

Ian William Craig - Cradle For The Wanting (2015)

Written by bluesever

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1 Doubtshapes 3:15 2 Habit Worn & Wandering 7:27 3 No Cradle For The Whole Of It 5:20 4 Each All In Another All (Lyrics By Octavio Paz) 4:52 5 Glassblower (Lyrics By Rumi) 4:46 6 Empty, Circle, Tremble 5:56 7 Shipbreaking 5:01 8 Grace In Expectation 5:26 IWC (Ian William Craig) - composer, performer All sounds created using the human voice layered onto a series of reel to reel decks specially manipulated and looped Recorded at home in Vancouver, Canada during the winter of 2014/15

If you were to describe something to me as “Bon Iver meets William Basinski,” I would tell you that it sounds like a fucking train wreck.

But, somewhere on the internet, that is how tape loop/vocal artist Ian William Craig is described—I encountered this description after I started listening to his 2014 album *A Turn of Breath*, earlier this year. And despite my instinct to cringe at such a perplexing juxtaposition of artists, I can’t think of any better way to describe what it is he does, and what it sounds like.

A Turn of Breath would have wound up on my paltry, eight album long, “Best of 2014” list had I heard about it in time—but I came across it in the bleakness of the month of January, with an iTunes gift card burning a hole in my pocket, while I was on a quest for new, ambient music to discover. It came recommended to me both through tweets from the gawd Tom Krell (*How to Dress Well*), and it was also repped very hard by former blogger turned podcaster Justin Snow of *Anti-Gravity Bunny*.

This winter was not the kindest to me, setting a rather dark tone for the rest of the year that followed, and in the months of confusion and spiraling depressing, I found solace in listening to

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one specific Craig track over, and over again—the haunting, evocative, melancholic “A Slight Grip, A Gentle Hold”—one of the only compositions of his that actually has discernable lyrics.

That’s kind of the beauty of Ian William Craig: it’s music for a feeling.

The man himself has returned, with a late in the year entry that picks up exactly where A Turn of Breath left off—Cradle For The Wanting is eight new tape loop and vocal manipulation pieces, each more haunted, damaged, and unbelievable sounding as the record progresses.

But why did someone on the internet describe this as “Bon Iver meets William Basinski?”

Well, it has to do with Craig’s otherworldly range and howl—reaching that same soaring falsetto that Mr. Bonny Bear himself Justin Vernon is now infamous for. It also has to do with the fact that all the compositions are solely based around ¼” tape loops, experiments, and manipulations, creating a dark, cacophonous, yet occasionally triumphant and hopeful environment.

There are moments on Cradle For The Wanting that sound like something from the spirit world is trying desperately to reach through the white noise and make some kind of connection with you—it’s an experience that is not for the faint of heart or faint of ears. By far, the album’s high point is nearly right out of the gate, with the sprawling, emotionally draining seven-minute “Habit Worn and Wandering,” which serves as a bit of an introduction for those uninitiated with what’s about to take place on the rest of the record. Descending into a low dissonant rumble, Craig’s voice soars through various distorted iterations of itself, creating a disorienting, somber, and somehow comforting wall of sound to rest your head upon.

The rest of the album arrives as a way to cement Craig’s status as a true innovator—to my knowledge, nobody is putting themselves out there completely in this fragile of a way, allowing their sorrow, their hope, and most importantly, their voice to be the only instrument used.

Cradle For The Wanting is a big, important statement, speaking dissonant, distorted, angelic volumes of the state of the world around us—not just the bigger picture, but also of the small,

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mundane moments that pass us by and that we take for granted. It's a soundtrack to a world that is constantly crumbling under its own weight, and always trying desperately to rebuild itself. ---Kevin Krein, anhedonicheadphones.blogspot.com

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