



Greg Brown **The Evening Call** Red House Records

Co-produced by Brown and his long time guitarist Bo Ramsey, **The Evening Call** is dedicated to the late Bob Feldman [d. 2006], who re-launched Brown's then dormant label Red House Records back in 1983. Brown's one-hundred word tribute to Feldman appears on the inside of the gatefold eco-card CD liner, and includes "You were strong and quick to help people in trouble. Life is lonely, we can any of us get too lonely." The collection was recorded at Ardent Studios in Memphis, and, Ramsey apart, Brown is supported by Rick Cicalo [bass], Steve Hayes [drums] and Ricky Peterson [keyboard]. Composed of twelve Brown penned originals *Joy Tears* finds the narrator offer us his insights into 'the thing they call love' thereby launching this folk/blues/country flavoured collection wherein the Iowan based musician handsomely employ his deep throated singing voice.

In *Cold & Dark & Wet* Brown indulges in a deal of social commentary, "Tell me what is a fella to do, When a car costs what a house used to, And a house is a pile of chipboard, paint and debt." Having piled on further references to the 'cost of living, American jobs being exported overseas and growing old and weak' Greg closes with "Life is not a walk across the park." The ribald *Bucket* previously appeared on the compilation "**Radio Free: Live In-Studio Performances From Radio Free Brattleboro**" [2003]. *Mighty Sweet Watermelon* amounts to a song in praise of those seeded fruits, watermelon and pumpkin, one of which is eaten cold while the other requires cooking. The almost six minute long *Eugene* is a spoken narrative, supported by languid 'background music.' Over the duration, Brown contemplates the freedom inherent in a cross-country road trip/fishing expedition, name-checks the 'tackle' he'll need, imagines the people he'll meet and more. The punchline being "Sometimes you gotta go not look for nothing."

Lyrical *Coneville Slough* is another travelogue wherein the narrator ruminates about the road, and, in this instance, his female travelling companion. *Kokomo* is a Brown original and not the Beach Boys 1988 # 1 Pop single. Stylistically it's an explorative blues, as are the earlier cuts *Evening Call* and *Treat Each Other Right*. The lyrical threads that regularly surface in **The Evening Call** relate to love, sex and fishing, and in *Pound It On Down* Brown manages to reference them all. Melodically the penultimate *Skinny Days* is a languid shuffle, while the album closer *Whippoorwill* picks up the pace a tad.

Folkwax Score 7 out of 10

Arthur Wood.
Kerrville Kronikles 08/06.