

MY JOURNEY WITH AIDS

By Anonymous, as told to Lisa K.

My journey began several years before I knew I had AIDS. I was in Nepal, then Vietnam during the 1990's. Exploring, living, and learning halfway around the world. My life was exotic.



I had a very healthy lifestyle.

After I returned to the U.S. I didn't feel well.

I became extremely ill. Tests were taken, blood was drawn.



I found out in 1998 that I had AIDS.

I was an inch away from death with T-cell count of 20. Docs all thought I would die that weekend.

I WAS

SHATTERED



I felt so forsaken .
So unclean .
Everyone thought I
was going to die .

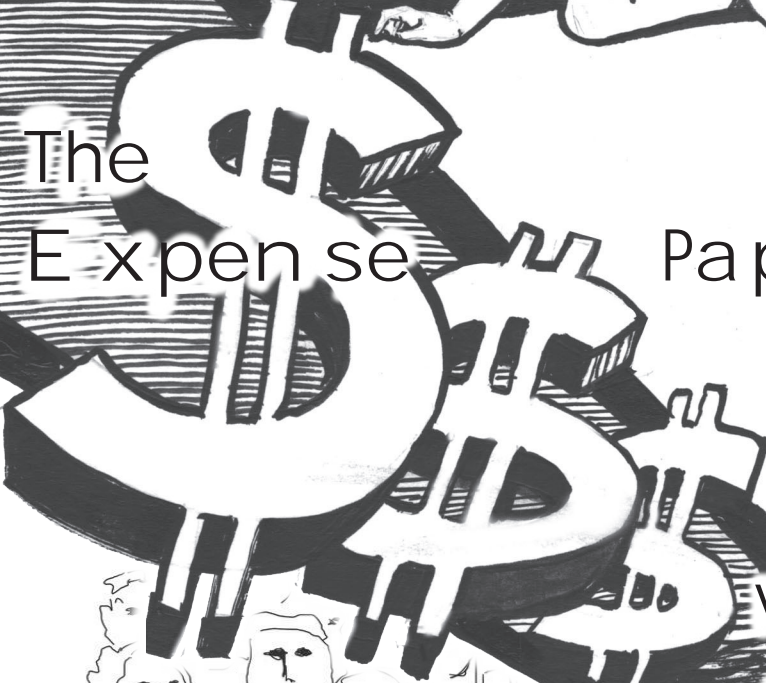
AND NOW THEY KNEW WHAT WAS WRONG,



The Expense

The Paper work was endless

The Pills were endless



was endless



The Scrutiny was endless.

My parents, friends, and family prepared for the worst





But,
very
slowly,

The constant barrage of drugs
started to heal my body.

Before that, I almost died
twice. *Pneumocystis carinii*
pneumonia, and *mycobacterium*
avium complex almost
killed me in the first year
of my illness





The pieces of my life started to come together.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. Laura Cheever and Johns Hopkins Hospital, I have survived.

It's been a long journey, but I have gone on for twenty years. Twenty more years of a full and productive life.

I will never be whole again, there is damage to my body, but I'm still here.

I'm still here. *

** Artists' note. As of this writing, the subject of this story is touring Switzerland.*

