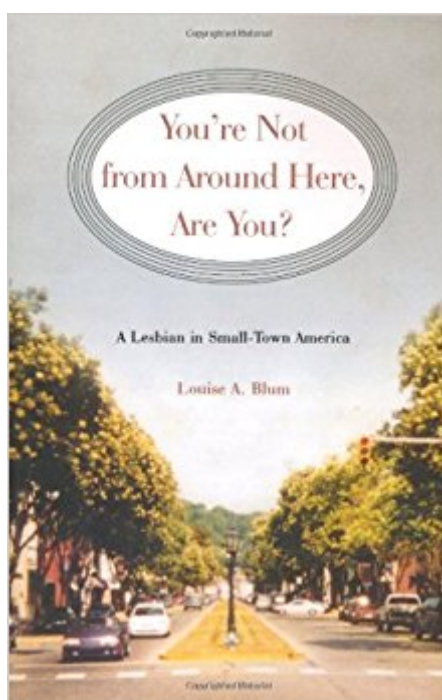


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# You're Not From Around Here, Are You?: A Lesbian In Small-Town America (Living Out: Gay And Lesbian Autobiog)



## Synopsis

This is a funny, moving story about life in a small town, from the point of view of a pregnant lesbian. Louise A. Blum, author of the critically acclaimed novel *Amnesty*, now tells the story of her own life and her decision to be out, loud, and pregnant. Mixing humor with memorable prose, Blum recounts how a quiet, conservative town in an impoverished stretch of Appalachia reacts as she and a local woman, Connie, fall in love, move in together, and determine to live their life together openly and truthfully. The town responds in radically different ways to the couple's presence, from prayer vigils on the village green to a feature article in the family section of the local newspaper. This is a cautionary, wise, and celebratory tale about what it's like to be different in America—both the good and the bad. A depiction of small town life with all its comforts and its terrors, this memoir speaks to anyone who has ever felt like an outsider in America. Blum tells her story with a razor wit and deft precision, a story about two "girls with grit," and the child they decide to raise, right where they are, in small town America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A pregnant lesbian living in the middle of God's country: it sounds like the premise of a sitcom, but this personal narrative of love and childbirth in Wellsboro, Penn., is by turns poignant and wonderfully witty. Blum (*Amnesty*), a novelist and college professor, recounts the difficulties that being gay presents when one simply wants to get a mortgage, fix up a house and attend Lamaze

classes in a small town. But to Blum's credit, this is no rose-colored, resolutely middle-class, "we're just like everyone else" kind of gay autobiography. She is refreshingly honest not only regarding her ambivalence about having children, but also regarding the sexual tensions the pregnancy causes in her relationship with her partner. Her descriptions of finding a sperm donor are hilarious ("He's attractive, I'd think, shaking someone's hand. I wonder what his sperm count is?"). And the book is filled with touching surprises such as that Blum doesn't admit to herself that she's gay until a year after moving in with her lover. With astonishing resilience, she describes her family's close-mindedness, as well as the prejudice she encounters from the townspeople she'd come to trust. Unfortunately, there's no escaping the miniature terrors of small-town life; as Blum points out, describing a trip across America, "Wellsboro is everywhere." Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

For most Americans, relocating to a small town, getting married, and starting a family is a cliché. For gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people fearing isolation, ostracism, and worse such a step requires courage. Blum and her partner meet with obstacles not experienced by most Americans, as when they decide Blum will undergo alternative insemination and they are refused service by the first doctor they go to. After she gets pregnant, Blum is subjected to a hate sheet put out by students speculating that her child will be deformed. Even the couple's friends and supporters can't fathom the depth of their vulnerability. Blum's memoir ends at the birth of the couple's daughter, just when it becomes even more interesting: what is it like for a child to grow up with gay parents in small-town America? Blum's at times cautionary tale will be a reality check for LGBT readers and an eye-opener for straight ones. Recommended for all collections. Ina Rimpau, Newark P.L., NJ Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

For years I have yearned for a book about committed Lesbians who do not jump around from one bed to another. Finally, I found this book and thoroughly enjoyed the story and the excellent writing. This female couple experiences the ups and downs not only of married life, but of going through the difficult and exasperating ordeal of getting pregnant through artificial insemination along with the stress it takes on their relationship. While all this is going on, they are living in a small town among citizens who vary from those who encourage and support them to those who write ugly letters and throw rocks through their windows. As soon as I finished reading this book, I handed it to my partner and said, "You'll like this book."

I hope my review isn't seen as less credible because of this, but I know Louise, her wife, and their amazing daughter. She attended a summer camp where I was a counselor and I have to say that she's the most self-actualized individual I have ever known. She's an amazing person, due in no small part to what her moms have gone through in bringing her into the world. :) I'd been wanting to read this book for quite a while once I realized it was out there. I was amazed at how this slim volume brought such a myriad of emotions to the surface. One minute I was laughing, the next minute I was so sad, then I was angry and militant, then disgusted at the evil of some people, then comforted by the love that Connie and Louise obviously share. It's a great book...with a wonderful, frank, conversational style that doesn't hide the facts, but doesn't spare the rich details. You feel like you are right there with them. The dialogue is honest and fleshed out very well. No small wonder, considering Louise's writing abilities! Whether you are gay or straight, consider reading this book. It will help you understand how hard it is to be gay and how wonderful it is as well. And hopefully, it might make you see that it doesn't matter what sexual orientation parents have...just that they truly love and want their children. :)

I was a student at the university where Ms. Blum taught while she was pregnant. Working in the book business, I stumbled upon an advertisement for this title in the publishers' catalog. (Of all catalogs to accidentally be placed in my mailbox, of all the pages the catalog could have opened to when it fell out of my mailbox, and of all the things that usually distract me from noticing a name I found familiar - it's a wonder all the pieces fell in place.) Anyway, I immediately ordered the book - if for no other reason than for the fact that it intertwined with my personal history with the university and the Pennsylvania towns she writes about. But I think the book is more than a piece of history. Her words are fluid and poetic. I gobbled up the chapters as if it were chocolate-y fiction, sneaking it in between breaks at work. It speaks to me as a woman, as a "non-traditional" worshipper of religious faith, and as someone who hopes to have her own children someday. I would, and have, recommended this memoir to many people.

I think of memoirs, biographies and autobiographies as a special treat. I found this particular book fascinating. The simple language, the sincerity of the author, her struggles to love and to be loved and to be mother and a member of a society in a small American town - all these aspects captured my heart. As a person who likes gay people and do not consider them "abnormal", I was ashamed to read about close-minded people's attitudes like hate mails, obscene phone calls and nasty rumors. I wish the author, her wife and their adorable child all the luck and resistance and optimism

in the world. Society changes. It will get gay people. Things will be ok.

I read Ms. Blum's book for a Sociology class. I actually started reading it before hand on the recommendation of a friend. I must say that this book is amazing. It gives you a view of gay life away from the normal booze drugs and sex. Also Ms. Blum is extremely witty. She is brutally honest about her pregnancy and the troubles it caused her! She also talks in DEPTH about the birth of her daughter. Though I thought some of the sex scenes were too graphic other than that I thought this book to be an amazing read!

Louise Blum has given us a book that will make you laugh at the outrageous behavior of "decent" people, will make you cry for her struggle to be accepted on her own terms, make you ache with her yearning and cheer for her triumph. Whether you love women or men, the love story touches your heart. But mostly, this book is glaringly honest and doesn't shy from truth on any front. I loved it!

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