

## Garbage - Bleed Like Me (2005)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Bad Boyfriend*
2. *Run Baby Run*
3. *Right Between The Eyes*
4. *Why Do You Love Me*
5. *Bleed Like Me*
6. *Metal Heart*
7. *Sex Is Not The Enemy*
8. *It's All Over But The Crying*
9. *Boys Wanna Fight*
10. *Why Don't You Come Over*
11. *Happy Home*

Bass – Justin Meldal-Johnsen Guitars, Synthesizer, Computer [Laptop], Noises – Steve Marker Guitars, Synthesizer, Programmed By, Other [Atmospherics] – Duke Erikson Guitar, Drums, Effects [Efx], Programmed By – Butch Vig Vocals, Electric Guitar – Shirley Manson + Drums - Matt Walker, Dave Grohl Bass – Butch Vig Mellotron, Piano – Duke Erikson

As polished and professional as it was, Garbage's third album, *Beautiful Garbage*, killed whatever momentum the quartet had as the LP commercially crashed and burned not long after its fall 2001 release. Subsequently, the band faded out of view, taking a long hiatus before regrouping in 2004 to record their fourth album, *Bleed Like Me*, which was finally released in the spring of 2005. Although it was released halfway through the first decade of the 21st century, it belongs to the midpoint of the last decade of the 20th century, sounding like a virtual Cliff Notes of the sounds, themes, and styles of the post-grunge '90s. As they beefed up the guitars, the band have toned down some of the electronica underpinnings that have been present since their debut -- they've not been excised, merely subdued, so this is still recognizably the work of a group that called their second album *Version 2.0* with their tongue firmly planted in cheek. But Garbage don't just hark back to their earlier work on *Bleed Like Me*, they conjure all kinds of ghosts from the '90s, building "Sex Is Not the Enemy" on a Kim Deal bassline, while pasting together a guitar riff straight off of Stone Temple Pilots' *Purple* and a chorus from *Elastica's*

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classic "Stutter" for the album's first single, "Why Do You Love Me." Other sounds of the '90s flutter throughout the album -- the title track reaches back even further, as its cavalcade of misfits uncannily recalls Lou Reed's "Walk on the Wild Side" in its structure, sentiment, and melody -- while lead singer/lyricist Shirley Manson trots out a litany of doomed relationships, kinky sex, wallowing despair, teenage cutters, and hostile confrontations, all topics that were de rigueur for '90s alt-rock. Manson doesn't seem like she's pandering -- several songs appear to cut close to the bone, suggesting that she's been through a particularly painful breakup recently -- and neither do the band. They're all old pros and they construct their music well, so it's hooky and loudly stylish. Problem is, it's a style that's about ten years out of date. Bleed Like Me doesn't sound like a revival, it feels like it's out of time, as if the band doesn't quite know how to do anything else but sound like it's the heyday of post-grunge alt-rock. Since the band's drummer and chief sonic architect, Butch Vig, helped create that sound with the albums he produced for Nirvana, the Smashing Pumpkins, Sonic Youth, and L7, that's not a surprise, nor is it necessarily a disappointment, because the music is not bad. He and his colleagues remain talented, capable professionals, crafting an appealing, tightly constructed album that plays to the group's strengths. It's an enjoyable record, but it's hard to escape the nagging feeling that Garbage has painted itself into a corner: they haven't found a way to expand their sound, to make it richer or mature -- they can only deliver more of the same. While they may be able to do this well, it is nevertheless more of the same. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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