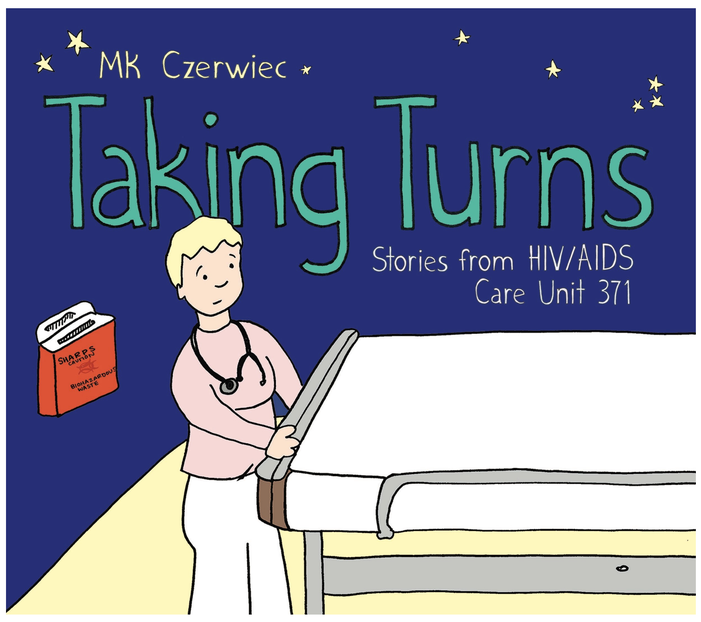
What is HIV/AIDS?

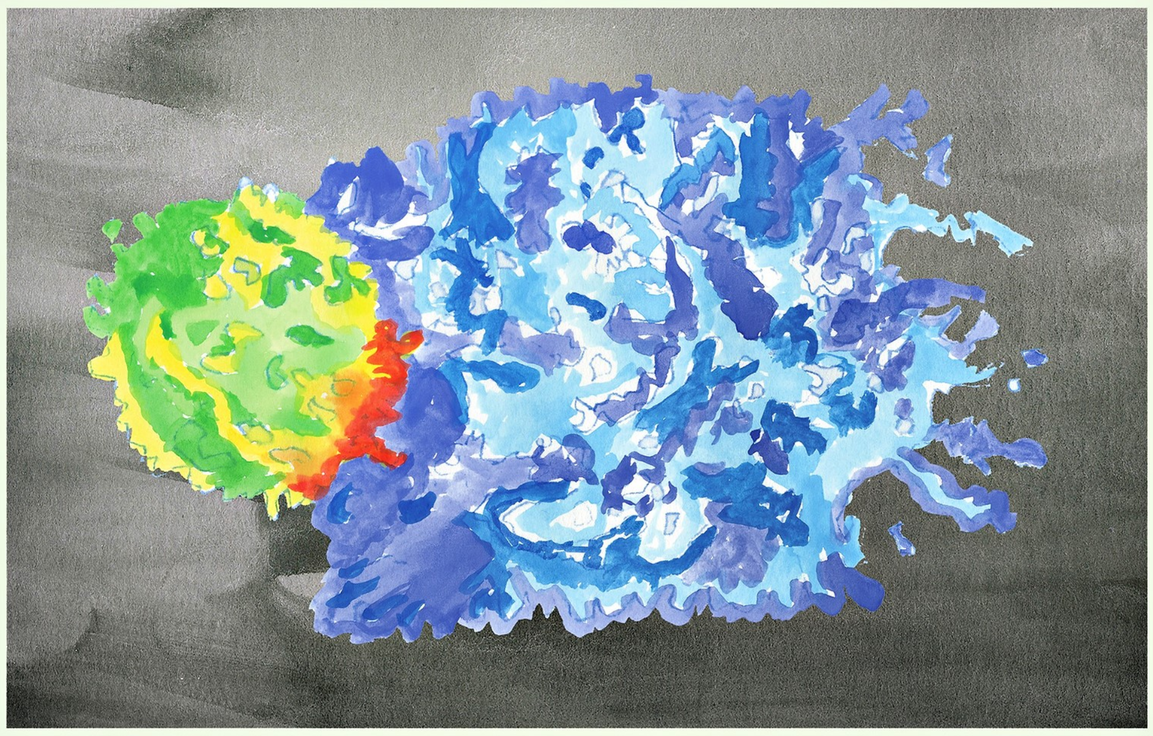
A Graphical Introduction



These images are taken from MK Czerwiec's graphical memoir, *Taking Turns: Stories from HIV/AIDS Care Unit 371*. Czerwiec was a nurse on an HIV/AIDS care unit in Chicago during the mid-1990s. The UW Libraries has print and ebook versions.

Three scenes from Stephen's life and death. See the book for the rest of Stephen's story.

ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME IS CAUSED BY THE HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS, WHICH IS A SINGLE STRAND OF RIBONUCLEIC ACID IN A PROTEIN ENVELOPE. ONCE IN THE HUMAN BODY, IT LATCHES ON TO A CD4 T-CELL, A CRITICAL PIECE OF OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM. BEFORE DESTROYING THE T-CELL, HIV TURNS IT INTO A FACTORY FOR MAKING MORE HIV — A TOTALLY JERKY, BUT ALSO BRILLIANT, MOVE FOR THE HIV.



THE NEW VIRIONS HEAD OFF TO DO THE SAME TO OTHER T-CELLS, EVENTUALLY LEAVING NO MORE CD4 T-CELLS, AND BILLIONS OF HIV, IN THE BODY.

OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS OUR PROTECTION AGAINST THE PATHOGENS OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN. WHEN HIV IS NOT CONTROLLED, IT DESTROYS OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM, LEAVING US VULNERABLE TO A WIDE RANGE OF INFECTIONS, SUCH AS

BRAIN
Infections and cancers can cause confusion, personality changes, psychosis, neuropathy, paralysis, coma, and death.

EYES
A common virus overtakes the eye, causing the retina to detach, resulting in blindness.

SINUSES
Chronic infections can be difficult to treat. One can even eat into the brain.

MOUTH
Yeast infections, also known as thrush, plus acceleration of tooth and gum decay.

KIDNEYS
Failure is often secondary to polypharmacy, a long word for too many toxic drugs.

LIVER
Hepatitis co-infection can be difficult to control and, since the liver cleans the blood, result in medication intolerance.

LYMPH NODES
Opportunistic cancers and viral infections can result in systemic lymphoma or localized tumors.

LUNGS
Viral, fungal, and bacterial infections result in accumulating destruction of lung tissue.

GUT
Infections and medications can cause unrelenting nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, leading to rapid weight loss. Also there's excruciating pancreatitis and rectal herpes.

GENITALS/REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM
With no immune system, a wide array of sexually transmitted infections can get totally out of control.



OFTEN SEVERAL OF THESE THINGS WILL HAPPEN AT ONCE.