

My 10 Favorite Books: Miranda July



By [Miranda July](#)

March 11, 2016

For his [bookshop](#) and website [One Grand Books](#), the editor Aaron Hicklin asked people to name the 10 books they'd take with them if they were marooned on a desert island. The next in the series is the writer and *T* contributor Miranda July, who shares her list exclusively with *T*.

“Rich and Poor: Photographs of Jim Goldberg,” Jim Goldberg

The format of this book is part of what makes it so great — that the subjects, very rich people and very poor people, got to see Goldberg’s portrait and write a sentence upon looking at themselves. It’s easy to objectify a subject — but also really easy to simply invite them to speak.

“Tattered Cloak & Other Stories,” Nina Berberova and Marian Schwartz

I don’t even know how I came across this book, but I read the title story every few years and just feel SO SAD. I thought my life would slip right through my fingers as it did for this narrator, and though it hasn’t ... it also has. Super Russian.

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“Photography & Film,” Friedl Kubelka Vom Groller, Melanie Ohnemus, Andrea Picard

I got this book a couple years ago and since then two people have bought it for me — and they are right to! The very specific, imperfect femininity — the sense of one woman’s struggle to make art — that’s my bailiwick.

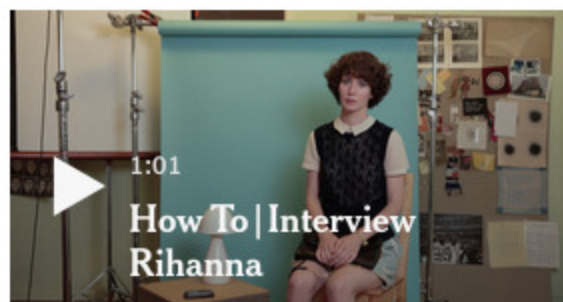
“The Diary of a Teenage Girl: An Account in Words and Pictures,” Phoebe Gloeckner

I was in a unique position to be influenced by this book because my parents published it when I was in my 20s (long before Marielle Heller made it into a great movie). It is the most graphic of all the graphic novels I own — and all from the point of view of a teenage girl.

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“The I Ching”

I’ve been using the same I Ching since I was teenager when it was given to me by a fellow teenager; it seems too late to change now. I don’t use it often, but when I do it really does help. You can fool yourself, but not the I Ching.



The writer and filmmaker Miranda July explains how she kept her cool while interviewing the pop star for *T*.



Miranda July
Elizabeth Weinberg for *The New York Times*

“Birds of America,” Lorrie Moore

Long before I started to write in earnest, Lorrie Moore taught me you could have a woman narrator who was funny and complex and even wrongheaded. She opened up a lot of space that me and a million other women rushed into.

“Working,” Studs Terkel

There’s no law against asking strangers about their lives and feelings, although sometimes it really feels like there is. This is the kind of thing I want to read all day long, on every aspect of life (and there’s more, Terkel collected oral histories on race, the Great Depression, movies and plays, etc.)

“The Famished Road,” Ben Okri

I am a big fan of work in any medium that can take on death — being dead, being a soul — in a new way. It shares something with my favorite aspects of George Saunders in its matter-of-fact dealings with what might be considered supernatural.

“The Address Book,” Sophie Calle

Sophie Calle taught me that art isn’t this thing apart from your life, your embarrassing life as woman, girlfriend, person who longed — all that could be art if you were smart and elegant enough to notice what makes something interesting.

“Tenth of December,” George Saunders

There is something George Saunders said in an interview that I reread many times while writing my novel. It’s too long for here but basically: Characters don’t have to be articulate to be full human beings. He does this so well and I plan on doing it well.