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## Living in the Woods in a Tree: Remembering Blaze Foley

**Sybil Rosen**
University of North Texas (Sep 2, 2008)
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“If I could only fly / I’d bid this place good-bye / To come and be with you / But I can hardly stand / Got nowhere to run / Another sinkin’ sun / And one more lonely night.” These words from country music singer and songwriter Blaze Foley’s “If I Could Only Fly,” embody more than the lonesome yearnings of a rambling man; they represent the search that every dedicated artist must go through—whatever the personal cost—in order to make tangible what they see in their own heart and mind. *Living in the Woods in a Tree* captures that quest perfectly. Author Sybil Rosen, who lived with and loved Foley in the late 1970s, records both Foley’s artistic struggles and her own with disarming honesty and emotion.

Rosen met Foley, who at that time went by the name Depty Dawg, in 1975 at an old Virginia mill. Rosen and several friends were working to rehabilitate the mill into a theater and studio for budding actors. Rosen was an aspiring actress of Jewish descent; Depty Dawg was a lanky, quiet-spoken, Protestant-raised musician who wanted not just to become a star, but a country music legend. Despite their differences, Rosen and Depty were drawn together. Before long, they were traveling about the Southern countryside together, staying with various friends and relations until they settled down to a lean but happy life in a Georgia treehouse Depty christened Udo.

Before long, however, their dreams of artistic fulfillment began to clamor for attention: Depty wanted to pursue the hard-drinking, hard-living, nomadic life that is the stuff raw country music legends are made of. Rosen wanted to pursue her acting and a new love—writing. The two slowly began to realize that, despite their love for one another, they couldn’t chase their vastly different rainbows and remain together.

*Living in the Woods in a Tree* is written from two different perspectives, both arising from Rosen’s memories of Depty—old memories of her young life with Depty and new memories from her recent journey to retrace his life after the two parted and Depty went on to reinvent himself as country singer Blaze Foley. Rosen deftly weaves both sets of memories into one harmonious whole. Readers see through Rosen’s eyes her joyous life with Depty in Udo, her tears at Depty/Blaze Foley’s graveside, and her ambivalence at meeting women Depty loved after she exited his life. Rosen’s book is a triumph of straightforward, honest writing, and a fitting tribute for the enigmatic and dedicated artist that Blaze Foley became.
(August 18, 2009)

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