

Brainwashed - Jason Urick, "Fussing and Fighting"

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Rhythm can lead, but sometimes it's anything but enlivening. On his new limited-edition edition EP, Jason Urick creates an atmosphere as driving as it is claustrophobic. The four pieces collected are somewhat repetitive, but nonetheless they have a subtle insistency that sticks in the mind long after the record is finished.

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Beat making is a relatively new preoccupation in Urick's run as a solo-artist. Unlike his last album, the excellent *Husbands*, he keeps his compositions sparse. Despite this, they have an unsettling air, especially the title track, which is downright sinister. It's built from a short, patios inflected vocal sample intoning the words "fussing and fighting" over and over again. Urick bends and stretches the sample to the accompaniment of sparse reverb drenched drum programming. Bits of disembodied noise wash in and out of the mix in a narcoleptic haze, apt accompaniment to a late night drive through a blighted cityscape.

The rest of the EP still has the same disembodied quality, but without the explicit menace. It's as if Urick's sounds were trapped in their own limited scope, trying to escape the tiny range of motion that he gives them. It's not until the end of the third track, "Sleeping Bag/Lets make it Critical," that Urick displays the kind of technical grandiosity that he is capable of. Drifts of static pile up and through the noise an airy half melody emerges, providing a sparkling coda to an otherwise unremarkable soundscape. It is the only moment on the record where Urick approaches the density that marks his best work, and while this may be a step backwards for him stylistically, it satisfies in a way that the other tracks do not. The rest seem pale and confused. Despite freshening his approach, Urick's work on *Fussing and Fighting* lacks the vitality of his previous work.