

BOOKS » BOOKS

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# Miranda July

## *No One Belongs Here More Than You*

by [Chas Bowie](#)

Long before *Me and You and Everyone We Know* made Miranda July a household name with the indie set, Portlanders and other people with their noses to the ground were fully aware of the 33-year-old's gift for creating dazzling creepiness in all sorts of mediums. From her audio-theatrical CDs on Kill Rock Stars to her short films to the boundary-pushing website she co-created ([learningtoloveyoumore.com](http://learningtoloveyoumore.com)), to her live performances that toured the globe, July demonstrated that one of her many gifts was the ability to inhabit different modes of expression while retaining her artistic voice.

We can now add another title to July's resume: author. This month, she releases *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, an incredible collection of short stories that are quintessentially July; they're eerie, sexual, uncanny, and occasionally sweet. And they've been getting rave reviews from the likes of David Byrne, Dave Eggers, and George Saunders. We caught up with the ex-Portlander to talk about her latest foray.

**MERCURY:** Let's talk first about the book's website

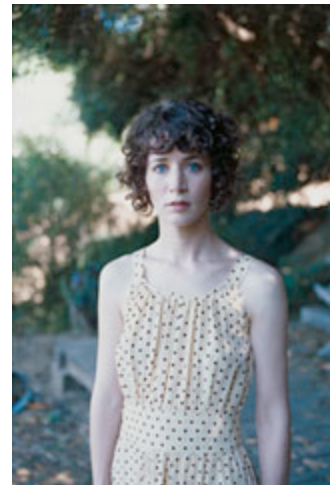
([noonebelongsheremorethanyou.com](http://noonebelongsheremorethanyou.com)), which became a fairly

**big internet phenomenon. I even saw it described as the "future of the internet."**

**JULY:** It was such an odd thing, because part of the reason I did it that way was because I wasn't given a budget for a website. I had to pay for it myself, so I had to come up with something that required virtually no programming, because I had to pay someone to do it out of pocket.

Also, I figured that nobody would go to a book's website more than once anyway, so I thought it would be better to make the site more like a performance or a one-time ride that you go through. I definitely didn't approach it with a website-oriented mentality.

**Why did you decide to follow *Me and You and Everyone We Know* with a book? I presume you could have made another movie if you wanted.**



TODD COLE

### **Miranda July**

July will read from *No One Belongs Here More Than You* at the First Congregational Church, 1126 SW Park, Fri May 18, 7 pm, \$10-13

I actually am working on a script now, but I had already written a lot of the book before *Me and You*, so it was like a project I had put on hold for the movie. Once the movie was done, it seemed obvious that I should finish the book. I finished it pretty quickly and moved on to this big performance that I did in New York, which in turn inspired this movie that I've also been writing. It's never appealing to do the medium you just finished, but I feel really committed to film, performance, and writing.

**The fiction writing is so much less collaborative than the other two mediums.**

They all feel pretty uncollaborative at the writing stage, but the good thing about the fiction is that it's done when you're done. Like, once I finish this script that I'm working on, that's when the real work begins.

**There's a lot of frank and odd sexuality running through the book. Was that hard to write?**

No, but it's a little more difficult now, now that everybody's reading it. It's my first book, so for a lot of those stories, I wasn't particularly imagining lots of people reading them. A lot of the more sexual stories are the earlier ones, for that reason.

**There are so many passages in the book I want to ask you about, but I'll limit it to this one sentence: "We were always getting away with something, which implied that someone was always watching us, which meant we were not alone in this world."**

Yeah, that story, "Something That Needs Nothing," is the only one that's remotely autobiographical, which you can probably tell from the young girl who moves to Portland and stuff, even though a lot of it is made up. But that sentence is very autobiographical. I think now, "God, why was I so..." I was a bit of a kleptomaniac, and I did put myself in various, slightly dangerous situations. Ones that almost begged to be caught or reprimanded. I guess I said it better in that sentence than I can say it now.

**I have to admit that I was scared that this book was going to be kind of overly sweet, but I was thrilled at how dark and edgy a lot of the writing is.**

There's a lot of dark stuff in the book, yeah. Like I was saying earlier, I really did feel a lot of freedom in this medium.