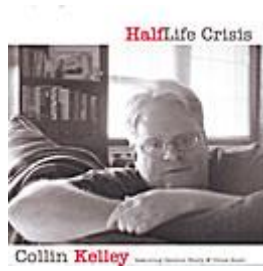


Mp3 Collin Kelley - Halflife Crisis



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Spoken word album from acclaimed poet Collin Kelley, featuring original music by Denton Perry and guest vocals by Christeen Snell. 16 MP3 Songs SPOKEN WORD: Poetry, SPOKEN WORD: With Music

Details: About Collin Kelley Collin Kelley is a Pushcart Prize-nominated poet from Atlanta. He is the author of *Slow To Burn* (2006, Metro Mania Press) and *Better To Travel* (2003), which was nominated for the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, Lambda Literary Award and Georgia Author of the Year Award. Kelley's poetry has appeared in many journals, including *Blue Fifth Review*, *Terminus*, *New Delta Review*, *Chiron Review*, *poeticdiversity*, *The Pedestal*, *Lily*, *Poetry Super Highway*, *Welter*, *The Harrow*, *SubtleTea*, *Offerings*, *HomeGround* and the critically acclaimed Arsenal Pulp Press anthology, *Red Light: Superheroes, Sluts Saints*. He is also co-editor of the award-winning *Java Monkey Speaks* Anthology series (Poetry Atlanta Press) and *The Thrill The Hurting: Poems and Art Inspired by the Music of Kate Bush* (Morning Fog Press, UK). By day, Kelley is the managing editor for *Atlanta Intown*. He has been a journalist for almost twenty years. Kelley also hosts the Internet radio show *The Business of Words* at Leisure Talk Radio Network. For more information, visit collinkelley.com.

Review of *HalfLife Crisis* By G. Murray Thomas For Poetix Collin Kelley writes knowingly about loss. He describes various forms of loss the loss of old loves, of death, the inevitable losses that result from the passage of time. All are movingly evoked on this CD. Kelley focuses on details which make us feel his losses. The message erased from an answering machine, the silences in an early morning diner, and a sign in a store window reading *Will be back shortly* all evoke relationships gone sour. The sight of a deserted power plant outside London represents the potential of the relationship which is ending as they ride a train past it. These details are what make these poems powerful. The specific images and actions draw us into the poems, let us see and feel the emotions Kelley is experiencing. If there is a weakness on this CD, it is this emphasis on

what is missing, not what is present. The relationships have all ended; there is little about the joys of new love, or the drama of the breakups. The two strongest pieces, *Sex in My Parents House* and *Why I Want to Be Pam Grier*, attempt to get away from this notion of loss, but it still pervades them. *Sex in My Parents House* manages to explore his parents dawning awareness of his homosexuality through (and I'm not kidding here) the image of shag carpeting. Specifically, sex on the shag carpet. Yet it still ends up looking back wistfully at his youthful relationships, now ended. *Pam Grier* celebrates the film star with humor and devotion. But it too is as much about what Kelley lacks in his life as it is about what she represents. But maybe that's just my interpretation, colored by the poems which have come before it. As a stand-alone piece, it is a glorious hoot of fandom. These are minor complaints. *HalfLife Crisis* is a moving and powerful selection of spoken word. *HalfLife Crisis* Review in SubtleTea.com By David Herrle

