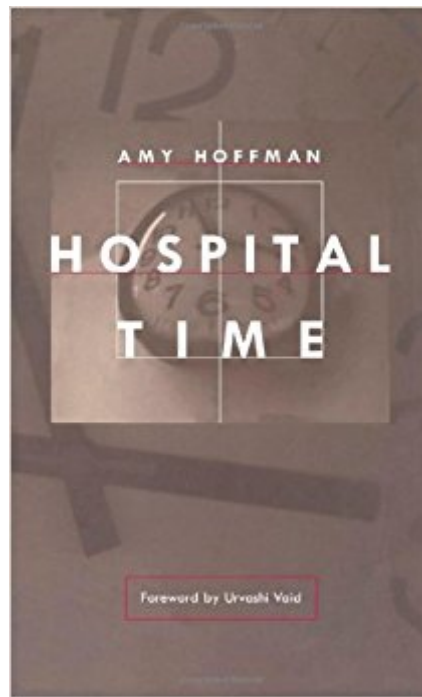


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Hospital Time



Synopsis

Hospital Time is a memoir about friendship, family, and caregiving in the age of AIDS. Amy Hoffman, a writer, lesbian activist, and former editor of Gay Community News, chronicles with fury and unflinching honesty her experience serving as primary caretaker for her friend and colleague, Mike Riegle, who died from AIDS-related complications in 1992. Hoffman neither idealizes nor deifies Riegle, whom she portrays as a brilliant man, devoted prison rights activist, and very difficult friend. Hoffman became central to Riegle's caregiving when he asked her to be his health-care proxy, and although she willingly chose to do this, she explores her conflicting feelings about herself in this role and about her involvement with Riegle and his grueling struggle with hospitalization, illness, and, finally, death. She tells of the waves of grief that echoed throughout her life, awakening memories of other losses, entering her dreams and fantasies, and altering her relationships with friends, family, and even total strangers. Hoffman's memoir gives voice to the psychological and emotional havoc AIDS creates for those in the difficult role of caring for the terminally ill and it gives recognition to the role that lesbians continue to play in the AIDS emergency. A foreword by Urvashi Vaid, former executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, offers a meditation on the politics of AIDS and the role of family in the lives of lesbians and gay men.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The author, Amy Hoffman, writes about her friend, activist Mike Riegle, with whom she shared a long history of activism in the gay community and elsewhere. When Mike became increasingly

debilitated by AIDS, Hoffman agreed to serve as the person to make health care decisions for him, and spent much time helping him negotiate his illness, along with other friends in the gay and lesbian community. I thought this book was great on my first reading of it, but a second reading really revealed to me the concise and intelligent way in which Hoffman artfully delivers the complex and painful truths and ambivalencies of her life and the lives of others. One theme explored in this memoir are the importance of the "created" family of friends in the gay and lesbian world, and how this family is often illegitimized when the "real" family shows up for a crisis...or a funeral. Another has to do with the real difficulties in loving other people, despite your pledges to them, especially when they are demanding and irrational--and they are dying, and you feel that you should be acting like a saint! I found this book particularly meaningful, having recently lost a dear (and complex and difficult) friend to AIDS, and working with feelings of guilt at not having done enough for him, but I think other readers would also enjoy it for many reasons, including its caustic wit, well-articulated rage, innovative narrative structure, and relevance to lesbian and gay lives. I recommend that you buy this unique, original, and affecting book, and encourage the author to keep on writing!

Touching, inspiring and brought back memories of friends lost in the early days of HIV-AIDS. Amy Hoffman provides a heart-rendering account of her times helping friends in need.

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