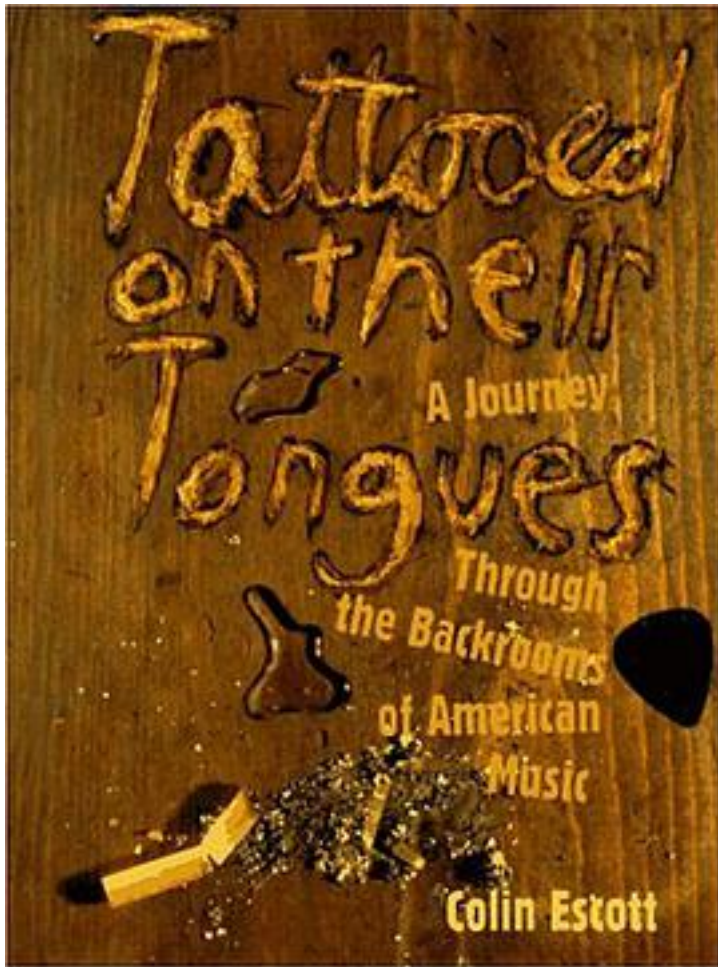


Tattooed on Their Tongues



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Roy Head
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oy Head was seated in the sightless gaze of a 260-pound deer he had

shot and stuffed it. He cried after he had shot it. He assured me. "Man, I've worked some rough places." He said when the sub cut finally turned to music. "This one joint, I remember feeling something against my shoe. I looked down and a biker was pissing on my feet. Man!" It illustrates the story with the appropriate gestures. "Even I knew better than to pick a fight with that hairy bastard. The owner of the joint said, 'That's okay, Roy. That means he likes you.' I said, 'What does the son of a bitch do if he doesn't like you?'" I didn't think I'd get to see Roy Head at all. I called from New York and told him I'd be in Houston on Saturday night. He said he had to work a bar because of the day but any time after six o'clock would be fine. I flew to Houston, drove in my Humble (a strangely inappropriate place for Roy Head to live), checked into a motel, and called Roy. No answer. There was no answer at seven, eight, nine, or ten o'clock either. Then at eleven o'clock there was a knock on the motel door. I opened it and stood there in the dark leveling a gun at me. A voice said, "Frisk me." I said, "Sundance." and a kid stepped out from around the corner and frisked me. I heard there was a laugh. It was Roy. He didn't appear to care that I didn't think it was so damn funny. Roy Kentstead is frighteningly intense and perpetually wired. He's been known to pick fights with strangers for looking at him the wrong way and he's broken in a few places--attends to the fact that he doesn't always know who to pick on. He had his crack at the brass in the fall of 1965 when "I Hear Her Right" broke out of the It&B market to become a surprise left-field pop hit in an era dominated by pimply British groups. In television appearances, he revealed that he was not black as many had thought but that his fellow Texans' natural style just owed a lot to black music. More than anything else, Roy is a performer. At (or strutting in) more than a thousand parties and people at the bar, he took me to a honky-tonc near Humble. If just one boy who once felt lucky when I caught him.

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