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Classic sports book celebrates thirtieth-anniversary with a new edition

Pittsburgh—It's been thirty years since the publication of Roy Blount Jr.'s *About Three Bricks Shy of a Load*, yet this insider's story of what the Pittsburgh Steelers did on and off the football field in 1973–74 remains a must-read sports classic. The 1973 season was undoubtedly a super one, but it did not culminate in a trip to the big Bowl, and Blount was there every intriguing step of the way.

To mark the book's three-decade milestone, an expanded edition is now available: *About Three Bricks Shy . . . and the Load Filled Up*, which includes additional chapters on the Steelers' Super Bowl wins, written for the 1989 paperback, and a new introduction by the author.

Blount was a staff writer for *Sports Illustrated* when he was assigned to spend an entire year with an NFL team—from the first day of training camp until the last pick of the draft—and write a book about the experience. Blount chose the Steelers. His portrait of a team poised to dominate the NFL for more than a decade recounts the gridiron accomplishments and off-the-field lives of players, coaches, wives, fans, and owners.

In his new introduction, Blount explains how truly unique his assignment turned out to be. "Only now can we realize how irreproducible this book is," he states. "You had to have great characters who were athletes rather than mounds of flesh and were funny without being derivative, and you also had to have the right—which is to say, exploitative—economic conditions. . . . So it was a rare moment in history that I had the great fortune to be a tangential part of."

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About Three Bricks Shy was the result of “a lot of heavy-duty listening,” according to Blount, who wrote the core of the book in three months, “on a manual typewriter . . . writing all night, busting a gut to see the whole field presented by the material, and feeling the book constantly getting away from me, because the stuff I had to work with was so good.”

The “good stuff” runs the gamut from the players’ psychology of aggression, racial attitudes, and reactions to fame—to the décor of their homes, favorite drinking games, and fans who scheduled their weddings around the team’s schedule.

A reviewer for the *New York Times Book Review* praised *About Three Bricks Shy* as “terrific . . . I have never read anything else on pro football, fiction or non-fiction, as good as this, nothing that explains so well the paradox of the brutality and subtlety of this repelling and fascinating game, nothing that brings alive so brilliantly the people whose lives are enmeshed in it.” The *National Review* called it “a revelation. Blount’s blend of candor, iconoclasm, and bawdy humor provides the flavor of the locker room minus the stench.”

Blount is an acclaimed humorist, sportswriter, poet, performer, and dramatist, and the author of seventeen books. He was a writer and editor for *Sports Illustrated* for several years, before becoming a contributing editor for the *Atlantic Monthly*. His work has appeared in over 150 periodicals. A regular panelist on NPR’s “Wait Wait . . . Don’t Tell Me,” Blount has been heard frequently on “A Prairie Home Companion,” and been a guest on many TV shows. Raised in Decatur, Georgia, he now resides in New York City.

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About Three Bricks Shy . . . And the Load Filled Up, by Roy Blount Jr., is published by the University of Pittsburgh Press
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