



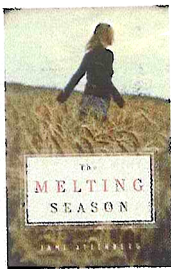
» NEED TO READ

The Melting Season by Jami Attenberg

In Jami Attenberg's third novel, *The Melting Season*, we meet Moonie Madison, a young Nebraska housewife who hits the road after her husband—enraged by a penile-enlargement surgery gone wrong—smacks her. Seriously.

MC: First off—penile surgery?

JA: Well, this book actually started as a response to Philip Roth's *The Breast*, a horrible, misogynistic novella from the '70s about a man who turns into a giant breast. It pissed me off so much that I decided to write a story called *The Prick*, which was the original title of this



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book. But I soon realized that turning a man into a giant penis had literary limitations.

MC: How did it turn into a girl-on-the-run tale?

JA: There's probably some deep-seated reason for a woman to end up with a man who doesn't satisfy her sexually, as Moonie did. So the story really became more about how our sexuality is impacted by early life experiences.

MC: So the book is about sex?

JA: It's partly about being sexually fulfilled—emotionally and physically. I mean, wouldn't it be awesome if sex-ed teachers said to girls, "It's going to be harder for you to have an orgasm

than men, but guys can help if you show them what to do." If Moonie had learned that, her life would've been different.

MC: But isn't she just running away?

JA: If you wait for that moment when you feel better at the end of a relationship, it'll be a long time. The idea of closure taking place naturally is bullshit—motion is important. —Sarah Z. Wexler