

# HEAT TREATMENT

**Dead Man Winter finds new life in ashes of post-marital despair**

**BEHOLD THE DREADED** breakup album. Once a release gets pegged as such, it's immediately saddled with enough presumed emotional baggage to prompt the most seasoned marriage counselors to reassess their vocation. And never mind the artistic expectations often assigned to such overt catharsis.

Hence, Dave Simonett finds himself in a bit of a predicament with *Furness* (GND-WIRE), his second and most personal effort as Dead Man Winter, the plugged-in alter ego to his bluegrass-inspired acoustic outfit Trampled By Turtles. He leaves himself dangerously exposed to scrutiny on *Furness*—though it's not as if he had a choice.

"Breakup records aren't generally something I'm interested in, but I couldn't get past the damn thing," the 36-year-old Simonett says of the emotional unraveling and ensuing creative windfall that followed the demise of his decade-long marriage—a relationship that began when he was just 19 and produced two young children. "It had to be done."

*Furness'* conventional folk/rock shell provides a certain measure of comfort, as does Simonett's languid vocal delivery. But you won't find much comfort in the words. "I'm a destroyer, I'm burning in the starlight/ All I wanted was to die, but you would not let me go," Simonett sings on "Destroyer."

*Furness* was once a much different album. Looking to regroup after his divorce, Simonett retreated to an isolated cabin in his Minnesota home. Snowed in much of the time and left to his own devices, he wrote like crazy. Trouble is, he didn't like what he heard when he got back, even after the record was mastered. "It just sounded kind of hollow," he says.

So Simonett recruited some pals from the Minneapolis roots-rock scene—including Trampled By Turtles bassist Tim Saxhaug—and headed to Pachyderm Recording Studio. In the wooded-retreat setting that produced such classics as Nirvana's *In Utero*, the group recorded everything live to tape. "A lot of the songs the guys were learning during the first take, but it was easier the second time around because I had some space and time," says Simonett. "I could actually focus more on making the record than my own stupid misery. It was like letting the steam out of a valve." —Hobart Rowland

**UNDER THE INFLUENCE**  
with **DAVE SIMONETT**

## 01 HOW MUSIC WORKS BY DAVID BYRNE

"This book has changed the way I look at creating. Byrne's description of the process of making music, from the scientific to the creative, is so brilliantly and accessibly stated that every time I read it, I'm motivated to get to work."

## 02 LOW

"They may be the coolest band in the world. Their music is beautiful, courageous, sometimes unsettling. Even after 25 years, they're still looking for magic when they perform and record. They're also hometown friends, which plays into my next item."

## 03 DULUTH, MINN.

"This dusty, stunning city on the edge of the world (or at least Lake Superior) is my spiritual home and where I go when I'm stuck. It's full of music and adventure and some of the most interesting people I've ever met. I'd need a lot more space to accurately describe what this city has meant to me—but in the context of this piece, it certainly is inspiring."