

In releasing their first EP, Porchlight demonstrate how a band's chosen name can so perfectly encapsulate the essence of their music. 'Wives Tales & Hymns of the Earth' is the aural equivalent to wandering a long road with only the gleam of some small, cold light to guide you in the distance. Each track is searching and uncertain, melting into the next, introducing new bends in this ever unfolding journey. As I listen to the EP in my family's moving car, headphones clamped over my ears, the shifting pattern of streetlights framed in the window is granted a new sense of gravitas.

Rather than being defined as singular forms, each track twists and moves like a living thing, transitioning between new tempos and melodies with a certain gritty fluidity. As the first track 'For Monday' blasts from my headphones, my family hiss at me to turn the volume down. Whilst its initial impression is one of chaos, the clashing drums and screeching guitar are deftly interwoven: there is a deeply embedded rhythm underneath it all. As one track folds into the next, it becomes apparent that this grounded quality is due in part to the resonant vocals of lead singer Sam Crees. There is a pronounced heaviness to his voice that calls to mind the gothic singing of Pete Murphy, albeit with less drawl and more firmness, a sound that makes the band's post-punk influences apparent.

'Spin Doctor' spirals from regularity into something quickened and panicked, instruments withdrawing before being flung back into the song with full-blown force. This fluctuating push and pull of melodies is carried through into 'Blue Chalk'; a melancholy, reflective track that introduces pining strings and soft harmonies. The lyrics "it's warmer, it's colder" seem to encapsulate the track's ever-changing musical essence.

The EP spirals towards something resembling an ending with the fumbling drums and guitar of 'Noel', which shifts for just a moment into a humming, electric tranquillity. The collective emotional weight of the EP comes to rest on the final track 'Shhrrp', during which Cree's singing becomes a desperate monologue, his words tumbling out of his mouth like stones conjured from the back of his breathless throat. The rumbling note of an electric guitar reverberates out into static, indecipherable whispers mingling for a few seconds before fading into oblivion.