



See Blue Audio – Press Release

'Cold Sleet on Old Slate'
Isolated Community
See Blue Audio SBA #029

- 1. Rumbling Kern**
- 2. Riven Ash**
- 3. In and Down**
- 4. Cold Sleet on Old Slate**
- 5. Long Nanny Saltmarsh**

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See Blue Audio: ambient / electronic / beatless / cinematic / downtempo / eclectic / introspective... Shade rather than light...

In the bleak midwinter, as the winter solstice and shortest day of the year approaches, at a time of ghosts and spirits... See Blue Audio acknowledges this time of desolation but also celebration with a suitably wintery collection of music to end the year. For the twenty-ninth release on the label, Isolated Community were invited to capture the seasonal changes marking the onset of winter, and they have done so with 'Cold Sleet on Old Slate' featuring five tracks that draw inspiration from the Northumberland coast and the North Sea.

Isolated Community are the duo of Rachael Talbot Dunn and Richard Dunn based in Newcastle upon Tyne, and they have established a strong reputation for their distinctive version of experimental ambient music over the course of five albums on their own Northumberland Audio Capture imprint. The most recent of these, 'The View Contains the Viewer', released in October 2021 in conjunction with Hreám Recordings, and many of its musical forms and ideas continue into 'Cold Sleet on Old Slate'. As the artists' experiences of rural dystopia inspired their earlier albums, so the windswept landscapes of North East England have played a central role in the creation of this music. As the title suggests, these are hard and unforgiving surroundings, but also rich in contrast and steeped in history.

The collection opens with 'Rumbling Kern' where field recordings taken from a hidden cove on the Northumberland coast provide the backdrop for swirling collisions of mood and sound. Over nine minutes long, it sets the scene for 'Cold Sleet on Old Slate' transporting the listener to a strange weather-beaten land where light flickers through shadow, and distant echoes from the past seep into the present. The musical ethos of See Blue Audio is all about shade rather than light, and 'Rumbling Kern' is the perfect encapsulation of this.

'Riven Ash' follows as the music takes on a more mysterious quality and the ghosts that inhabit this area make their presence known. Sombre strings combine with ascending tones to create an almost mystical sense of invocation. By way of contrast, 'In and Down' brings us back to harsh reality, while also providing a kind of solace with its simple piano refrain and machine-like noises. Throughout 'Cold Sleet on Old Slate', the beatless soundscapes that so evocatively portray the elemental nature of this area are interwoven with recordings of the opening and closing of wooden gates, footsteps on coastal paths, and the North Sea crashing against rocks.

The dramatic tension of title track takes the music in another direction once again with manipulated strings and waves of synthesizer sounds. Shade transforms into light before returning to shade as a cautionary reminder of the passing of time, and ghostly voices reappear. The concluding 'Long Nanny Saltmarsh', an area where the river meets the sea at Beadnell Bay and designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty, provides some calm after the proceeding storms, and time for reflection as so often happens in the presence of the sea. A distant rumble remains, however, in the certain knowledge that the forces of nature are ever-changing.

As 2021 draws to a close, Isolated Community have created an accomplished, powerful and eloquent soundtrack to the changing seasons. At times otherworldly elegant and subtly melodic, it is also rooted in drone, industrial and cinematic sensibilities, and channels the energies of both the nature and supernatural world. See Blue Audio is honoured to present 'Cold Sleet on Old Slate' as a winter offering.