

Brainwashed - The Vomit Arsonist, "Meditations on Giving Up Completely"

Written by Creag Dunton

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A fitting follow-up to 2015's *Only Red*, Andy Grant again delivers a strong suite of harsh, aggressive electronics, but with a slightly different mood to it. Anger and frustration still abounds, but it seems to be shaded with a self-aware futility and nihilism that is very fitting and appropriate for the title.

[Malignant](#)

Meditations on Giving Up Completely sticks with Grant's penchant for slow, lugubrious pseudo-rhythms mixed with aggressive electronics and enraged, but heavily processed vocals. "What's Left" is a perfect example of this: crunchy, overdriven bursts of noise lead into manic, ridiculously distorted shouting. In some ways it is textbook power electronics, but his use of open space in the mix is extremely effective, making all the harshness hit all the harder, but also giving the sense that Grant's aggressive delivery is tantamount to an enraged, ranting diatribe delivered to an empty auditorium.

This unconventional inclusion in a well-known approach to noise is a recurring theme throughout the album. Over an especially bleak electronic expanse, Grant introduces an excellent mechanical banging that never relents, soon bringing in his heavily flanged/phased vocals. In this case, however, the volume and dynamics are surprisingly restrained, casting all of this violent aggression in an insignificant, impotent light. The depressive synths and distorted thuds of "There Is Nothing Here" end up feeling similar with its heavy, yet hollow overall sound.

That nihilistic mood to the album does not fully define it though: the dark murk of "It Never Ends" gives the first third a feel somewhere between harsh noise track and unsettling field recordings before he brings in the big, boisterous crashes and vocals, congealing into a wonderfully raw dense wall of sound. "When The Last Flame Has Been Extinguished" is a blend of big, thunderous bass thumps and brittle, insect-like buzzing that is soon mixed with feedback and shrill electronics, culminating in a strong blend of low-end rumble and tinnitus squeak. The nearly ten minute closer "Sick Over Trying" is the perfect unfulfilling climax to the

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album. Surging, but hollow synthesizers and rattling noises lead off, eventually mixed with some tonal dirges to bring the closest thing to melody on this record. Metallically distorted vocals appear at around the half-way mark, and the piece continues on its slow, repetitive lurch until ending flatly.

In a lot of ways, *Meditations on Giving Up Completely* is the symbolic representation of "if an angry dude is screaming into a distortion pedal but nobody hears it, did it happen?" I think in most cases that would come across as an insult, but that would seem to be the entire point of this album, being seven examples of the banality and futility of macho aggressiveness. Peppered throughout Andy Grant's paeon to frustration and nothingness are some really great power electronics moments though, making for a consistent album that is conceptually strong, but is still very powerful divorced from context as well.

samples:

- [It Never Ends](#)
- [When the Last Flame Has Been Extinguished](#)
- [Sick Over Trying](#)