

Jim O'Rourke – *The Visitor*

by [admin](#) on Oct.16, 2009, under [Good Music](#)



[Jim O'Rourke](#) pretty much does whatever the hell he wants and more power to him. His production style always feels warm and eccentric, regardless of what he is touching. And yet his roster of things he has touched is rather eclectic. He has produced the likes of [Wilco](#), [Kahimi Karie](#), [Stereolab](#) and [Joanna Newsom](#), to name a few. He has scored film by [Werner Herzog](#). He's been a full fledged member of [Gastr Del Sol](#), [Loose Fur](#) and [Sonic Youth](#). He played for the [Merce Cunningham](#) Dance Company. He's pumped out almost two dozen solo albums. He's received grants and a Grammy. Now he lives in Tokyo, Japan and, to reiterate, he does whatever the hell he wants.

And again...more power to him.

His newest solo effort, recorded in his Tokyo apartment but sounding much larger, is called simply, [The Visitor](#). It is one long and ever evolving track, clocking in at about thirty-eight minutes. The standard O'Rourke fare is ever present. There are clean, acoustic guitars, delicately touched piano keys, soft ambiance, 70's era electric guitar flourishes, darkish downturns, distant pedal steel sounds, and touches of driving beats with an emphasis on snare rolls. Yep. It's all there and eloquently arranged as always.

The tone of the piece may perhaps go through the perceived emotions felt through the duration of the title visitor's visit. That's just the obvious assumption, though, and the true intent is between O'Rourke and his music. Suffice it to say that the work changes its colors several times through its duration. As best I can figure, there is an undercurrent of longing that seems to hold the whole thing together. It's dotted along the way with moments mostly comprised of whimsy or mystery, and a sense of intense satisfaction just before the longing and sentiment return for the very end.

It's a powerful arrangement of sounds. It would serve well as background music, though to fully appreciate it takes a few close and purposeful listens. There are no vocal parts, but it *feels* as though dialogue is being traded somewhere in the mix. I suggest a dark and quiet room when you are ready to tune in. You'll have to make a trip to the record store first, though. There are no digital sales of this one.