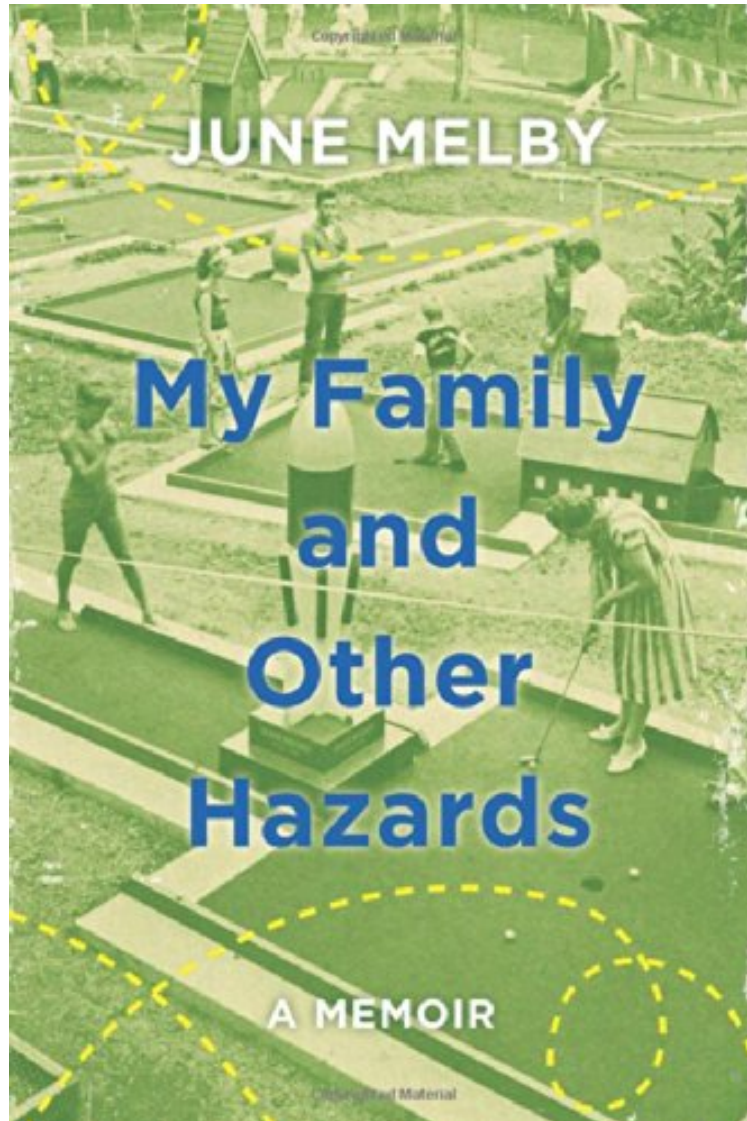


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## My Family and Other Hazards: A Memoir

June Melby

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**June Melby : My Family and Other Hazards: A Memoir** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised My Family and Other Hazards: A Memoir:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Free Game if You Get the Ball into the Clown's NostrilBy Jim McIntoshI am writing a book of fiction that centers round the decline of rural roadside attractions, especially during the 1990s. As research, I chatted with a friend whose family owned and operated a wonderful place called Circus Towne near my home in NH's White Mountains. (Veronica wrote a memoir, Circus Towne that is available on . Get it!) She told me that I HAD to read June Melby's book.It is funny, poignant and nostalgic. Her childhood summers at

