

*Ghosts in the Garden*, the gorgeous and searching new album from Kris Delmhorst, is a layered, kaleidoscopic meditation on grief, loss, and fate. Inhabiting the songs are a host of vivid spirits made tangible: the departed and the disappeared, sins and their consequences; lost loves, missed chances, and the invisible sorrows that accompany us all. With richly observed details and finely calibrated emotional range, Delmhorst finds the wavelength that illuminates these multitudes. Having summoned them, she doesn't avert her eyes from her ghosts – or ours – but invites them into an expansive conversation about the ways we're shaped by loss, and woven together by unseen threads of love.

Working at Great North Sound Society, a studio built into an 18th-century Maine farmhouse that no doubt harbors ghosts of its own, Delmhorst tracked live with a core band of Ray Rizzo on drums, Jeremy Moses Curtis on bass, and Erik Koskinen on guitars. Engineer Sam Kassirer added keys, and Rich Hinman contributed pedal steel. An illustrious procession of guest vocalists – Anaïs Mitchell, Rose Cousins, Anna Tivel, Ana Egge, Taylor Ashton, Rachel Baiman, Jabe Beyer, and Jeffrey Foucault – brings prismatic brilliance to the tracks, refracting the individual slant of each song's light.

The stories on this record unfold from the inside out like fables, sketching archetypal characters – a fisherman recalling details of a life tethered to the margins, a soldier remembering the universe of a single day and night of love – and transforming them into proxies for our own hauntings. The darkly hypnotic “Wolves” reckons with the mortality of parents, the ordinary and inevitable orphaning that we all face. *“I see wolves / circling the fire / circling the fire with their yellow eyes,”* Delmhorst sings, steadying and challenging us to meet death's gaze with respect, before posing the album's central question: *“Do you really love the story if you don't love the end?”*

The eponymous ghosts of the title track – who turn up not only in the garden but on the road and in the kitchen, in songs and at the bar – recount a dear friend's expansive last days, departing the corporeal world surrounded by a houseful of loved ones, music and stories, unguarded tears and wild laughter. It's a gathering of spirits, the brief and holy moment when the door between worlds is open, and it is from this place that the album's journey unfolds.

Some elegies are more collective than personal: “Won’t Be Long,” a jangly, agitated rocker, uses the queasy restlessness of the pandemic years to indict our blind impulse toward self-destructive greed, while the gentle, rolling groove of “Age of Innocence” delivers matter-of-fact reportage from a future ghost, tallying the inevitable wages of our excess.

From the weatherworn longing of “Lucky River,” to “Something to Show” and its insomniac prayer for insight, *Ghosts in the Garden* explores the hidden country of grief, a land we all inhabit together but often navigate alone. Within this tender and urgent collection of songs, Delmhorst offers a place in the wilderness to gather for solace and communion: “*everyone’s here / no one’s gone.*”

#### ABOUT KRIS DELMHORST

Kris Delmhorst is an American songwriter, singer, instrumentalist, and producer. Over more than 25 years as an independent artist, she has built a body of work characterized by a wide-ranging, genre-agnostic curiosity and constant collaboration. In addition to nine critically acclaimed studio albums, she’s written music for films and TV, produced albums for Session Americana and Jeremy Moses Curtis, contributed instrumentation and vocals to scores of other artists’ work, and performed thousands of shows across the US and Europe. Kris Delmhorst lives in western Massachusetts with her husband, the songwriter Jeffrey Foucault, and their daughter.

“bold and brilliant” - *Irish Times*

“literate and allusive” - *Boston Globe*

“moody, euphoric and transcendent” - *LA Times*