

Brainwashed - Naam, "Kingdom"

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When I first threw this 12" EP on the turntable I wasn't sure what to expect. The cover art gave me twinges of pretentious freak folk, while something in my gut said it was going to be another stagnant piece of guitar drone. However, it is neither, and I was quite happily surprised by the unabashed noisy sludge rock that followed.

[self-released](#)

A three track EP clocking in at just over 20 minutes, the A side features two moderate length tracks, while the third is a longer, slow building piece of stoner sprawl. The slow droning feedback that opens "Skyling Slip" belies the balls out rocking that is about to follow, an overdriven bass and drum led track that picks up the pace rather quickly and falls into a noise rock groove. The sound bridges the LSD tinged rock of Loop with the THC laced riffs of old school Black Sabbath, and buries the whole thing in reverb thick enough to give a contact high. Through the Geezer Butler like bass melodies and the over-wah'd guitar soloing, there is a little hint of Hawkwind that pops up.

"Fever if Fire" slows down the pace, with a meditative pace that leans more on the space rock side of Naam's sound, opening the mix to give breathing room, the distant vocals giving it more of a '70s rock sheen. The flip-side is the 11 minute "Kingdom," which begins with rudimentary bass playing and twangy guitar soloing that gives way to distant, Ozzy-esque vocals. The pace changes a few times, but the track gets locked into a very looped/repetitive sound, which is exasperated by the mantra like vocals.

This is one of those pleasant little surprises that I ended up enjoying more than I had expected. While this might be the absolute archetype for "stoner rock," it is executed in such a way that any lack of innovation doesn't matter. It doesn't do anything different, but it does the same things very well.