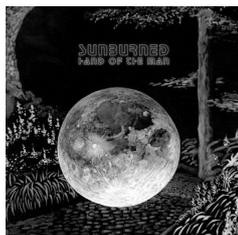


## Brainwashed - Sunburned Hand of the Man, "Pick a Day to Die"

Written by Three Lobed Recordings  
Wednesday, 13 January 2021 08:09 -

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"Sunburned Hand of the Man might be the last of the great American free rock collectives. There was a time, not too long ago, when every region of this great republic could boast of its own visionary troupe of seekers and improvisers, thrumming at the frequency of the illuminated world. There was Pelt in the south and Jackie-O Motherfucker in the Pacific northwest, No-Neck Blues Band in New York and the iridescent Jewelled Antler out in the Bay Area. And up in the New England wilds, there was The Sunburned Hand of the Man. David Keenan of The Wire memorably called it the New Weird America. It felt to me like the mystical democracy of Walt Whitman. It was never arch or jittery or wiry; it sprawled like the continent and massed like the seas. It produced some of the most singularly thrilling performances that I ever had the privilege of witnessing. Most of those groups have since gone dormant—disbanded entirely or decomposed into smaller units and solo projects. But the Sunburned Hand of the Man remains.

Or rather, we might say that the Sunburned Hand has returned. The sudden appearance of the phenomenal *Headless* in late 2019 felt like something of a resurfacing. There had, of course, been a steady trickle of obscure cassettes and CD-Rs over the years, filling out an already bewilderingly immense and impossible to master discography. But *Headless* felt like their first proper album since the release of the Kieran Hebden-produced *A on Ecstatic Peace!* all the way back in 2010. It appears that it was no one-off.

The thing that one has to remember about Sunburned Hand of the Man is that while they were no less committed to vast, ritualistic summonings than their siblings in the American free rock underground, they were perhaps uniquely capable of channeling that cosmic funk. There's a throb and a groove to Sunburned's music that made it as much body music as head music. This is a different kind of American weirdness than that which conjures ghosts and threatens to tear down the veil between worlds. This is "free your ass" weirdness that chugs and bounces. It makes us want to get out of our heads where we've all been trapped these past months and drive on the freeway or bop down the street or loaf like Walt Whitman in the stoned sun. Like the man said, it makes us want to taste the campfire. *Pick A Day to Die*. Sure, but definitely not today."

--Brent S. Sirota--

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More information can be found [here](#) .