

# DUSTIN KENS RUE - CARRY THE FIRE



For more than 15 years, Dustin Kensrue has been at the forefront of the independent music world, including an enviable run leading Thrice that bore 8 full-length records, as well as his work as a solo artist. Now, another new chapter begins on April 21 with the release of *Carry The Fire*, Kensrue's newest full-length solo recording, on Staple Records/Vagrant Records. As the long-awaited follow-up to Kensrue's last solo full-length, 2007's *Please Come Home*, and more than three years removed from *Major/Minor*, Thrice's last LP, it's no surprise Kensrue entered the studio with a wealth of new material.

"I always have bits and pieces of songs that are bouncing around in my head. I usually record them and listen back later, and most of the time I can't remember why I even bothered to record them in the first place. But then there are the tunes that stick – the ones I find running over and over through my head, demanding to be finished. Begging for a home."

Thematically, the album continues the philosophical and spiritual discourse that has become indicative of Kensrue's past works. "This record is a study in contrasts; light and darkness, flame and flood, true love and senseless hatred," commented Kensrue. "What does it mean to 'carry the fire' when it so often seems like there is no light or warmth to be found at all? This is the question woven through the fabric of these ten songs."

Kensrue attributes the record's title to a phrase lifted from two of author Cormac McCarthy's books *The Road* and *No Country For Old Men*. "McCarthy introduces the image at the very end of *No Country* and then weaves the phrase throughout *The Road* which was his next book and the last that he published. The concept seems to be roughly the idea of holding on to light in darkness - of believing in and striving towards actual good amidst actual evil. It resonated with me because it's one of the themes I most often find myself writing about. Beyond myself, this theme also seems to be something that is playing itself out more and more in culture, especially in post-apocalyptic genres as seen in *The Road* or a TV show like *The Walking Dead*. That show is constantly wrestling with the same questions that I do in many of my songs — Is there good? Is there right and wrong? Is there any real beauty or truth? — When you ask these questions in an environment stripped of the external constraints of law and civilization, they take a razor sharp edge. The contrasts leap out."

Tracks like *Ruby*, *Back to Back*, *Of Crows and Crowns*, and *Juggernaut* explore this contrast of light and dark by looking through the lens of love; particularly in parsing out the difference between true love and it's more shallow or selfish shadows.

*There's Something Dark Inside Of Me*, one of the more subdued songs on the record, turns the listener's gaze inward, causing them to confront the darkness within. A later track, *What Beautiful Things*, expands the view to encompass the darkness we find around us in the world as well. While the former song leaves the listener in that darkness (for the moment at least) the latter refuses to, following up each sober look with the affirmation that the darkness is not all there is to see.

Musically, Kensrue expands his own sonic stomping grounds in proportion with his lyrical explorations, embracing on *Carry The Fire* a wider range of tones and textures than was heard on the largely folk-and country-influenced *Please Come Home*. While those elements are still present on *Fire*, they are only one color on the palette. From heavy grooves of "Gallows" (which Kensrue described as feeling to him like a mix of The Black Keys and Haim) to Ruby's tinge of dark '60's pop, to the sprawling and cinematic title track, the record is sonically expansive.

*Carry The Fire* is nearly top to bottom truly a solo effort, with the singer/guitarist producing, engineering and performing all of the instruments on the album himself while reserving the mixing for his friend Brian Eichelberger who produced Kensrue's *The Water & The Blood* in 2013.

The release of *Carry The Fire* marks the beginning of a new period of heightened activity for Kensrue, who will be actively supporting the album on the road this year, in addition to the forthcoming return of Thrice in 2015 after a 3-year hiatus. Meanwhile Kensrue's current commitments for solo dates include the upcoming tour with Andy Hull, as well as a showcase at the March SXSW conference in Austin, Texas. The break from full-time writing and performing seems to have refreshed and reinvigorated Kensrue. "The last few years have been very clarifying for me. I see more clearly than ever that what I'm most gifted and what I love working at is writing music, and I couldn't be more excited to be pursuing it full time again."

###

<http://dustinkensrue.com/>  
<http://www.facebook.com/dustinkensrue>  
<https://twitter.com/dustinkensrue>  
<http://staplerecords.com/>  
<http://www.vagrant.com/>

Vagrant.



Staple  
RECORDS