

DRUNKEN PRAYER (AKA Morgan Geer) is releasing his sixth full-length album, **THE NAME OF THE GHOST IS HOME** Mixed & mastered by Paul Oldham (Bonnie "Prince" Billy, Royal Trux) on Fluff and Gravy Records

The Name of the Ghost is Home, the new album by Drunken Prayer, transcends the bounds of Americana music. For the last year Morgan Geer has been working from his home studio building on drum tracks initially recorded in Albuquerque, NM at Empty House Studios, home of doom metal bands like OM and Sleep. The end result evokes an ominous feedback-and-driftwood aesthetic. This is music that could have emerged from a highly blissed-out biker bar or at a swampy ashram.

A descendant of the 2019's Mitch Easter produced *Cordelia Elsewhere* and the spaced-out death-raga *Electric Daddyland* of 2021, *The Name of the Ghost is Home* finishes the trinity not with angst or a sentimental tear, but smirking testaments from a series of characters, each taking a different road to get to the same familiar place. Coming to terms with the most rebellious of their family, they arrive at the same grave with a fistful of immortelle, ready to move on.

There's something Whitmanesque about all of this: the particle subsumed into the cosmic swirl, the ineffable communion of souls, the beautiful crass open road; like a film score for a road movie of the mind.

"Sweetheart of the Picket Line" begins the album. It's a modern Romeo and Juliet story about a cop that falls for a protester, or maybe it's vice versa. The singer's "one true love was sent by fate, testing the mettle of a police state", if they only had the weapons or the will. It's a simple bohemian love song that quietly introduces the rest of the record. What comes after is like a portal through time to a better world.

"Landlines and Rabbit Ears (Nachos for One)" starts dignified enough with piercing lyrics, big guitars and Beach Boy harmonies before finally expanding into a sarcastic declaration that "The kids can't rock to save their goddamn souls". It was written by Morgan Geer during the last leg of a tour of the British Isles with The Handsome Family. They had gotten stranded at a miserable hotel during a freak English snow storm with nothing to do but brood and complain. This song was inspired by the most appropriate item on the menu.

The calm between the storm of hooks and riffs on this album are songs like "Crazy Alone" and "God of the Sea", playfully loco tunes about losing your grip on reality. Geer recorded layered vocal harmonies by himself to the former, adding a nice woozy and bonkers vibe to this meditation on isolation. It's all Morgan, a sonic hall of mirrors for those of us staring at our own reflections and wondering what the hell is going on. The result is like a slightly crooked hand-rolled cigarette: a homespun something to calm the jitters and measure out a few minutes of precious time.

The biggest departure from the Drunken Prayer norm here is "Sunderland". Geer doesn't often write with hat in hand sincerity but this story is a poignant one and he doesn't dance around it. Sequenced toward the end, it's a heartbreaking soliloquy about a shit-kicking anti-hero, "underemployed on opioid pills" who wants more out of life than to just survive. Straight, no ironic chaser. This is the quiet sleeper on the album.

The closer and namesake of the album plays out as a final dusty showdown between a solipsistic mind and a bleeding heart. Repeating the line "shadows and shackles, shudders and boards" the band rises in slow motion from deadpan *El Topo* to triumphant *A Night at the Opera*. It's a reminder that home is more than the floors we walk over and four walls that surround us, it's also the spirits in-between and the blood in the ground. Like the music of Drunken Prayer, none of it ever stays put.

The core group of musicians on this record are Morgan Geer, who plays most of the instruments and sings, and the ABQ experimental duo GRAL: Greg Williams playing percussion and Alex McMahon on synth and pedal steel guitars. Williams and McMahon are also frequent members of Americana icons The Handsome Family. Filling out and classing up the sound is Aaron Price on piano, J.J. Tourville playing fiddles, and the Eric Slick (Dr. Dog) on electric keys. The fresh-off-the-clothesline voice of background vocalist Christa de Mayo is the spoonful of sugar that helps the album's more bitter pills go down so sweet.

Morgan Geer lives in the beautiful but hard-scrabble mountains of southern Appalachia. These stories were written from his front porch off a country road where cars go too fast and unchained dogs run wild. *The Name of the Ghost is Home* takes a hard but loving look at the people and places we hold dear for better or worse.



"It's Americana in the sense that America is a place of menace, hybrid vigor and unending strangeness."

- Robert Duncan, CREEM Magazine