

Mp3 Decomposure - Humidity Patient Guide



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So, a mixtape, a sound collage, a human nose, frustration, and a bucketful of disintegrating genres all walk into a bar. 1 MP3 Songs in this album (50:53) ! Related styles: ELECTRONIC: Glitch, HIP-HOP/RAP: Alternative Hip Hop Details: The first shot in the battle of Humidity Patient Guide rang out one brisk January evening in 2007. In the wake of that piercing primordial echo, an incubated path began to unfurl as a tongue over the lips of an untraced horizon, a journey through the soul's unknown that, over time, would come to dismantle and reshape Decomposure irrevocably. That's a stark, dramatic opening, isn't it? You can almost hear war drums shuffling solemnly against a smoky dawn as Decomposure stares resolutely into the distance, apparently licking it. No, i hate writing these things. They're always embarrassing and cumbersome things that take far too long to spit out for what they are. Four albums in, and i still squint trying to stuff years of confused effort into a collection of perky paragraphs about an hour of noise and how great everyone should be thinking it is. So this time, i'm going to scale back, forgo the whole 'third-person + adjectives' thing and just talk about where the album came from, and we'll see how that goes. After all, it's free, so stakes is low. THE BRIEF, UNINTERESTING STORY OF HUMIDITY PATIENT GUIDE Humidity Patient Guide began formally in late January 2007 with a short lo-fi snippet recorded on my mp3 player about someone buying a condo. But before that, even as i was gathering Vertical Lines A for its May 2007 release, i had been feeling this sense of creative momentum, a growth and flow that i needed to chase and milk before i lost it in the great grey beast that devours people when they hit 30 (4 more years!). At the same time, i also had a vague notion that the coming year would probably be busyish, so an EP-length project that i could work on in smaller intervals would at least keep my boots warm. i'd also been thinking about doing something...simpler for awhile. Not lazy simple, but something a bit more loose and gut-level, as opposed the usual scrap-heap density i seem to gravitate

toward. i love complexity in music, but there's something about hearing something clear and heartfelt unreeling in the moment that can best the most deeply orchestrated work. And that something is frustratingly difficult to access through the hammer of electronic music, where the whole system is built around do-overs and non-linear control. Also, it was (and is) heavy on my mind that a lot of bands seem to fence off their own tiny corner of a fertile genre and harvest it for all it's worth, and end up stranded later when it all dries up. Stagnation is a scary thing, and i wanted (and have tried) to continually evict myself from where i camped last album. This time, i felt especially that i really needed to take some time to rewire my brain and venture out into something beyond my indie-breakcore-mush ghetto. i'd also been kind of revisiting my love of the mixtape - not that 'personal greatest hits' collection you give to people when you're dating or auditioning for friends, but that DJ tradition of long-form continuous mixes. i'd done a few on CD-R back in high school to play behind basketball warmups; they were mostly high-intensity rave-ups of big beat and old school hip hop staples, with a couple inside jokes and radio crap thrown in for good measure. The format itself is full of possibilities - not only is it an opportunity to draw together a batch of songs more intimately than usual, but the transitions between songs can amount to new songs in themselves. Inevitably, i began to think about how i could take on the format and use it for my own unprofitable purposes. So: simpler, plus mixtape, plus a whole lot of other baggage equals...what? Well, somehow i landed on the idea to record at least one sound - a beat, a texture, a song, a word, an instrument - every day, for an indeterminate amount of time. Then, as the volume of fragments mounted, i would attempt to corral them into one patchwork mixtape-style album. In my head, i had a few fuzzy expectations about the entire thing being 25 minutes long, done by the end of the summer, and released before the year was up. Of course, the problems started immediately. The first problem was actually kind of a good one: i was recording far more than one sound per day, often closer to five or ten clips that were each 3-20 minutes long, and some of them weren't even that bad. The second problem was logistical: the old blackbox computer i'd sequenced my previous albums on was dead, and i found quickly that the little old laptop i'd just switched to wasn't built for much more than typing, bluescreening frequently without warning. But the problem that really did it was the sheer unrelenting wall of busy that fell on me. It had been ratcheting up in the background for awhile, and while i'd been able to keep abreast of it before, by June it had taken over. Morning to morning, it was work, overtime, and then more work. Looking back, it turns out i was laying the foundations for my own little business and i didn't even know it, but at the time

all i could think about was trying to dig myself out. Occasionally, i'd sneak away for an hour to try to sort through the out-of-control pile of sound files i'd collected, but work would always be waiting behind me. So i'd slice up a sound just to feel like i was doing something, making some kind of progress, but i wouldn't know what to do next. i couldn't focus on the project, i didn't know where to start, and even if i did, i didn't have time. And in the midst of it all, the two-and-a-half-year effort of Vertical Lines A had landed with a resounding silence. Long weekends and holidays zipped by. The daily writing and recording slowed, then dwindled to almost nothing. Suddenly, ten months had gone by. i'd still catch bits and pieces as they came to me, and occasionally dedicate a few stray hours late at night to figuring out what was going on, but all i could muster were a few handfuls of unrelated scraps. Finally, in the spring of 2008, i closed my eyes and made the scary leap from my old job to the uncharted new world of running my own little business. It was a bit rough finding my sea legs at first, but soon enough i'd whittled the work down to a sane level, and i began to think about music again. The problem was, i'd been disconnected from the album for so long that i wasn't sure i could do it; i felt scattered, unsure about how to approach it, and stuck outside the process. i began seriously debating whether i shouldn't simply scrap everything i'd done and move on to another idea on my long list of albums i wish i had time to make. i cycled through this for quite awhile, without resolution, and the album continued to dangle somewhere between abandoned and in progress. But whenever i'd actually get close to shelving the project for real, one song kept holding me back. It was a simple circular tune about a bear walking under powerlines; i'd recorded it while walking out in the snow the night of February 7th, 2007, and had stacked all the harmonies together a few months later. For me, it was one of those simple moments that i talked about awhile back, one of those right-now-real things that i couldn't bring myself to abandon. But it also wasn't really a standalone song, nor could it be shortened, diluted or stuffed into a box without killing what i loved about it. So i stayed with the album. And as i started to reimmerge myself in the sounds i'd collected and the disconnected microsongs i'd already assembled, i realized that i really couldn't leave any of it behind anyway - it was a kind of time capsule, an indirect capture device for a year and a half spent in flux. The pieces began falling into place; i spent the months between April and September picking the songs i'd planted and rediscovering the album. When the summer settled, Humidity Patient Guide had been completed. So... After all that, i'm not really sure how to characterize the album. Despite its relatively long gestation period, it still feels very fresh to me (it was only finished a few weeks ago as of this writing). Also, most of the

sound comes from cheap mp3 players, cassettes and dictaphones to keep things portable, so it's definitely pretty lo-fi. i've long been thinking of it as a kind of parenthetical album or tangential EP, even though it breaks the 50-minute mark and i've spent more time in it than some other albums. It still feels like an album made 'for fun', window-shopping through folk, abstract rap, noise, electronic, piano pop, ambient, spoken word, industrial, chants, field recordings, and whatever else you call the stuff between them, but it's also more than 'for fun'. i don't know - i don't have enough distance to properly frame it; i know the fabric and stitching intimately but don't know what it amounts to yet. So i guess we'll be learning together. Awwwww Hope you enjoy the album, please donate if you like it. Cheers, -caleb, September 2008

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