



Meg Hutchinson Red House Records

Having previously employed the self-release route, Hutchinson's debut for the Red House label, like its predecessor **"The Crossing,"** was produced by Crit Harmon. Three Hutchinson solo releases, studio and live, surfaced before the latter 2004 title.

**"Come Up Full"** opens with "Ready," a song for summer that finds the narrator reflect at the outset *"Perhaps the years of grieving have left me"* and having poetically painted [in words] a backdrop of warm seasonal bliss [he/she] proceeds to offer the possibility *"Maybe I'm ready."* During the opening minute of the ensuing "Home" Meg's vocal delivery possesses a breathy intimacy, and when the initially restful paced melody melts into the first chorus the tempo bursts into a joyful stream of consciousness – *"And I've been dreaming in full colour, Goodbye sorrow I've found another way."* A kind of restrained joy also permeates the lines of the third track "Whole Bird" - *"I don't need the whole bird, just a feather will do"* and toward the close the narrator adds *"I have known you all along."* In summation it's a celebration of finding [new/true] love.

The Lakota Sioux war cry *"hoka hey"* literally translates as "Good Day To Die" and on that foundation Hutchinson has built a contemplation of life. With "America [Enough]" this late twenty something Massachusetts bred writer turns her focus from the intimate and personal to a nation and its politics. In a land where everything has to be larger than life and the finest possible, excess is the norm. Sadly, the maxim 'enough is never enough,' as history has repeatedly proved, is a rocky road that leads to ruin. In "Seeing Stars" Meg reflects on the natural world that surrounds us, while "Climbing Mountains" finds her literally reach for 'new heights.' In "I'd Like To Know" the lovelorn narrator confesses, *"After the song is sung, Cause I'm quick to love, Quicker to tire"* then earnestly expresses the future wish *"I'm looking for a slower burn, A better kind of fire."*

By the close of the opening line of "Somewhere," there's little doubt that Meg's lyric and melody are based on the 1939 Harold Arlen/Yip Harburg creation "Over The Rainbow." I guess if there was a word that captured the essence of "Song For Jeffrey Lucey" then it's haunting. Haunting because throughout this six minute long cut there's this nagging feeling that something is not quite right, although Hutchinson – deliberately – does not state that aged 23 and deeply troubled by what he saw and did during a mere handful of months serving in Iraq, Lucey took his own life; rather she opens with the optimistic *"You would have made a great dad, if you'd lived that long."* Whether the latter contention is based on fact, who knows? The "Come Up Full" lyric reflects on the riches found in the depths of the sea, and this collection closes with "Can You Tell Me" a love song for Boston.

Folkwax Score 7/8?? out of 10

**Arthur Wood.**

Kerrville Kronikles 03/08.