HIV Here and Now

May 16, 2016 By Casey Halter

Over the past year, award-winning poet Michael Broder has been publishing one poem every day in a countdown to June 5, 2016, the 35-year anniversary of the first report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on what's now known as AIDS. Broder's resulting online archive, titled The HIV Here and Now Project, features hundreds of poems by HIV-positive and HIV-negative writers across the country who are hashing out what it means to be living with or affected by the virus.

Broder, 55, has been writing about HIV in his poetry and also as a freelance medical writer for decades. But he didn't come up with the idea for the project until he attended a literary conference in Minneapolis a year ago.

"I brought along a couple of poems that were about being an older gay man who had been living with HIV for over 25 years, and I noticed that a couple of other guys in the reading room were doing that too," Broder recalls. "I thought, There hasn't really been an anthology of work like this—nothing about surviving or how HIV impacts people's lives today."

So last spring, Broder launched a website and invited poets to submit work for the collection. Since then, the online archive has attracted award-winning writers like Marie Howe, Mark Doty and Daniel Nester, as well as unknown authors from all walks of life who have written about topics ranging from an obsessive love of Freddie Mercury to the deepest and darkest facets of the modern epidemic.

"It's been a big learning experience for me on a lot of levels," Broder says. "As I read the work, I became aware of issues that I hadn't been aware of before."

The anthology also awakened Broder to the need for HIV awareness and prevention among some of the groups hit hardest by the country's ongoing epidemic. He recently hired a co-editor, Maxton Young-Jones, to help with outreach to transgender women, gender-nonconforming people, the spoken word scene and the black community to ensure that the collection showcases the full picture of what HIV means today.

This fall, Broder plans to publish a print anthology of selected works from the HIV Here and Now site through Indolent Press, the independent publishing house he started last year out of his home in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. He also plans to continue the project in some

form after the June 5 CDC anniversary.

Broder says it’s all about giving back to the community that he’s been a part of for so many years.

“I was not an activist in the ’80s and ’90s, but I always admired the people who were,” says Broder. “But then the idea for this anthology kind of popped into my head, and I realized what I’m going to do with the rest of my life. I’m a poet, but now I feel much more invested in my need to make a difference around HIV/AIDS.”

To read the collection of poetry and to get updates about the print anthology, visit hivhereandnow.com.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/article/hiv-now