

Brainwashed - Stormloop, "Snowbound**"

Written by Craiga Dunton

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Even though the concept and imagery of frigid weather has been done time and time again within drone and ambient music, Kevin Spence's take on it is able to transcend the expectations I had and present a haunting, glacial suite of songs that radiate a frozen stillness.

[Glacial Movements](#)

Image

Recorded during the winter months between 2005 and 2009, the coldness of the surroundings clearly seeped into the tapes, such as on the expansive ambience and thick, icy synth pulses that make up the title track. During its eight minutes, the piece varies and evolves, but it definitely isn't via quick edits or jumpy composition.

The snow metaphors are especially apt on "A Blizzard," which begins as shimmering waves of sound that slowly become heavier and more demanding, much like a snowstorm would produce. "Cold Winds" is enshrouded by a layer of crackling snowflakes, as delicate, crystalline melodies intertwine in the distance. Again, a sense of cold stillness, but not fully frozen, with some good melodic evolution and development forming the focus of the track.

After the aptly titled "Melt," with its echoing percussive hints and slowly running water sounds, the overarching mood and feeling of the album changes to something a little less consistent, but still fitting. "Drifting-Decent" feels warmer, with lighter sounds and distant echoes pushing the piece in a different direction. "Losing Sleep" also goes in its own direction, pulling in a bassier

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sound and field recording loops, giving a quiet, but disorienting intensity.

The two closing pieces, "Space Station J" and "Cygnus," as expected, take a more astronomical/science fiction vibe in comparison to the rest of the album. Both have a more distant quality, feeling less organic and disconnected in comparison. Each have an odd intrusion: a tiny bit of guitar on the former and sampled voices on the latter. The guitar works, but the voices were more distracting overall (and the same with their use on the title track).

Living up to the album title and imagery, this debut physical release is an expansive world of icy beauty. While not a perfect record, as a compilation of material recorded over a five-year span, it feels rather cohesive. The thick, chilling tones make for a great accompaniment to the winter season.

samples:

- [Snowbound](#)
- [A Blizzard](#)
- [Cygnus](#)