Tom Thumb make for a rollicking chronicle of life with two sisters, a religiously devout and super-competent mother, and a father who is a dreamer, an inventor and a teacher in the winter months. I liked him best. He has scads of knowledge, a good share of wisdom and only a glancing acquaintance with the real world. He spent hours devising a way to make golf balls roll into a clown's nostril. Melby, whose career included seven years as a stand-up comic, knows exactly how to tell this story. Her narrative is perfectly paced with adroit punchlines. Her descriptions are colorful, detailed and always funny. We hear about tourists, and her father hurrying get the windmill working when the season begins: "If the windmill isn't turning, the public will think we are closed!" Each chapter is a hole number and includes a detailed description of the "hazard" or obstacle that challenges the player. (The descriptions lend a mounting comic effect that had me shaking with laughter.) Meanwhile, the girls are reaching their teen years with all the complications that entails. You learn how to make pink cotton candy and, my favorite: bright yellow popcorn infused with a dozen ghastly-sounding artificial ingredients that Melby lists with a straight face. Left-over popcorn is a staple of the girls' diet, the dog's treats, and part of the next day's batch. Please -- there are too many amusing details to enumerate, and you should read them yourself. I thank Veronica Francis for recommending this book and echo her endorsement tenfold. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is a keeper!!! By C.K. Designer This mini golf course is one block from our house...we built a cottage just south of it 27 years ago. After 10 years, we expanded our lake home and moved into it permanently. Our twin sons grew up playing golf at Tom Thumb and would get the "neighborhood discount." This was a big part of their summers. We subsequently introduced mini golf to relatives and friends and even played last summer with our then 2-1/2 year old granddaughter. This book is truly delightful! I wish I had known the author back in the day...June had a funny, quirky story and shares her memories so well that I found myself appreciating even more the work her family put into this little attraction on our Chain O' Lakes. The local librarian suggested I read this and put it on hold for me. I have since ordered a copy on so I can share it with our guests and family. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ho hum. By Kindle Customer I thought this book would be funnier. (It could have been). It's an ok story, but probably more interesting to the family than to the general public. I thought it was a little boring and had a hard time finishing it. No real tension to keep my interest.

A funny, heartwarming memoir about saying goodbye to your childhood home, in this case a quirky, one-of-a-kind, family-run miniature golf course in the woods of Wisconsin. When June Melby was ten years old, her parents decided on a whim to buy the miniature golf course in the small Wisconsin town where they vacationed every summer. Without any business experience or outside employees, the family sets out to open Tom Thumb Miniature Golf to the public. Naturally, there are bumps along the way. In *My Family and Other Hazards*, Melby recreates all the squabbling, confusion, and ultimately triumph, of one family's quest to build something together, and brings to life the joys of one of America's favorite pastimes. In sharp, funny prose, we get the hazards that taunted players at each hole, and the dedication and hard work that went into each one's creation. All the familiar delights of summer are here? snowcones and popcorn and long days spent with people you love. Melby's relationship with the course is love-hate from the beginning, given the summer's freedom it robs her of, but when her parents decide to sell the course years later, her panicked reaction surprises even her. Now an adult living in Hollywood, having flown the Midwest long ago, she flies back to the course to help run it before the sale goes through, wondering if she should try to stop it. As the clock ticks, she reflects on what the course meant to her both as a child and an adult, the simpler era that it represents, and the particular pains of losing your childhood home, even years after you've left it.

From Booklist When June Melby was 10 years old, her parents bought a miniature golf course. Every summer after that, the family of five would trek from Iowa to their summer home (and the site of the course) in Wisconsin's Chain o' Lakes. As her parents prepare to sell the place after 30 years, Melby takes the reader on a tour of the lovingly handmade course, corny hazard by corny hazard, recounting their work amid the bittersweet pangs of bidding this longtime home farewell. After moving to California in search of fame and working for a time as a stand-up comedian, Melby recalls her childhood with gentle humor. This is a light and nostalgic read for those who want to travel back to bug-bitten summer days when nothing seemed more wondrous than a perfectly frothy puff of cotton candy after a hard-fought game of miniature golf. It is, after all, a whimsical game, and though the maintenance work may have been tedious and the demanding tourists tiresome, at the end of the day there was the humble satisfaction of a job well done. --Bridget Thoreson "A wonderful, witty account of growing up on a mini-golf course...In a droll, understated voice that recalls Dorothy Parker, Melby writes of the years her family owned and operated Tom Thumb . . . The book is packed with self-contained vignettes that have the shapeliness of a well-told joke." ?The Christian Science Monitor "Charming . . . This book is a ball . . . [Melby's] descriptions of this close-knit crew endear and amuse." ?Bust "Melby scores a hole-in-one with her hilarious and heartwarming tale of her childhood summers spent working on her family's miniature-golf course and her bittersweet final visit during its last season in business." ?American Way "[A] charming--and moving--debut work . . . It's all here: humorous memories of mishaps, adventure, as well as teenage frustrations and sibling rivalries, all told in Melby's amazingly deadpan voice." ?Cedar Rapids Gazette "A nostalgic, hilarious look at [Melby's] Midwestern upbringing." ?Popsugar "Wickedly funny . . . A warm and refreshing

