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Reaper - nothing.nowhere.

By Nicole Wasnock



After two years of posting EP's, nothing.nowhere released his debut full-length album, *Reaper*, on October 20th, 2017. The sound is familiar, reminiscent of his previous work. Every song on the album seems to blend together, but is individually original. The emo rapper has a completely unique sound, combining hard edged rap beats with vulnerable lyrics. His music always has an in-

strumental simplicity but is mixed with unique elements like voice-overs or sound clips of cars, rain, children yelling and more. Nothing.nowhere's lyrics are explicit, not just in the sense that he curses, but he also raps about topics most people shy away from, like suicide and death, in a shameless way.

The first track on *Reaper* is titled "Houdini" and starts with a slow, brooding bass riff, one very familiar to his listeners. His vocals are soft, almost as if he's constantly on the verge of tears, as he starts to rap

"I swear that I'ma die in this basement
Isolation is the high that I'm chasing
Overdose on lonely nights, how I waste it
I can hear the reaper close I hear him pacing"

At the heart of the song is a laid back but punchy drum track. The percussion consistently cuts when the vocals end throughout the song, giving an angry emphasis to nothing,nowhere's voice while the guitar stands alone in between the chorus and verses, isolated in a way that recalls the sulking tone of the lyrics. This album follows his struggles with death, personified by the Reaper. When the album starts out the Reaper is already close, but he only gets closer.

"Funeral Fantasy" is the heaviest rap track on the album. The song starts out with a clip from what sounds like an old movie. Directly after this clip, a heavy drum track starts and when the vocals enter, there is no brooding romantic quality to them, instead they are straightforward, simple, and a little angry. He delves into his struggles with the concept of fame, rapping about clout and money, wondering if he'll be remembered for his life and struggling to find a purpose.

Next up is "REM," featuring guest artist, Lil West. On this song nothing,nowhere struggles to escape the ghost of his ex in a track that is the ideal balance of emo and rap. The track starts with a pining hook in which he reveals he can't forget his ex and is sick of seeing her in his dreams. This track is a perfect example of how nothing,nowhere can fluidly transition between soft laments to angry accusations in his vocals. You can hear his agony when he pleads:

"And I'm so sorry
That we had to fall apart
Now you're in my head every night
And I just wanna shut my eyes,"

while his frustration is evident when he bellows:

"I'm so sick of feeling used
I wish I could dream of something new."

Following "REM" is "Black Heart" where nothing,nowhere raps about how he feels disconnected from society and how that is just another reason why he isolates himself and hates life. The Reaper reappears when he confesses "Feel the resentment inside of me / I can feel the reaper

trying me.” This lyric parallels to his struggles staying alive in this song, it’s getting harder to avoid the Reaper as he sings “I think I’ve had it” and “This has been a long time coming, I swear.”

Next is “Marykate,” the evident ballad of the album. “Marykate” starts out with the sound of falling rain, then the clicking of keys starting a car, and the beeping of a car backing up followed by the rev of the engine. Once the listener has gone through this auditory experience, a soft electric guitar riff comes in that repeats throughout the song. It’s a very simplistic song instrumentally, so the emphasis is heavily on the vocals and lyrics. There is only the repeating riff and during the chorus a second guitar plays a few simple chords layered over the riff. At 1:54 a synthesized string instrument comes in but fades out in time for the second verse. The lyrics are filled with pain and regret, stripped of anger and frustration, it’s self-hatred at its purest as he confesses he let down the girl he loved and he doesn’t know how to be better. The second verse finds him wishing he could change for her as he explains

“I’m trying to be
The person that you want me to be
But I’m not.
Sure if I can meet those needs, and I
I wish that I was anyone but me
Like on the TV screen or in the magazines
Marykate, I’m sorry that I let you down again.”

The track ends as the final chord of the riff repeats and fades into silence.

“Skully” is a heavier rap track that has the darkest lyrics on the album. Nothing.nowhere raps of self-hatred and death in this song, admitting:

“I’ve got this feeling I won’t make it to twenty-five
It’s a far cry, know we all got hard times
But these long nights got me feeling like I wanna die.”

In the album's ninth and final track "Nevermore," all the rage and self-loathing is gone, replaced by a sense of being lost and hopeless. The song begins with a devastatingly calm feeling to it, as nothing,nowhere looks back on his life and decides he wants to end it. The chorus sounds like a plea for help as he cries out, "I don't wanna do this anymore." In the second verse he raps over soft guitar showing a conflict between the sadness and anger inside of him as he reflects on his life and wonders:

"How can I see the bright side
When the blind's closed and I'm stuck?
They say I'll get it when I'm older
I'm getting closer no closure
Now I'm feeling like it's over."

The song ends with a heart-wrenching guitar solo; nothing,nowhere sings over it, sounding muffled as he pleads, "Remember me with a smile on my face / So when I'm gone you can know I'm in a better place," finally giving in to the Reaper.

Nothing,nowhere leaves his audience feeling simultaneously empty and whole; his music cuts deep, but also assures fans that they are not alone in their lowest moments. Listeners who value poetic lyrics and emotional vocals will appreciate the vulnerability of *Reaper*.