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## The Courtesy Fall

### Dawn Kinnard



Pennsylvanian export Dawn Kinnard has been wowing the crowds with her intense performances in tiny clubs for ages [\[click here for gig review\]](#), though obscurity may well be behind her after a stellar performance on BBC show Later With Jools Holland. With such interest in her debut album the pressure is on, but *The Courtesy Fall* is more than capable of standing up to the fans and critics alike.

Kinnard's voice is the epitome of scratched up, alcohol tinged huskiness, purring and growling its way around some fantastically evocative lyrics, with beautifully arranged acoustic guitar, piano and production flourishes creating all sorts of drama around it. The realisation that there are no dud tunes on an album is a very happy one, and these twelve tracks evoke all sorts of deliciously dark, mysterious moods with their arresting lyrics and personality-filled vocal performances.

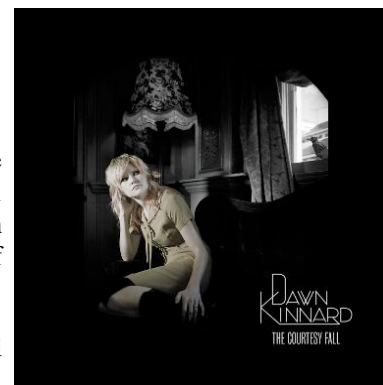
'All In Your Head' and 'Island' are Coldplay epic pop, the driving bass supporting twinkling piano surges and beautifully intense vocal melodies. 'Clear The Way' features Ed Harcourt in particularly husky mode, the duetting pair backed by sumptuous strings in tense verses that open out to majestic swooping choruses. It's all over too quickly but the quirky, dreamy lyrics stick in the brain; "As we meet it's like stars lose their grip".

"I won't go to sleep, I won't go to sleep / But I'm tired" is the plaintive opening cry of 'You're My Kite', a fuzzed up, ethereal three and a half minute peek in to the Kinnard psyche. It's usually true that sad songs are more interesting than happy ones but this is no indulgent exercise in navel gazing - the pervading sense of romantic hope anchors it squarely in the real world, albeit a slightly spooky sounding version of it. 'Lean To The Glass' is a lesson in frustration, the long-haired lover who won't commit serenaded on bare bones acoustic guitar. Kinnard's voice fades to a bitter, resigned whisper before returning to sweetly plead "Don't make me wait on you / It's just too hard to do."

This sugared anguish continues on 'Pennsylvania', a place Kinnard clearly has no regrets about leaving. "There's something in the wind that lifts me up" is an inspirational line, proof that there can always be hope amid the melancholy. All artists need conflict, and exiting the place where "the tall trees, they cover our eyes" for the wider world not only gave Dawn Kinnard more material but brought her to our ears - for that we should be truly thankful.

#### Dawn Kinnard *The Courtesy Fall* track listing:

1. All In Your Head
2. Devil's Flame
3. No Different Now
4. Island
5. Fortuneteller
6. Clear The Way
7. You're My Kite
8. Stop And Start
9. Lean To The Glass
10. One Little Step Away
11. Pennsylvania
12. White Walls



**Try Dawn Kinnard if you like:** Ed Harcourt, Ryan Adams, Cat Power, Cerys Matthews

Review by *Laura Kidd*