Second Time Around

An author’s new work joins the past with the present.

March 1, 2009 By Wayne Hoffman

Jameson Currier, 53, has been writing about HIV-positive gay men for the past 20 years. And the epidemic’s impact on the gay community has been a constant thread in his work. In addition to his 1993 debut, *Dancing on the Moon: Short Stories About AIDS*, Currier’s stories have appeared in magazines and literary journals. He also wrote the script for the documentary film *Living Proof: HIV and the Pursuit of Happiness*. His recent collection of short stories, *Still Dancing: New and Selected Stories* (Lethe Press, $18), combines several tales from *Dancing on the Moon* with 10 new ones. *POZ* recently chatted with the HIV-negative author about the past, present and future of HIV-related literature.

How has your experience writing about AIDS changed over time?
[In] the beginning, AIDS had very definable moments, such as the first article in The *New York Times* in 1981, Rock Hudson’s death in 1985, ACT UP demos starting in 1987, Clinton’s election in 1992 and the [introduction of protease inhibitors] in 1996. That’s changed since HIV stopped being considered a death sentence and became something more manageable.

Why write about AIDS now?
Because people have stopped talking about it and [we] need to start talking about it again. The virus hasn’t gone away, even though it’s considered [to be] manageable.

In an epidemic that is very real, what role can fiction play?
Fiction embellishes [a subject] in a way that a nonfiction article about someone, for example, who’s going to have an HIV test, cannot. [Fiction] shows the choices that a person or a character can make. And good fiction has a germ of truth in it.

Twenty years from now, will there be another AIDS book to write?
Yes, there are still many untold stories. I’d also like to think there are more defining moments. Two that everyone is waiting for are the vaccine and the cure.

Hoffman is the author of *Hard*, a novel about sex, politics and AIDS activism.

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