

Lucinda Williams *The Ghosts of Highway 20*

HIGHWAY 20/THIRTY TIGERS



Sooner or later, it seems, most singer-songwriters write their “on-the-road” album. It’s a natural calling, considering how much time they spend making their way from one dot on the map to the next. Unlike most of these, **Lucinda Williams’** *The Ghosts of Highway 20* is not a travelogue but a character study, the character being a specific slice of the American landscape: Interstate 20, which traverses a sizable swath of the South. In a dozen of the album’s 14 songs, Williams weaves her own stories; we meet her people, her places, her memories, all set along that history-rich line. “Death Came,” like several tracks, is stark and haunting, imbued with illusory mystery. On “Can’t Close the Door on Love,” Williams asks us to trust her to believe what the title suggests. The other two tracks are covers she now owns: a swampy, minimalist take on Springsteen’s “Factory” and “House Of Earth,” a Woody Guthrie lyric to which Williams wrote the music. Featuring Williams’ rhythm section of

sound, delivering an immediate appeal that’s both ageless and inviting.

Lee Zimmerman