The artist chose the cool ones. How rare and pleasing. The artist chose the cool ones! Too many compilations, collections, and "best of"s tend to include more junk than gem, losing better representation of a writer, band, or whatever. For instance, the Bruce Springsteen Greatest Hits lacks "I'm On Fire" - one of his greatest hits! Or Peter Gabriel's compilation, *Shaking The Tree*: no "In Your Eyes"! See what I mean? *Half-Life Crisis* is comprised of some of Collin's best pieces, six from his debut poetry book, *Better To Travel*. Of course, this is a matter of opinion and taste. But since it's my review, we'll grant that my opinion and taste are keen and reliable. Thankfully, Collin had the good sense to include cool selections from his poetical repertoire. The CD is bookended and interluded by Denton Perry's uniquely weird music. Perry also recorded, mixed, and mastered everything at Corgimanor Studios (save the poem recited at California's Ugly Mug, recorded by Steve Ramirez). Collin is "hosted" by Christeen Snell, a friend to whom *Better To Travel*, is dedicated. "Hosted?" you ask? Essentially. *Half-Life* is not "live" in the typical sense. Except for "Why I Want To Be Pam Grier", the recitals were studio recorded. At first I was disappointed that *Half-Life* wasn't completely live (recording of actual poetry gigs). But after my second listen I thought: Well, it IS live in a sense. It's Collin reciting his work as he would at Barnes Noble or Java Monkey. Then I realized that the studio "live" aspect was more unique for its intimacy. Listeners can eavesdrop on Collin and Chris in a quiet room rather than listen from a public audience. The two speak naturally, unscripted, so each reading seems casually agreed on. Chris even recites two pieces. Her voice is lovely. And Collin's voice is made for spoken poetry (and radio): smoothly textured with a light, Georgian sweetener. I warmed to the studio format, considering *Half-Life Crisis* a "virtual" poetry gig - cough free. Hell, too many folks do "live"

recordings anyway. But I would have liked more integration with the music, maybe accompanied by a poem. "Battersea", my fave (and a gem from Better To Travel), is a poem capable of many replays that won't degrade the effect. It provides me with an alternative, complementary image and impression to add to my warmly visceral appreciation for James Whistler's Blue and Gold Old Battersea Bridge painting (c. 1872-77). The poem is also sincere in its impression, not hesitant to notice ugliness or drear in a popularly exotic location. "Half-Life Crisis", the title poem and my second fave, touches on a very familiar, nostalgic ache of mine: gravitation to lost toys. Collin reveals his eBay quest for regaining the toys from his youth, identifying the quest as a defiance of slipping time and age: "I've spent a fortune restocking my hollowed-out chest." (What chest? A toy chest or his own chest?) He's aware of the "ticking clock"; he tries to fill "a hole that deepens each year". The poem ends with a look into an indifferent, truthful mirror and the narrator "no longer mistook myself for a boy". Once an adult dares to peek back, to reunite with his/her Rosebuds, a floodgate bursts open. The tiny particulars become sacred, all-important relics. And seemingly silly things like action figures or stuffed animal dolls embody beloved times and youth. Collin claims that "Why I Want To Be Pam Grier" usually reaps applause. I can hear why now. The poem begins thus: "I want to pull a gun out of my hair and blow your head off." And the poem shoots from the sexy hips from there on, focusing mainly on Grier's renaissance in Tarantino's underrated film, Jackie Brown. Humorous, energetic, and...hell...it features the legendary Pam Grier! Booyah! Collin wisely clipped this from a public performance at Cali's Ugly Mug. It's a crowd pleaser, so the pleased crowd is appropriately heard. "Sex In My Parents House" is, well, sure to turn cheeks crimson. Hearing it spoken is much more effective than reading. I dig the honesty and self-criticism and the blue carpet imagery. You have to read/hear it to understand. "Los Angeles" is an impressionistic interpretation of the city of angels and devils, a sharply sincere portrait, and a frenzy of solitude. Collin bluntly describes the Interstate 405 as "a shit-stained diamond". Ruined intimacy's powerful wake is grimly spoken in the very touching "Answering Machine" (another gem from Better To Travel): "...consider me exiled, expatriate, excommunicated. It is just your voice on the machine I could not face. Start. Stop. Pause. Erase." Half-Life Crisis is a cool complement to Better To Travel because it serves as a bridge from his debut work to his more variable, different-toned - and more erotic - work (similar to U2's Rattle and Hum between The Joshua Tree and the innovative Achtung Baby.) Rather than dredge up a catchy conclusion, I'll leave you with the closing of Collin's "Diners At 2 A.M." (another CD gem, as well as a BTT piece): ...You light a cigarette, I stir the

cream. At 2 a.m. we sit next to our ghosts, still locked in combat. And sometimes we do not speak, because the past drowns us out.

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