message to you is to be true to yourself with adventurism and the appreciation of the life you have and lead.” - Bryan Guyll

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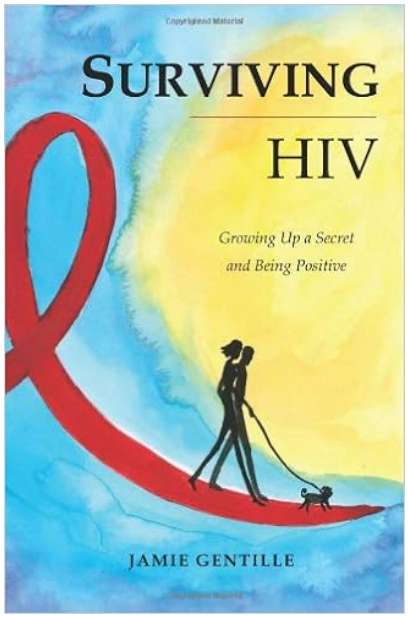

Surviving HIV: Growing Up a Secret and Being Positive
by Jamie E. Gentille

The true story of Jamie Gentille, a girl in her 30s who defies the odds by living a healthy and productive life after contracting HIV during a blood transfusion at age 3 during open heart surgery. This book follows Jamie’s life as a child, to whom the medical world was a second home, through adolescence and adulthood. Along the way she encounters pain, joy, adversity, despair, ignorance, and above all, hope.

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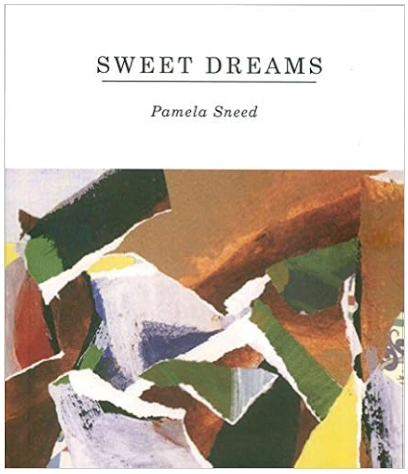

Sweet Dreams
by Pamela Sneed

"In the tradition of Baldwin's Price of the Ticket, Pamela Sneed takes on the call to action to generously offer her own life experience of finding self and purpose with art, agency and celebration amidst and despite family dysfunction, abandonment, racism, sexism and belonging with joy, humanity, creative daring and a twinkle in the Big Apple to become an acclaimed writer in Downtown New York. This profound poetic journey of her keen and witty observations, revelatory experiences reveals a deeper truth of society and its discontents, that all combined weaves a tapestry with humor, grace and wisdom. Sweet Dreams is a profound memoir of courage, transformation and empowerment. This intimate embodied bold and tender tale calls to action for humanity to insist and create gestures of self-determination while taking a moment to pet the butterfly." - Karen Finley

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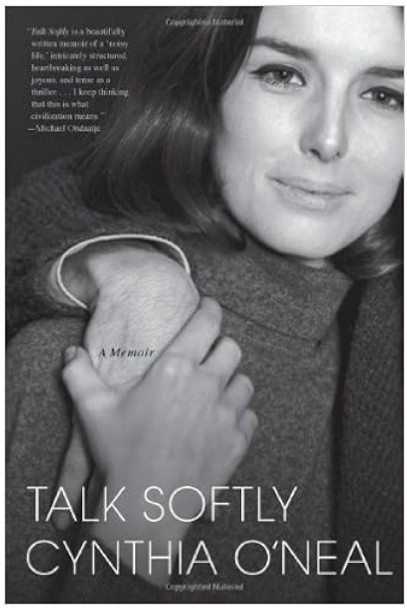
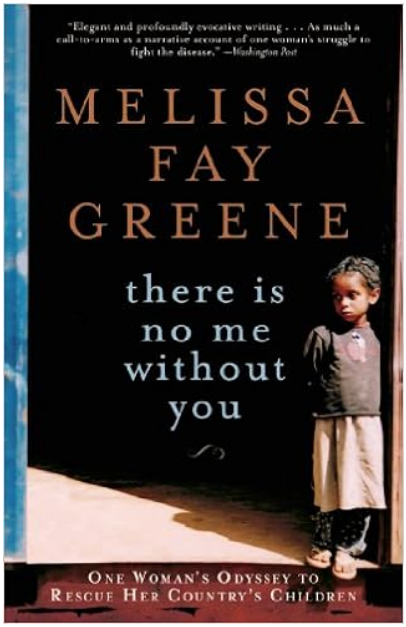


