

Scott Kelly

The Wake

NR060

In James Joyce's Dublin the streets inhale and exhale an Irishness that is so fundamentally elemental that it's more a part of the landscape than the actual landscape which is to say: his books are more real than the real space they describe. And so it is with SCOTT KELLY, great guitar griot and founder of NEUROSIS [see below], and his Wake. Or THE WAKE, to be precise. Its reality supersedes the place, the space and the particulars that gave birth to it. Mixing imagery that borders on a bold and stark contemplation of the limits of our earthly existence via our failed loves, efforts, conceits and even our less than noble other failures [blissfully unspecified and probably unnecessary to HAVE them specified: if you're ALIVE the blanks are easy enough to fill in], THE WAKE with its lion-in-the-winter woe wrenches the almost inexpressibly sad into seven songs that sound like what you hear when you're just about to not hear anything anymore.

"The weather never changes in my world." – Kelly

Goddamned right.

With an acoustic guitar and a croon that crams the lilt, lift and longing of several lives well lived into 5-some-odd minutes of every song this record would not only not have been possible at any other point in either his life, or ours for that matter, than now, it also seems to suggest the shape of beyond-now: thin and on fire.

Enjoy it. Time is short.

NEUROSIS

The name and game transformed while you watch, if you've been watching, from 1985 to now and right on through to the rest of forever: Neurosis, a 5-piece projectile that despite the accolades has not managed to have anybody get it right yet about why they are great, good or as interesting as they are.

You see Neurosis, despite all the chatter about "heavy metal" this and "doom-crunch" that, lay a serious and earnest claim to being standard bearers for the most significant, but as-of-yet-unnamed plot of real estate yet: fucking musical art. And in this instance artistry. Twenty-three years of deep shit involvement with everybody from Steve Albini to Jarboe, 10 albums, even more than that when you factor in 7 inches, DVDs, "official" bootlegs, side projects and more shows than the average music fan has even ever seen has crystallized Neurosis into a starkly effective delivery vehicle for the impending end times.

In an age when music has become Kleenex, there is occasionally that which transcends commodity and Neurosis is it. Weaving earth-based imagery with blood based realities Neurosis may go on being misunderstood, or understood for the wrong reasons, or misunderstood for the right ones but they will never be lost on ME, at least. For me Neurosis is the sound of man struggling with the gods. A good fight if there ever was one.

--Eugene S. Robinson / www.eugenesorobinson.com



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