



# How to Leave Hialeah

*Jennine Capó Crucet*

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## **How to Leave Hialeah** Jennine Capo Crucet

United in their fierce sense of place and infused with the fading echoes of a lost homeland, the stories in Jennine Capó Crucet's striking debut collection do for Miami what Edward P. Jones does for Washington, D.C., and what James Joyce did for Dublin: they expand our ideas and our expectations of the city by exposing its tough but vulnerable underbelly.

Crucet's writing has been shaped by the people and landscapes of South Florida and by the stories of Cuba told by her parents and abuelos. Her own stories are informed by her experiences as a Cuban American woman living within and without her community, ready to leave and ready to return, "ready to mourn everything."

Coming to us from the predominantly Hispanic working-class neighborhoods of Hialeah, the voices of this steamy section of Miami shout out to us from rowdy all-night funerals and kitchens full of plátanos and croquetas and lechón ribs, from domino tables and cigar factories, glitter-purple Buicks and handed-down Mom Rides, private homes of santeras and fights on front lawns. Calling to us from crowded expressways and canals underneath abandoned overpasses shading a city's secrets, these voices are the heart of Miami, and in this award-winning collection Jennine Capó Crucet makes them sing.

## **How to Leave Hialeah Details**

Date : Published September 1st 2009 by University Of Iowa Press

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Author : Jennine Capo Crucet

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# From Reader Review How to Leave Hialeah for online ebook

## Dan Coxon says

As with most short story collections, some of the stories are stronger than others... But when Jennine Capo Crucet is strong, she's really strong. The best pieces in this collection echo long after they finish, and her voice manages to be both culturally specific and impressively universal. A fantastic debut - more please!

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## Maria Reads says

I really enjoyed this short story collection, most of the stories felt really unexpected. I love her ability to weave in a variety of characters, and how she honors and depicts her Cuban heritage. All of her characters really come to life, I especially loved her writings around relationships, specifically abuse. It didn't not feel trite. Overall great collection.

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## Kate Savage says

Capo Crucet's writing is rooted deep in a specific ecology and community. These are character-driven stories, not plot-driven, but all the same the body count is high. Almost all of the pieces in here are about death. Those that aren't are about bodies that decay or fail.

I tried typing down my favorite stories, but found that the list was getting too long and all-inclusive. If you want to read about a radio intern enlisting nuns and santeras in the quest to resurrect Celia Cruz, or what happens to a dead man's ferret, or Miami-Cuban funerals and Christmas Eves and multiple sclerosis and tai chi -- and you don't mind an unconventional narrative arc that often leaves you without a concluding dum-dum-DUUUUM -- then find this book. At the very least, read the title essay, "How to Leave Hialeah," which is remarkable.

I disliked the few stories about young, heterosexual couples -- but I'm not certain they were written to be liked.

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## Alex Maldonado says

Such a great read, although to get the full picture, multiple read-throughs are necessary. Capo Crucet touches on many themes that almost any Latino/a can identify with, all while bringing such realistic and flawed characters to life. Each short story has a different tone, feel, and theme to it that make them perfect on their own, but even better when read together.

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## Yvette Ward-Horner says

This is a stunning collection of earthy, uproarious stories that force you to smile even as they break your heart. Ms. Crucet doesn't hold back at all in her intimate depictions of the lives of Cuban immigrants in Miami.

I first encountered one of the stories in this book in an online literary journal and was captivated by the writer's honesty. Here's a link to the story, *Low Tide*. If you're not sure whether or not to buy this book, go and read *Low Tide* first. It will give you an appetite for more.

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### **Sam says**

The first story, I felt out of place and like I had insufficient context to understand the language, the references, the meaning of the story. And then, in every subsequent story, I fell completely into the moments of people's lives that Janine Capo Crucet describes. Highly, highly recommend.