Talk Softly: A Memoir
by Cynthia O'Neal

Actress and model Cynthia O'Neal was living her dream life—married to the famous stage and screen actor Patrick O'Neal, the mother of two young sons, resident of The Dakota downstairs from John Lennon, owner of the successful Ginger Man restaurant, and friend to many brilliant musicians and performers. When the AIDS epidemic hit the arts community hard, her life changed course suddenly, surprisingly, and completely. Cynthia did not hesitate to throw herself into the fray. With the support of longtime friend Mike Nichols, she founded Friends in Deed and soon found herself spending her days in hospitals, cramped rooms, and dirty apartments: anywhere a patient needed a hug, a hand held, or confidence boosted. And when Patrick became ill and passed away in 1994, Cynthia had to work through her own grief instead of someone else's, and she found her life transformed again.

Available at amazon



There is No Me Without You
by Melissa Fay Greene

In *There is No Me Without You*, two-time National Book Award nominee Melissa Fay Greene tells the powerful true tale of one woman working to save Ethiopian children orphaned by AIDS. For every AIDS orphan in Africa adopted by Westerners, 10,000 are left behind. Greene looks at who will raise them and how. It is also the story of families and their relationships, however they may find one another.

Available at amazon

AIDS Memoir: Journal of an HIV-Positive Mother
by Heather Ellis

After riding her motorcycle across Africa, Heather Ellis is diagnosed with HIV in London. She is thirty years old and is given five years to live. It is 1995 when death from AIDS is inevitable. Timeless On The Silk Road is the story of what happens next as she rides the fabled Silk Roads of antiquity from London to Hanoi. What unfolds is a journey of courage, hardship and immense natural beauty on her journey through Central Asia to Australia.



“Unprotected” By Billy Porter

Unprotected: A Memoir

by Billy Porter

While starring in the hit TV series Pose, earning a Tony and Grammy for Broadway’s Kinky Boots and serving red carpet lewks to the children, Billy Porter had a secret. He has been living with HIV since 2007, a fact he disclosed earlier this year. Now, he shares his journey from bullied and abused effeminate child to proud international icon.

Available at amazon

Unprotected: A Memoir

by Rae Lewis Thornton

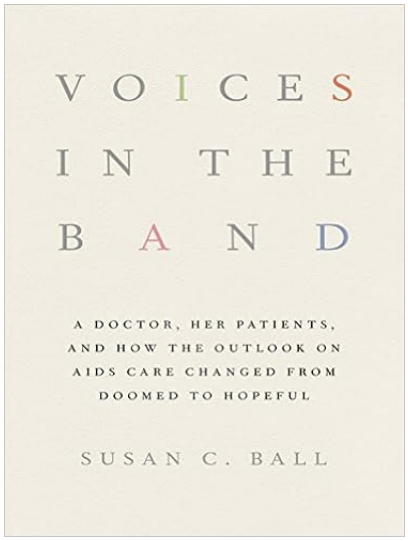
Unprotected: A Memoir is Rae Lewis Thornton's captivating story of what happened to her as a child and how it shaped the trajectory of her life. This story begins on the South Side of Chicago at the age of six with the death of her paternal grandfather-her caregiver and protector—after which, darkness descends over her life like the sky before a storm. Born to drug-addicted, interracial parents in the sixties, Rae's father is dead from a gunshot wound to the head. Her mother is somewhere lost to drugs, and her maternal grandmother doesn't want her. She is left to be raised by her grandfather's third wife, the woman she calls "Mama." In Mama's care, Rae's life is charged with rejection, violence, and childhood sexual molestation.

Rae situates her story within the research on childhood trauma. That is, high doses of trauma cause a deregulation of the stress response system. This disruption of normal cortisol patterns during a child's developmental stages can change the biology of a child's brain and body, causing a short attention span, hyperactivity, learning disabilities and also lead to poor social and medical outcomes through adulthood. Rae's story fits squarely into the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study, published in 1998 by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control, which demonstrates the connection between childhood abuse and household dysfunction to leading causes of death and dysfunction in adults. Deregulation becomes Rae's reality, and she gives you a front-row seat to Little Rae as she treads through a world of abuse, where her abnormal environment becomes her normal existence.

