

# DEAFHEAVEN

## ORDINARY CORRUPT HUMAN LOVE

An album review by Gabriel Ivey

**DEAFHEAVEN** is a group rooted in post metal but also combines the styles of black metal, shoegaze and blackgaze. Formed in San Francisco, California in February 2010. Originally a duo of Vocalist George Clarke and guitarist Kerry McCoy, the two recorded an untitled demo for \$500, with money they did not have. They didn't own an electric guitar or an amplifier at the time so the duo recorded a 4 track demo fusing elements of black metal and post rock with an acoustic guitar. At first, the duo didn't want to release the demo, but ended up sending it out to a few of their favorite blogs, which receiving positive acclaim and ended up on the desk of Jacob Bannon, the founder of Deathwish Inc. and most notably, the Vocalist of Converge, a legendary hardcore band.



After receiving positive feedback on the demo, the group brought on 3 more members, Derek Prine on bass, Nick Bassett on guitar, and Trevor Deschryver on drums. By december of the same year, the band signed to Deathwish Inc. and they released their debut album, "Roads to Judah" in april of 2011

**ORDINARY CORRUPT HUMAN LOVE** is the fourth studio album released by



Deafheaven was recorded in January and February of 2018 and announced alongside the single "Honeycomb" on April 18th. It was available on NPR July 5th and officially released 8 days later on the 13th. It received

universal acclaim and charted at 111 on the US billboard 200, a surprisingly high number considering the album's genre, sounds and tones.

The album Contains 7 tracks clocking in at 61 minutes and 36 seconds, just barely passing the one hour mark.

The album embraces the black metal roots of the band with a softer tone, incorporating many aspects of shoegaze and post metal, while creating a cinematic and emotional listen. Often most songs on this album create a soundscape of a hopeless desolation, but bring a hopeful tone, portraying that not all may be lost.

#### Tracklist:

You without end - 7:36  
Honeycomb - 11:04  
Canary Yellow - 12:17  
Near - 5:28  
Glint: 10:57  
Night People - 4:07  
Worthless Animal - 10:07

#### **You without end**

The opening track on the album, “You without end” opens with a spoken word segment, performed by Nadia Kury over a melancholic piano melody backed by a soulful chorus guitar. The short story being read is Black and Borax, which comes from a book called Oakland Noir. The song's lyrics seem to discuss how rage, defeat and sadness can drown you. And though you will sink, eventually you will resurface on the side with the light, allowing you the opportunity to overcome and love again,



The song begins with a calm piano medley backed by guitar and drums, overtop of Nadia Kury's spoken segment. This slowly builds towards the first verse where the rise reaches its climax and George Clark opens with an incredible vocal performance. The song continuously builds and falls until the second spoken segment, and then launches into an orchestral breakdown accompanied by pained screams and an incredible guitar solo. The song ends and leads into the following track perfectly. **8.5/10**

## Honeycomb

Honeycomb opens with roaring guitars and crashing cymbals with an intense energy, before the vocals come in. A particular thing I love about this song is its instrumentation especially after the line "Shout!" is absolutely beautiful as Clark

screams the lines "The ends of bread" and "8, 12, 13 hours".

Trevor Dreschryver's drums shine on this track, providing a fast and exhilarating rhythm to the song that perfectly aligns with the lead guitar work.

The lyrics of this song tackle a few ideas, the first being the idea of letting others in, and how alongside the happiness and joy

it can bring one, it also can assure misery and grief, and the foolish hope to repeat the actions all over again. This sentiment is represented in the lyrics "Cortazar stares at women, shuffling by who blot their lips, from violent men, and say "god bless you"", These lyrics tell of women who are abused in



relationships and wipe the blood from their lips, and are still able to offer kindness to others. Another image conveyed by the narrator is of Julio Cortazar, an Argentinian novelist who found inspiration for depressing and pained novels through beauty and peace. **9/10**

## Canary Yellow

My favorite song of all time is Canary Yellow, the third track off of this album. It opens with a soft and gentle lead guitar part backed by an almost siren-like synthesizer before all gentle tapping and guitar is second guitar slowly rising the hi hats are it reaches its booms into a crescendo incredibly powerful gives me chills and fiery drums with a tremolo picked backing that fills the space between perfectly.



The song keeps this energy going powerfully and emotionally until around the 6 minute mark where the guitar begins to go deeper into this emotion evoking rhythm. This is held until the 9 and a half minute point where a guitar segment leads into an incredible solo demonstrating Kerry's guitar skills. Immediately after, the song launches into a chant of sorts, where the lyrics "On and on we choke on (My lover's blood)" and "An everlasting handsome night, my lover's blood rushes right through me" before the song fades away. The song also tells a story through it's lyrics of a man struggling to understand existence, portraying it as "poetry" as an attempt to remember and to figure out the meaning of it all and contemplating the abstract idea of heaven and the afterlife. This is shown

through the chorus with lyrics like “Staring out onto the earthly pottery of, Pottery of existence, climbing light, Climbing light vines to heaven, Clay ribbons descend, Swirl downwards against”. Towards the end of the song it seems to shift to be more about continuing to push forwards in life in the memories of others, despite the confusing nature of existence. **10/10**

### **Closing thoughts**

Ordinary Corrupt Human Love is one of my favorite releases in the last decade and a perfect starting point for those looking to get into the genres of black metal, post metal, and blackgaze. I have listened to this album many times and can thoroughly say that it is near perfect and deserves so much more recognition than it gets. With powerful ideas and lyrics in the songs, strong composition and beautiful rhythms, powerful vocals and emotional highs and lows, while also containing my favorite song that I have ever heard, OCHL sits high on my list of favorite albums.

**9.4/10**