



It has been quite a long time since these shape-shifting drone stalwarts from Kranky's golden age last surfaced with a major release, aside from the gnarled, bass-heavy *Disorder* LP that teasingly appeared on Important back in 2017. While I am certainly happy to have them back, this latest release from the core duo of Joe Denardo and Kevin Doria takes a somewhat unexpectedly minimalist and meditative direction. I am tempted to call

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a "return to form," but Growing have several different appealing forms they could potentially return to and this one arguably feels like a mis-remembered return to the pair's Kranky era, as these radiant slow-motion reveries pieces feel more akin to Stars of the Lid than any Growing album I recall. Whether that is a step in the right direction or not is hard to say, as a strong case could be made that project's killer run of weirder, spacier releases in 2007 & 2008 was its zenith and that this latest opus sands away all of the duo's distinctive quirks and sharp edges. From a purely artistic perspective, however,

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is quite an impressive achievement, as Doria and Denardo distill drone to its purest essence with an almost supernatural degree of control and patience.

[Silver Current](#)

This album initially seemed very straightforward to me, but sneakily became more and more interesting with repeat listens and a bit of idle reflection upon its mysteries. One such mystery is Growing's decision to call a three-song album *Diptych*, which caused me to wonder if the two things being referenced were Doria and Denardo or the sun and moon from the album's eclipse cover art. Then I realized that the eclipse provided a flawed but insightful Rosetta Stone for grasping the essence of this latest direction, as each piece feels like slow-motion footage of a mesmerizing celestial event: seemingly nothing happens for a long time, then something subtly rapturous begins to reveal itself. The flaw with eclipse imagery is merely that nothing here undergoes a particularly dramatic transformation nor is there much perceptible darkness to speak of (though a dissonant undercurrent does briefly appear in the closing "Swallow Turn"). Instead, these pieces feel more like solar flares blossoming from the surface of the sun in extremely glacial fashion. Of the three pieces, "Swallow Turn" is my favorite, as it is the most condensed and varied: it is half the length of the others, yet still feels epic and it even includes some bird songs and spacey synth-sounding flourishes near the end. The other two pieces

Brainwashed - Growing, "Diptych"

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offer their own compelling twists though: "Variable Speeds" culminates with an unexpected heavy and pulsing bass buzz, while "Down + Distance" initially sounds like a shimmering organ drone but dissolves into a vapor trail of low-end thrum and smears of sculpted feedback. Aside from that, it is also very cool that these sounds mostly emanate from just a bass and a guitar and that Doria and Denardo have seemingly achieved total ego death (or at least become obsessive Eliane Radigue fans).

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may be an album that requires significant patience and attention to fall in love with, but it is ultimately one worth loving.

Samples can be found [here](#) .