THROUGH MASSAMAN'S EYES

By: Kelena Klipple
I love him.

It’s been a year since he told me. I was so surprised! He didn’t look sick, thin, or tired.

Granted, we made adjustments to uphold his quality of life.

Everyday I poke him during his favorite show. This reminds him to take his meds. If he skips his meds, this makes him vulnerable for the virus to multiply.
This is difficult for me to understand. But I remember a story he told me back when this all began.

He sat me on the couch with him and said, "You remember that one party we had last October?"

"With so many people in this tiny apartment, uninvited people started coming in? We were so alarmed when they started stealing our belongings and wrecking the place."

"But do you remember some of our friends stuck up for us and tried warding them off? What is going on inside my body right now is kind of like that night."
“HIV shows up as uninvited guests, beating up the people helping out at the party—”

"the T-cells. The invited guests are more vulnerable now,"and this allow thieves and burglars— the infections — to easily sneak in."

I’ve seen a lot of people walk out of his life after he told them what he told me.

But he continued to keep on telling people. He joined a support group. He started taking me to the park more to meet other dogs so I could tell them too.
At the support group, he focuses on mental and emotional self-care.

He also meets all kinds of people. I've met them too, at their weekly get togethers.

t's interesting to hear about their backgrounds and how they found their way into this niche.

My owner takes antiretroviral therapy (ART) to reduce the risk of spreading his condition to his partner.
This is taken to stop the virus from growing and multiplying.

Gabrielle’s mom didn’t have the healthcare that was needed to take pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). So she was exposed to the virus during her birth.

This for for individuals who are HIV negative but are at risk.

Gabrielle and Brendan talk about this and minority healthcare a lot.
Brendan was exposed while recklessly handling needles as a new CNA. He took post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP).

This must be taken within 72 hours of exposure.

Meena, like Gabrielle, also takes PrEP, but only because she doesn’t want to contract from her husband.

They are not different than any of us. They’re just caught off guard by some uninvited guests.
I love them all.