

Dead Moon - In The Graveyard (1988)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Graveyard* 2 *Out On A Wire* 3 *Can't Help Falling In Love* 4 *Parchment Farm* 5 *Dead In The Saddle* 6 *Hey Joe* 7 *Don't Burn The Fires* 8 *Where Did I Go Wrong* 9 *Remember Me* 10 *I Hate The Blues* Fred Cole – guitar, vocals Toody Cole – bass Andrew Loomis – drums (2 – 10) Louis Samora – drums (1)

That Dead Moon remain of relative obscurity feels not so much a matter of oversight as a cosmic injustice. Since 1988 they've independently released a dozen albums, toured extensively, and teetered on the precipice of wider recognition: Pearl Jam and Shellac have sung their praises, while 2004 documentary *Unknown Passage* and 2006 Sub Pop collection *Echoes From The Past* have spread the gospel further.

It can't be to do with the backstory, itself a slice of history. Singer-guitarist Fred Cole played in 60s garage bands *The Lords*, *The Weeds*, and *The Lollipop Shoppe*, whose "You Must Be A Witch" landed on the first Nuggets box. Fleeing the draft, the band ended up in Portland, where Fred met Toody, future wife and Dead Moon bandmate. The Coles conduct themselves with DIY integrity, booking their own tours, running a studio and guitar store, and pressing their own records, some cut on the same lathe used on *The Kingsmen's* "Louie Louie". Toody credits their spirited self-reliance to their parents: "They survived the depression and World War Two, and taught us that strength and determination will carry you through."

Dead Moon's first three records, *In The Graveyard* (1988), *Unknown Passage* (1989) and *Defiance* (1990), remain unimpeachable. They started as a covers band, and some remain: Toody's Mo Tucker-ish "I Can't Help Falling In Love With You" on *In The Graveyard*, a raging take on blues standard "Milk Cow Blues" on *Defiance*. But the originals are just as good: the nightmarish "thunderbolts and nightsticks" visions of "Dead Moon Night", or the wracked country blues of "Dagger Moon".

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Fred and Toody split with drummer Andrew Looms in 2006, but Dead Moon reformed at the start of 2014 to play the centenary of Portland's Crystal Ballroom. A subsequent European tour was cancelled when Fred fell ill, and he's just undergone triple bypass open-heart surgery. "He needs several months to heal completely, and be able to play on stage again, standing for over an hour with that heavy Guild Thunderbird guitar strapped on," says Toody. But a Portland show is booked for January 2015. The world still has a chance to wake up to Dead Moon. ---Louis Pattison, uncut.co.uk

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