

# SINESTESIEONLINE

SUPPLEMENTO DELLA RIVISTA «SINESTESIE»

ISSN 2280-6849

a. XV, n. 52, 2026

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## «IL PARLAGGIO» – RECENSIONI

**VICTOR KRUMMENACHER, *Block Out The Sun*, Veritas Recording, Portland, OR 2025.**

*Block Out The Sun*, the latest solo album from American guitarist, bassist, and songwriter Victor Krummenacher, is firmly rooted in this earth we call home. Returning from the dreamlike space of *Silver Smoke Of Dreams*, his previous offering, he creates here an ode to nature and to everything that surrounds him. This entails the immeasurable space that stretches from sky to sea, to mountains and beyond: everything the musician can see, touch and hear with the senses. By doing this, he reflects on the problematic relations of humans within nature, highlighting the fragility of our existence in today's world through his own search for things he may or may not find: peace, direction, connections to fellow beings, lightness of mind.

Like a flâneur of this complex 21st century or a wanderer in a turbulent world, Krummenacher is a contemporary observer who has left, if just for a moment, the city behind (or perhaps the city has left him?) to try to

find in nature, a possible meaning or answer to our precarious present. Nature, which takes on different facets and forms in each song, displays a visual quality that the musician adds through strokes that emphasize each element (color, movement, contrast), conveying the emotions, but also the textures of each of these songs. Paper and pen are treated as canvas and brush: these songs possess a pictorial quality, they feel like paintings, like landscapes, that simultaneously mirror and reflect upon our present times.

*Time Will Do Us No Favors* begins this new journey with the speaker's vision of our absurd world and all that it cannot, and will not, offer us. This is an introduction to the path that lies ahead, with the speaker traveling with someone in a car, while both are reflecting on what they experience: «We were riding in a big black car/I never understood how we got so far/Got where we were going, you said "Let's turn back/I've seen more than enough and that is that/I've seen more than enough and that is that"». Isn't that what life is about? The wandering down unknown paths, following them

mercilessly until we either continue that journey or we decide to turn back. Water appears in this song, a water that will reappear in different forms throughout the album, and which here will help the speaker to quench his thirst («The water's raining down hard and I'm dying of thirst.»). In this opening track, the traveler gives us an account of our times, like a chronicler. He moves, goes from one place to another, observes and sees the fragility in himself and in others, summarizing our weak position in this world: «The bells they toll, the bells they ring/But we are not ever gonna get our wings.» All these observations will ultimately be *Block Out The Sun*.

The second track, *Peace At The Water's Edge*, it's musically atmospheric, with a stillness quality portrayed in the speaker, which, along with his dog, is looking at a river and feeling a deep connection with nature: «I sucked a breath into my belly/I pushed the earth into my toe/ And I watched that river flow/I watched that black river flow/I just watched it go.» The river is a silent witness to the speaker's thoughts, to his own notion of «feeling off», but, at the same time there is a sense of mutual connection between both. Can the river help the speaker's state of mind? There has always been a healing power and a sense of self-cleansing in rivers, considering their process of constant motion. Will this be enough here? In his reflection, the speaker seeks peace in the river, but

he also knows it could be fatal. The river can also become something threatening, something from which we must run away from in order to survive -as with some life situations.

*Block Out The Sun*, the album's title song, contrasts with the stillness of *Peace At The Water's Edge*. It is turbulent, majestic, with an Americana sound that carries us to vast open spaces. The speaker here wanders through these spaces, but it's not a peaceful journey; rather, there is an angry boldness and passion in the way he confronts nature. Thus, he invokes the sun to be blocked out, the lights to be extinguished, so that they may reflect his own feelings of loss and loneliness. Eventually, these feelings are exorcised by throwing the source of them into the sea: «I carved your likeness into stone/And I threw that stone into the sea/I'm gonna follow it into the briny deep/And wash away all my blues.» Water reappears as something positive, similar to the pouring rain that quenched the thirst in *Time Will Do Us No Favors*.

Far from the static nature of *Peace At The Water's Edge*, in *Block Out The Sun* the walker conveys his moods as he journeys from different heights down to the coastline: «I walked down from the cliffs, to the beach, to the shore/Leapt into a boat, with nowhere to go, and no way home.» Such imagery of visual and kinetic richness, puts us in direct contact with the intense battle taking place between the

speaker's mind and the surrounding nature. Armed with the stone he has carved, he throws it away, like his past. In letting go, he chooses light over darkness and lightheartedness over the "blues". In the repetition of its verses, this song grows in intensity, leading us again and again to the speaker's release of his past. Perhaps once and for all?