Homeless at the age of seventeen, Rae never gives up on herself. She believes that her pain situates her to help understand the suffering of others and commits her life to social justice at the age of nineteen. By the age of twenty-four, she is diagnosed with HIV. Rae chronicles her journey from HIV to AIDS and situates her life in the dichotomy between the early days of the AIDS pandemic and as a major force and political organizer for notable giants in politics. Her diagnosis of HIV is shrouded in secrecy and shame as she navigates dating, disclosure, and the first generation of antiretroviral drugs.

After years of keeping "the secret," Rae turns her mess into a message and tragedy into activism. She becomes the face of AIDS for Black women in America with her groundbreaking Essence magazine cover story in the December 1994 issue. Today, nearly three decades after Essence and almost forty years of living with HIV, Rae tells all-the trauma that shaped her life, and how she survived the odds and continued to soar with a broken wing.





Voices in the Band: A Doctor, Her Patients, and How the Outlook on AIDS Care Changed from Doomed to Hopeful (The Culture and Politics of Health Care Work)
by Susan C. Ball

“I am an AIDS doctor. When I began that work in 1992, we knew what caused AIDS, how it spread, and how to avoid getting it, but we didn’t know how to treat it or how to prevent our patients’ seemingly inevitable progression toward death. The stigma that surrounded AIDS patients from the very beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s continued to be harsh and isolating. People looked askance at me: What was it like to work in that kind of environment with those kinds of people? My patients are ’those kinds of people.’ They are an array and a combination of brave, depraved, strong, entitled, admirable, self-centered, amazing, strange, funny, daring, gifted, exasperating, wonderful, and sad. And more. At my clinic most of the patients are indigent and few have had an education beyond high school, if that. Many are gay men and many of the patients use or have used drugs. They all have HIV, and in the early days far too many of them died. Every day they brought us the stories of their lives. We listened to them and we took care of them as best we could.” - From the Introduction

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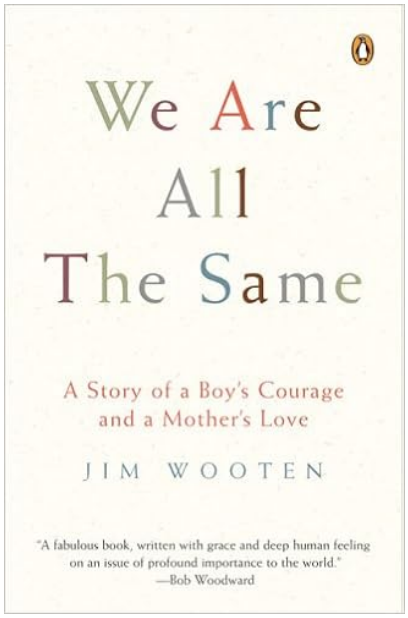

We Are All The Same: A Story of a Boy's Courage and a Mother's Love
by James T. Wooten

The author, an award-winning senior correspondent for ABC News, has written an extraordinarily moving account of a courageous South African boy's battle with AIDS that is also a scathing indictment of South African leaders who have failed to confront the AIDS epidemic in their country. Nkosi, born in 1989 in the former Zululand, was infected by his poverty-stricken mother, Daphne. As Wooten recounts, Daphne moved heaven and earth to insure that her son would be provided for after her own death and agreed to his adoption, at age three, by Gail Johnson, a white South African, who had met Nkosi at a hospice. A hero in her own right, Johnson nourished Nkosi's strong spirit, which gave out only when he died at the age of 12. Before then, Johnson and Nkosi traveled internationally to gain support for Nkosi's Haven, a home for women and children with AIDS in South Africa. Looking at the larger picture, Wooten points out that Nelson Mandela refused to deal with the AIDS crisis because he was embarrassed to speak publicly about sex (a position he later said he regretted). Mandela's successor, Thabo Mkebi, has also hampered attempts to get antiretroviral drugs to AIDS victims, absurdly denying that the virus HIV exists. According to Wooten, 20 percent of South African girls are currently infected with HIV and 7,000 infants die of AIDS each month. This powerful account puts a human face on a catastrophic epidemic that grows worse daily.

Available at amazon

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