In the late 1930s, having endured several brutal winters in a flimsy shack on the Texas Panhandle, Woody Guthrie invested five cents in a Department of Agriculture pamphlet called "The Use of Adobe or Sun-Dried Brick for Farm Building". The folk singer fell in love with the idea of constructing his own house from the earth on which it stood. He never fulfilled that dream, but he did turn it into a wad of fiction, undiscovered until recently and now published as House of Earth, the debut book from Infinitum Nihil, a fourth Estate imprint "helmed" by the actor Johnny Depp. Guthrie characterized himself as a "hoping machine". When he dreamed, he dreamed hard, and so do his novel's heroes. Tike and Ella May Hamlin are subsistence farmers under siege from duststorms, drought and debt, keeping their spirits up with high hopes, roguish banter and lots of sex. In a typical episode, the Hamlins combine a discussion

Book Review: Woody Guthrie, House of Earth

David L. Ulin

Abstract


Keywords

Woody Guthrie; House of Earth; novel; review

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