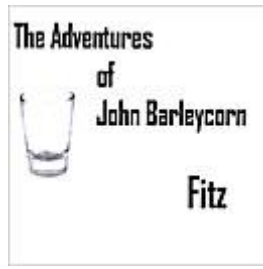


Mp3 Fitz - The Adventures Of John Barleycorn



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Raspy, real, pretty songs just waiting to explode, scattering their ashes through the bare realism of Bruce Springsteen's "Nebraska", the hopeless faith of Whiskeytown's "Faithless Street", and the dark, foot-stomping prayers of Johnny Cash. 15 MP3 Songs in this album (77:03) ! Related styles: COUNTRY: Alt-Country, COUNTRY: Americana People who are interested in Johnny Cash Bruce Springsteen Ryan Adams should consider this download. Details: Nobody really tells stories anymore. Most records you pick up these days like to keep it short and sweet. Never mind the details, the descriptions, the characters, or trying to communicate an overall idea to an audience. Never mind actually trying to say something. Written and recorded in a small St. Louis, Missouri bedroom by Michael Fitzgerald, the sole songwriter and performer of Fitz, The Adventures John Barleycorn at first glance seems like a record of seclusion and introspection. But then, the first song starts turning, and a man begins counting quietly, 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, along with a thumping accompaniment of muted guitar strings. And suddenly the song, Ill Sleep When Im Dead bursts to life with a single harmonica breaking through the barrier, followed by a slur of acoustic guitars and a voice rasping its way towards the light of a distant horizon with the words, Theres a woman up on Meadowmere Street. And so begins a foot-stomping proclamation of faith, hope, love, and death, told by a narrator living for the moments he has left. And thats just the beginning. The Adventures of John Barleycorn is a record born out of frustration, belief, expectation, sorrow, and love. It explodes from the speakers like a collection of short stories, boasting a cast of less than desirable, but relatable characters people looking for work, stumbling through nights, searching for love, mourning death, and clinging to the last threads of hope. It parallels the basement tapes and home recordings of musics past, making its bed between the bare bones and skin of albums like Bruce Springsteens Nebraska and the messy explosion of beautiful disaster that was Whiskeytowns Faithless Street. The title track, John

Barleycorn introduces the album after it has already begun. Telling a story of dark humor and bittersweet nights against the background of strummed acoustics and a weaving slide guitar part, it brings the listener into a world of bar stools, smoke-infested rooms, and haunting half-light where nothing and no one exists except for the drink and who people become because of it. The narrator relates, but I always come back for more, I always open wide and give in/because whether I like it or not, John Barleycorn is my best friend. Moments akin to this appear as separate characters tell their stories of John Barleycorn, as with the solemn prayer of release Happy Birthday, Old Man or the folk anthem pyrotechnics of Independence Day, the story of a mans realization that his last freedom is the anticipation of his own death. John Barleycorn also claims territory within stories of love like the swooning Say Hello or Say Goodbye, Suzanne that follows a narrator who comes to the same watering-hole, longing to escape his life with a beautiful bartender named Suzanne who serves him on a nightly basis. The same goes for the bouncing Be My Reason, a song that follows a trail of darkness and confusion within the electronic lights and surreal nights of expensive clubs, only to leave the main character yearning for an innocence and past long gone. A Letter to Elizabeth finds John Barleycorn becoming the comfort in mourning love lost in death, while Sunday Morning Confession succeeds in finding sentiment for the drunken liar at the end of the bar. Other songs like the erratic, tempo-changing, Maggie Dear and the story of Miss Anna Lee delve into the minds of men and women searching for love and connection in all the wrong places. Miss Anna Lee in particular succeeds in creating a female character worth wanting, only because she can never stay in one place for too long. Fitzgerald explores faith and death in songs like Another Ghost in Line, a tune that finds the narrator looking at his life in terms of faith, wondering if it would have taken a different course if he had chosen to believe in anything at all. Fitzgerald practically growls the lyric, Am I another ghost in line who never bent down on his knees? against the bronze clang of guitar strings and a harmonica part that rips through the air. The quiet hum of Graveyard continues this search for meaning, declaring in an existential fashion, This world is the graveyard we were born into it. One More Bottle Down scrapes its fingers on a fading past (Everybodys got something they just cant seem to drink away, something theyll never say/oh, how I miss those innocent, God-forsaken days), while Riverboat Man offers up a mans last rites as Fitzgerald rambles in a fashion reminiscent of a slightly darker Bob Dylan (Sing me a song bout a Rhine riverboat man/and Ill pay you back as soon as I can). There are many striking moments that arise within the brave songwriting of The Adventures of John Barleycorn. The

albums fifteen songs overflow with a raw energy and powerful sense of storytelling and character. The final song, Notes from the Underground being a prime example of such. As the acoustic guitars and harmonica explode into the air along with Fitzgeralds voice as the bridge begins, the tingle through your spine is as noticeable as the arrow through your heart. And as the song comes to an end, so does the story. The curtain begins to fall as the guitars become quieter, until one stands alone fighting against a quiet slide part accompanied by Fitzgeralds strained vocal, its awful quiet here, waiting on the passage of time/you got yours, I got mine. And just like any adventure, as soon as its finished, all you want is to live it all over again.

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