summer read, one that explores the meaning of family and the emotional significance of losing a childhood home.”

“Bustle” “A summer delight . . . Melby's ode to Wisconsin is rich with detail.”

“Minneapolis Star Tribune” “Nerdily, I most enjoyed the passages of the book that focused on running the course and how the family coped with a routine as daily as farming, only with more night hours. . . Middle children may relish June's accounts of sibling rivalry and envy. . . [Melby] has recaptured a family's life among the Windmills, putters and sno-cone machine.”

“Milwaukee Journal Sentinel” “With every laugh, Melby's wise and warm and loving memoir delivers something else: something that will make us think, and smile, after we've dried our eyes and thought about our own lives and loves, in the way the best-told stories will tend to do.”

“The Decorah Journal” “Clever, outrageously funny . . . My Family and Other Hazards is a nostalgic look back at Melby's experiences and the inevitability of letting go of one's childhood.”

“Express Milwaukee” “Enchanting . . . An outpouring of tender, witty memories . . . Melby showcases her corny, unaffected Midwestern humor in this inspired work.”

“Publishers Weekly” “Witty . . . A lot of fun and enjoyable to navigate.”

“Kirkus” “[A] nostalgic read for those who want to travel back to bug-bitten summer days when nothing seemed more wondrous than a perfectly frothy puff of cotton candy after a hard-fought game of miniature golf.”

“Booklist” “My Family and Other Hazards is a winning, charming memoir about summers spent at a family-owned mini-golf course in Wisconsin. I would have loved this even if I wasn't the former Junior Putt-Putt Champion of Chautauqua, New York. Funny and nostalgic without being sentimental, Melby deftly captures her family's seemingly endless lakeside summers and the inevitable letting go of childhood. A perfect summer book.”

“Rob Spillman, editor of Tin House” “I bet you've never picked up a memoir about miniature golf before now. Neither had I! But June Melby's deeply funny and endearing book goes far beyond novelty to tell an evocative story about memory, family, and the perfection of Midwestern summers.”

“Wendy McClure, author of *The Wilder Life: My Adventures in the Lost World of Little House on the Prairie*.” “Thanks to June's witty and poetic recollections, you don't just read this book -- you become part of the Melby family. And that's a helluva ride, because besides being wildly funny, the Melbys have a lot to teach us all about the meaning of the word ‘success.’”

“Mishna Wolff, author of *I'm Down*” “In this utterly hilarious and deeply moving memoir, June Melby recounts her unusual childhood growing up in a family who ran a miniature golf course. Impossible to put down for its witty and conversational style, you'll turn the last page reminded that the places we call home are often carved from the times we feel the farthest from it. An impressive debut from a deserving writer.”

“Claire Bidwell Smith, author of *The Rules of Inheritance*” “My Family and Other Hazards is a perfect balance of wit and warmth: you start off laughing at a perfectly executed running joke about the forgotten youngest child or the portrait of a family's competitive, compulsive generosity, but by the end you realize June Melby has been building a rich, generous, and loving portrait of her parents all along.”

“Michelle Wildgen, author of *Bread and Butter*” “About the Author June Melby's work has appeared in *McSweeney's*, *LA Weekly*, and *National Lampoon Magazine*, among other places. In 2011 she was a Writing Fellow at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and in 2003 received the International Artist Award and residency from the City of Hamburg Kulturbehörde (Cultural Affairs Department). In 2002 she was the winner of the Children's Poetry Award at the Edinburgh International Poetry Festival. She lives in Decorah, Iowa.