

Singer, guitarist, and folk music interpreter Jake Xerxes Fussell has distinguished himself as one of his generation's preeminent interpreters of traditional (and not so traditional) "folk" songs, a practice which he approaches with a refreshingly unfussy lack of nostalgia. By recontextualizing ancient vernacular songs and sources of the American South, he allows them to breathe and speak for themselves and for himself; he alternately inhabits them and allows them to inhabit him. In all his work, Fussell humanizes his material with his own profound curatorial and interpretive gifts, unmooring stories and melodies from their specific eras and origins and setting them adrift in our own waterways. The robust burr of his voice, which periodically melts and catches at a particularly tender turn of phrase, and the swung rhythmic undertow of exquisite, seemingly effortless guitar-playing pull new valences of meaning from ostensibly antique songs and subjects.

Fussell's new album *Good and Green Again* is set for release on Jan 21, 2022 via Paradise of Bachelors. Produced by James Elkington, *Good and Green Again* navigates fresh sonic and compositional landscapes and is his most conceptually focused and breathtakingly rendered to-date. Fussell and Elkington enlisted a group of formidable players hailing from Durham, North Carolina (where Fussell lives) and elsewhere, including regular bandmembers Casey Toll on upright bass, Libby Rodenbough on strings, and Nathan Golub on pedal steel. They were joined by welcome newcomers Joe Westerlund (Megafaun, Califone) on drums, Joseph Decosimo on fiddle, Anna Jacobson on brass, and Bonnie "Prince" Billy, who contributes additional vocals.

If overall *Good and Green Again* sounds a little sadder and slower than Fussell's past records, well, maybe we're all a little sadder and slower these days. A smoldering mood of regret and loss pervades, a distinct vibe of vanitas. But three airy instrumentals, all Fussell originals, punctuate the program, offering respite and light in the form of crisp, shuffling play-party tunes, each in turn somewhat more hopeful and exuberant than the last. Their resemblance to lullabies is, perhaps, not coincidental. Fussell and his partner welcomed their first child into the world during the making of *Good and Green Again*. These lovely songs bear that promise in letters of bright gold.