After the intensity of the previous track, the instrumental *The Horizon Line* is an interlude where we take a rest, a deep breath and focus on the line where sea and land meets, while waiting for the next song. It begins calmly with the exchange between Krummenacher's guitar and Michael Jerome's percussion, before rising above that horizon and taking us to unpredictable places.

*Your Last Winter Comes* is lyrical, a reflection on life and all the disillusion it brings. There is a special immediacy in Krummenacher's voice, a vulnerability, as if something is moving him very deeply. Water returns again, as snow and ice, in two landscapes separated by time, by the life that has passed between them. The first landscape is that of the past: the speaker remembers here with nostalgia, and perhaps also with a bittersweet feeling. This is a Christmas landscape with church bells ringing; musically, a background of subtle spirituals reinforces this particular moment, where everything was "simple" and "good", although it was not fully enjoyed:

«What I had in the moment, I misunderstood», it's said. When his memory fades, the present reappears, hitting him deeply. The walker no longer sees the main marker of that landscape, the Christmas tree: «I'm walking the ice, I'm looking for cracks/Thinking of sins of the heart, and knives in the back/There's a hole on the horizon, where a tree used to stand/ There's a hole in the ice, and a missing man.» The present is that place heavy in the heart, where we have to look twice as we walk. Life, in traversing and following its inexorable course, has carved a hole in this walker's soul. The absence of the tree, which produces a striking visual image of emptiness, expresses much more than the presence of it.

As in *Block Out The Sun, The Sky Gone White* is a tale of the battle between man against himself and nature. The musician's choice of speaking this song, makes it haunting, as if rooted in dreams. The rain sets the scene: «The world hums in rain/And lights were shining from somewhere/And the stars shone from nowhere/And the moon hid from view.» It is a nature that remains fearless in the face of the speaker, no matter how vulnerable he may feel: «I awoke next to you, I awoke from a dream/ The whole world was bleeding, and the sky has gone white.» As the rain transforms into blood, covering an absurd world, it also permeates the one who is beside the speaker:

«I awoke next to you, I awoke from a dream/ Somehow you were bleeding, and the sky has gone white.» Man has lost the battle in the world in which he lives, a world that reveals itself in the powerful convergence of reds and whites. It is from this visual imagery of colors that this track reaches out to us, appealing directly to our senses.

The penultimate track, *Give Me A Boat To Cross The Sea*, responds with hope to the gravity of *The Sky Gone White*. Here, the speaker resumes his journey, now in search of a possible redemption. Water comes back again as a spirit of regeneration, of re-growth. The crossing of the river is stepping into another state, not only spatially but mentally, in the sense of being “on the other side”: «Give me a boat to cross the sea/Say no words, I have no need/Grant me just this small reprieve/And let me slip away(...)/ Let me find a place of peace/Between the shimmering sky and the ocean’s sheen.» There is a sense of strength and conviction in this song, a wandering with a clear focus in mind: to find that peace which is so difficult to get. The speaker seems to no longer want to walk under a white sky, on ice or along rugged cliffs; rather, he seeks a “shimmering sky” that a sunny day can provide. He seems to long for that moment of calm introduced musically to us in *The Horizon Line*; he wishes to find, as stated here, «The horizon line between the blue and green», the ultimate place. In seeking his own

redemption, he steps outside of himself, and now, he may be able to find that other being, no longer bleeding, but whole: «Well let me go, I’m ready to leave/ And I’ll see what I’ll see/ If there’s anyone there who’s waiting for me/If you give me a boat to cross the sea.»

*Hard Times Have Come To Stay* concludes the album with the musician’s ongoing reflection about today’s world: «Hard times have come to stay/Hard times have come to stay/Well you never thought you’d see that day/But everything you know has changed/And now you are standing in the pouring rain.» This rain reminds the speaker of that other pouring rain from the first song, and also the person who was with him at that moment: «I remember you, I remember the rain/ And the sound of a song through time and space.» This, in turn, creates a sense of mutual connection between the two songs, as if Krummenacher wanted to frame the storminess and emotions from this album with them.

*Block Out The Sun* goes through all the states of mind, following the roller coasters that disrupts our equilibrium, and then restores it again. Nature accompanies humans through their arduous journey, and is also a roller coaster itself, because it is part of the world we live in. It is in the man/nature relationship that lies the beauty arising from this very connection. In the song *Block Out The Sun*, Krummenacher refers to his inability

to possibly describe beauty: «To a beauty that I could never define/ No matter how hard I tried/ Because there wasn't a rule/ That it wouldn't defy.» Nevertheless, this album comes very close in describing such beauty.

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