



Rain Perry **"Cinderblock Bookshelves"** Precipitous Records

From the get go, let me offer the insight that **"Cinderblock Bookshelves"** features thirteen autobiographically themed songs that have already spawned a one-woman stage show and will, ere long, be published as a [narrative] book of the same name.

Perry's sophomore solo album opens with "Yosemite" a subtly worded paeon to the inner strength that is attained with coming of age. With the passage of years and decades, a mature swan evolves from the innocent young duckling....you already know the fairy story backwards, Perry's story is real and involved negotiating unexpected obstacles along the way. The foregoing song also appeared on Perry's Y2K debut collection **"Balance."** That said, Rain's lyric intelligently employs geographical terms – scrape, scour, erratic, striation, glacial terrain and more – to paint the manner in which, raised by her sometimes errant father, she traversed the rocky terrain of growing up. At three crucial stages in her life Rain has stood in a doorway, in two of them she bid a final farewell to a dying parent – to her mother as a seven-year old, and some decades later as a mature, married mother to her ailing father. As a loving mother she hovers in a doorway observing her precious offspring as they slumber. For FolkWax readers aged forty and over, blessed with the foregoing and numerous other clever poetic images, "Cinderblock Bookshelves" will most surely resonate. It's meant to tug at the heartstrings and most certainly does, by way of the remembrance of a seven-year old *"This is the beginning of experience, Innocence is gone too soon,"* while her father's passing in 1999, at the age of 53, brings the heartfelt *"Hard as I fought to get away from him, Suddenly he's gone too soon."* When they pass beyond that final veil, the opportunity to lay bare your true sentiments has vanished. Forever.

Dave Robison's pounding drum beat furnishes "Wild Child" with a Joplin/Canned Heat/Airplane, late sixties underground music vibe, as Perry recalls her rowdy teen years - *"Played tag on the ridge by moonlight, Just because it was a lovely night, Everyone in a circle, We had so much time."* The "Girl In The Boy's Room" is there simply because, to the amazement of the male gender, Rain can skilfully propel the six strings on a guitar [+]. Initiated into this secret society through her undoubted skill, Rain could avariciously swap licks and other guitar tricks. In the opening verse Rain name checks Neil Young, and by surname the lesser known Jaime Brockett [composer of "Legend Of The U.S.S. Titanic"], while I guess *"Danny's more concerned with how he looks when he plays"* could just be a reference to Danny Kortchmar.

"Girl On The Side" paints the portrait of a confused teen consigned to her father's custody – *"I've lost myself in a grownup world, With a man more lost than me,"* while in the ensuing, "Dear Dana," a newly deserted and heartbroken Perry discovers that as one door to happiness closed, another immediately opened. Chris Maresh's upright bass accompanies Rain's voice on the starkly worded "Many Moons Of You," another remembrance of 'surviving' life with her late father. Where Rain sarcastically alluded to *"girlfriend 23"* in the title cut, set in the time leading up to and after her father's passing, "Patty" is an affectionate thank you to the woman who shared the final years of John Perry's life.

The allegorical "There's A Problem With The Dam" opens with the self-protective *"I built this dam one winter, When I knew I would drown"* and following an unspecified period of time closes with the decision to 'dismantle' – *"It's careful work to take down a dam, You've got to do it slow, Can't let out the anger all at once, Cause your loved ones live below."* In the opening verse of "Airborne," Rain declares *"I'm ready now to fly"* and in the process becomes the mighty and mature swan I mentioned at the outset. Discovering the freedom that flight furnishes, becomes palpable in "Eliza On The Car Tour." Malkovich did it in a movie, and here Ms Gilkyson adds her voice to this very personal musical reflection of a

“faithful daughter.” Having referenced her mother in the latter lyric, despite their troubled relationship “Thank You” is an expression of deep and lasting gratitude to Rain’s father who always urged her to ‘write it down’ – *“And when I stop to think about it, I owe him more than I often admit.”* On “Beautiful Tree” which closes this collection, Perry is joined by a choir of friendly voices – and while the tree that they sing of may not be a perfect specimen, it is has survived many trials and tribulations and learned many lessons along the way. While the memories linger, gone are the days of cinderblock bookshelves....and in the sequel. Well, let’s leave that for another day.

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10 maybe a 9????? Hard to decide.

Arthur Wood.

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