

# Read All About It: A cat? Well, yes, but not just that

**Brandy Hilboldt Allport** For the Jacksonville Florida Times-Union USA TODAY NETWORK

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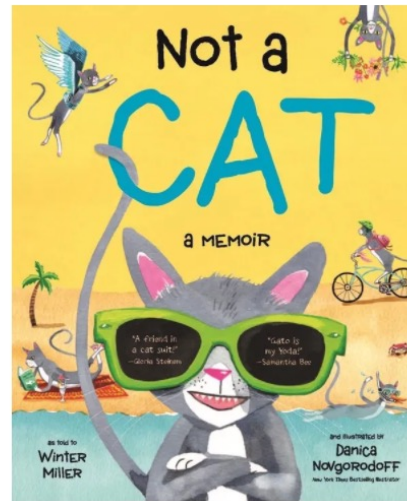
“Not a Cat: A Memoir”

Author: Winter Miller

Illustrator: Danica Novgorodoff

Tilbury House, \$18.95; ages 4 and older

A new memoir, “Not a Cat,” is “as told to” playwright Winter Miller. It features a feline called Gato who quickly establishes on Page 3 that that he doesn’t feel the word “cat” describes him. After all, he goes for walks on a leash wearing a sweater (like a puppy). He runs fast through pastures (like a horse). He eats grass (like a cow), and he loves flowers (like a bee). Not to mention his affinity for swims in lakes (quack).



“Not a Cat: A Memoir” by Winter Miller and Danica Novgorodoff Tilbury Books

Young readers will love discovering the various pursuits of Gato accompanied by vibrant, unlined illustrations that chronicle Gato’s characteristics, which include several human-like ones. Note his turn at the wheel of a taxi in San Francisco, his many trips on the subway around New York City and his visit to Hollywood (“I have worn my sunglasses at night”) where he enjoys a milk cocktail complete with umbrella.

Various other illustrations feature Gato reading “Go Tell It on the Meowtain,” wearing high-topped sneakers and strolling through the foyer of his home underneath a sampler that reads “You Be You.” The message about embracing individuality is the main attraction in this quirky offering. “Not a Cat” encourages everyone to celebrate various passions without a thought for labels.

Miller met Gato in 2008 at an animal shelter. He became her constant companion and traveled with her throughout New York City. He even made a trip to California and to several writing retreats in the Adirondacks. He passed away in 2018. Miller wrote in a news release that “I did encourage Gato to be what other people might call ‘dog-like.’ But as it turns out, cats, too, can be friendly, generous and play well with others. ... From the first time we stepped out onto the streets of Brooklyn, it was clear that Gato was a magnet for people.”

Miller is a former journalist, and her work has been featured in The New Yorker, New York Magazine and on NPR’s “Brian Lehrer Show.” Danica Novgorodoff is an artist, writer and graphic novelist. Her titles include “A Long Way Down,” “The Undertaking of Lily Chen,” “Refresh, Refresh” and “Slow Storm.”

*Brandy Hilboldt Allport writes Read All About It, a children’s book review column in The Florida Times-Union. She can be reached at [brandyallport@outlook.com](mailto:brandyallport@outlook.com).*

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