

## After Pose

Abigail Petersen

*How many of them fell?*

Your beautiful babies  
dancing amongst the stars  
with glazed eyes  
and aching bodies.  
Who tore apart their physical self  
and remade them in their own image.

The first AIDS cases were reported in the United States in 1981. By December 31, 2000, 774,467 people had been diagnosed with AIDS and 448,060 of those people died. Of these cases, 79% were men and 61% were black or Hispanic.

*How many of them fell, God?*

How many listened to the rain  
one too many times  
and were punished for it?  
Who were caught in the shadows  
like alley cats  
in a mass exodus.

AIDS was most common amongst homosexual individuals. Socioeconomic factors associated with increased risk of contracting AIDS are homophobia, high rates of poverty and unemployment, and lack of access to health care.

*How many of your children were abandoned?*

Who found new mothers  
amongst the sea of  
disowned children,  
all looking for  
a home.

*Save us.*

**Abigail Petersen** is a criminal justice and sociology major at UND. She enjoys writing fiction and poetry. She draws most of her inspiration from the world around her, music, and her pets.