

Built to Spill – *There is No Enemy*

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The new [Built to Spill](#) album is called *There is No Enemy*. Before I listened, I was under the impression that I was about to embark on a journey of rainbows and happy faces. Then I saw the album cover and expected something a bit different perhaps. Maybe something deep and dreamy, resonating the idea that everything is going to be just fine. Finally, I let it into my ears and realized that, no, everything was not going to be fine. For an album called *There is No Enemy*, this album sure has a lot of somewhat depressing insights into the human experience.

I was right about the deep and dreamy, though. Musically, it's shimmery guitar work is captivating as in any of their prior releases. It also has the odd distinction of a slightly new production style. With the exception of their earliest works, most of their stuff

sounds like it's coming down from a mountain. This one sounds kind of like it was recorded in [Doug Martsch's](#) den. The drums are softly implied and the vocals...well...they might have been recorded in the bathroom. This does not detract, though, at all. On the contrary, it seems more personal and simplistic. This album is for you.

So what kind of things do they have to say to you on this go around? Basically that everything is a mess, everyone has been a bit misled through history and nothing is going to sustain forever. Perhaps the most jarring of these assertions comes in the song "[Things Fall Apart](#)," which boasts a fantastic [horn](#) solo. Affecting and prolific, Martsch deduces, "If no one thinks of no one / Then no one believes in no one / And no one fucks with no one / Then no one's afraid of no one / We've all seen enough, now it's time to decide / The meekness of love or the power of pride / It doesn't matter if you're good or smart / God damn it, things fall apart." He gives the impression that he doesn't just believe it, he *knows* it...and it's been on his mind a lot.

All of these fantastically somber lyrics come painted on music that does not cover any new terrain for the band. Everything drifts along pointedly and profoundly, which is to be expected for Built to Spill. The guitar work is strong and detailed and, as usual, repeated listens expose subtle nuances in the music. Yeah. It's [Built to Spill](#). You know what to expect. It's good. It's safe. You can trust it and get a lot of quality time out of it. Just watch out for the bite of those lyrics, damn it.

So given those lyrics, why *do* they call it *There is No Enemy*? Well, this is where the poetry of it all is tied together in a neat little package. I'm pretty sure that the reason the album is called *There is No Enemy* is because all of these human faults and emotions which are brought to the center are pertaining to *all* of us. Generalized pronouns such as "everyone" and "no one" are abundant here. Our fears are internal and our fates are eternal. There is no enemy because we're all trudging through the harshness of life together.