

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Stephanie Barbé Hammer: Excerpts from Rescue Plan

Stephanie Barbé Hammer · Wednesday, February 17th, 2021

1. Gomer Faithcutt liked swimming. The feeling of weightlessness. The power to do things he could never do on the ground: somersaults — back and front — handstands, and dives from the highest board. Then, he had started learning to save people from drowning a year ago, last spring. He'd completed the class work for Junior Lifeguard and even taken the written test.

Then he got brain cancer.

2. All winter, the water polo team from the high school up at Amherst had been using the pool for practice, and these boys were tall and powerful, and their legs were muscled to the point of ropiness. And grownup guys came too – policemen and firefighters from Narrow Interior. They used to pool for strength training, and for relaxation. The way those bodies moved through space with ease and knowledge. He wanted to be close to bodies like that.

Gomer knew what coming out was. He had taken the sex-ed classes, and there were gay people in his town, but they tended to come for weekends and the summer, because they had jobs in the city. They were rich gay people, in other words, and he went to public school, and the local people were different.

3. Sometimes, when things got serious, Gomer called his father by his first name. Like a lot of people in this town, they both had Bible names, although Gideon wasn't religious, and Gomer's mother, Ming Ming was a Confucian atheist like most PRC nationals. After the divorce, Gideon made Gomer go to the church near the college. He had heard the coffee ladies muttering about an acquaintance's son who lived in the big city with his – the ladies muttered – BOYFRIEND.



Excerpts from RESCUE PLAN by Stephanie Barbé Hammer, Bamboo Dart Press, 2021. Click image to purchase.

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