

TY SEGALL/WHITE FENCE: JOY



(Review Disclaimer: At a particularly grim point in my grad school career, I wore a “Goodbye Bread” t-shirt every day for a week, followed by what could be charitably described as a mental and spiritual melt down at a Cate Le Bon/Tim Presley concert. This review can be nothing but bias...)

Longstanding kingpins of the West Coast psych-garage scene, Ty Segall and Tim Presley (White Fence) are in a word, prolific. Over the course of their careers, the Drag City duo (at this point certifiable garage rock royalty) have each released a massive back catalog, both in their own right charting the evolution of California punk-fuzz scene. Six years after their first collaboration—2012’s gleefully chaotic *Hair*—sophomore album *Joy* delights in its own contradictions. Individually equalitarian, its musical themes run course like a self-aware, Kafka-esque hodgepodge of twists and turns. Presley and Segall have never shied from risk—and nowhere is that clearer than on *Joy*.

With joint co-writing credit on each song, Presley and Segall craft an alternative garage-honed musical universe. Structurally, it comes off as some sort of a psychedelia rock opera: albeit one without a plot or theme. Sporadic in its fragmentation—but always to great effect—and never completely disorientating, the duo’s unorthodox ebb and flow remains remarkably cohesive. Beyond interlacing vocal harmonies, this is a rare case of two individuals executing their visions while still operating on the same, unique plane. *Joy* is in many ways an inaccessible album. It holds without a center: dramatic tempo shifts give way from sheer esoterica to folksy intimacy, then plowing back into the psych-punk void. Heavy fuzz tracks like “Other Way” and “Prettiest Dog” melt seamlessly into the pop hum-dumming “Do Your Hair” and the plundering “She is Gold.” “A Nod” professes to vulnerability (“Tried to please my mother / Tried to please my father / Tried to please everyone but me”) followed by the coldly clamoring “Grin Without Smile,” perhaps the album’s most old-school, *Melted* era Segall influenced track.

Joy is paradoxically abstract and yet, in moments, luminously tangible. Presley and Segall’s wide array of talents were no secret prior—but *Joy* allows for an emblazonment of each’s willingness to surpass the norm.

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