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### **Ana Facio says**

I had to read this for my Global Lit class. When I opened the book I knew I was going to fall in love with the characters and the collection of short stories. The characters are so complex and raw which makes the story feel more human and relatable. The usage of language shapes a story in a way in which the audience can connect to on a deeper level. I personally identify with a lot of the characters in the book because of my Latina heritage. Personally it was nice to see characters like me represented in a realistic manner in addition to the deeper critic of modern society and personal struggles.

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### **Lyana Rodriguez says**

**Really a 4.5 out of 5 stars.**

Before I say anything, you all should probably know: I'm extremely biased with the subject of this book. This is because I am Cuban, and, for most of my life, I have starved for just the tiniest bit of representation, a glimmer of a life similar to the one I lead here in Southern Florida. The closest thing I have ever gotten is George Lopez's wife and her over-the-top Cuban Dad on The George Lopez show. I'd do anything to get that glimpse, even read the most awful book written in existence and declare it finer than wine.

Thankfully, this is not that book. Far from it. Read more [here](#).

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### **Ren says**

I read this because I wanted something to set the mood for a Miami trip. Jennine Capo Crucet is a gifted writer and I'm excited to read more of her work. I didn't find all of the stories equally captivating but I'm glad I read them.

My favorites were:

"The Story behind the Failure of the 2003 Radio Salsa 98.1 Semi-Annual Cuban and/or Puerto Rican Heritage Festival". I can't even summarize what this was about properly, but it's an excellent opening story, that changes pace and style .

"And in the Morning, Work" which was a story of a Cuban "reader", employed to read fiction to factory workers.

"How to Leave Hialeah" which seamlessly talked about similar feelings and thoughts I've had on homesickness, navigating the Midwest as a person of color, and becoming politicized.

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### **Jennifer Reading says**

I picked this up after finishing her novel, Make Your Home Among Strangers. This collection is rich. I can't wait to meet the author tomorrow at our library...

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### **Kathryn says**

Loved these stories. Some really funny moments, memorable characters and I really loved the titular essay "How to Leave Hialeah". Can't wait to read her novel!

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### **Steve Hersh says**

How to Leave Hialeah is an amazing short story collection from a major talent. I loved it! Stand out stories are "And in the Morning, Work", "The Next Move", "Noche Buena", and the title story, "How to Leave Hialeah."

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### **Annie says**

I came upon Jennine Capó Crucet quite by accident, through an excerpt from her forthcoming novel in Guernica (highly recommended). These stories deal primarily with the Cuban-American community in and around Miami, and while there are one or two stories that utilize Cuba as a backdrop I think Crucet's strength is in depicting the curious hybridity of Cuban Miami. She obviously has a great and complicated affection for Miami and for Florida and I am really hoping that in her future works she does more with the landscape of the city. My favorite facet of this work is (surprise) how she explores masculinity and how she uses it as a device, especially in my personal favorite of the short stories, "Men Who Punched Me in the Face." I am really looking forward to seeing more work from Crucet.

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### **Lovett.nicholas says**

A collection that has strengths and weaknesses. The sense of place and prose were very strong, but the

characters and stories weren't very good. I live in South Florida and grew up outside of Lawrence, so these characters and the setting didn't have much of an effect, or any novelty for me. The author was pretty young when these stories were written and I'd give her another shot to see if she was able to color in the lines.

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## **David says**

Junot Diaz's *Drown*. Sandra Cisneros's *House on Mango Street*. Achy Obejas' *Memory Mambo*. These are just some reference points for Jenine Capo-Crucet's marvelous short story collection, *How To Leave Hialeah*. Set in the vastly Cuban working class neighborhood of Hialeah, a city in northwest Miami, these stories are tragic and tender, violent and hilarious. A young woman seeks to resurrect a legendary salsa singer to help cement an internship. A gang of kids find a dead body and wind up having to protect it from themselves. And, in what might be the funniest of these stories, a son runs over his own father, and that's not even the worst of it. To say these stories are firmly rooted in the Cuban-American experience is to describe the heart of this collection. To say these stories address nothing less than the great themes of literature—love and loss, family and country—is to describe its spirit.

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