

MARGO CILKER'S "VALLEY OF HEART'S DELIGHT"

ROLLING STONE

"As a songwriter, *Valley of Heart's Delight* represents a profound leap forward, exploring darker territory that both sharpens and widens her scope as a storyteller."

UNCUT

"Country rock's new star delivers superlative second album"

THE FADER

"Cilker's writing has an impressively clear-eyed view while her voice reflects her emotions with a winning honesty."

STEREOGUM

"She's a remarkable lyricist carving out her own space within a grand tradition, always subverting Americana tropes or finding ways to make them feel new. Every time I listen through *Valley Of Heart's Delight*, another exceptional line jumps out at me."

AMERICAN SONGWRITER

"Cilker proves herself to be one of our finest and most literate songwriters, one whose physical and psychological distance from the pressures of Nashville seems to be at least partially tied to her artistic triumphs."

Valley Of Heart's Delight refers to a place where Cilker can't return: California's Santa Clara Valley, as it was known before the orchards were paved over and became more famous for Silicon than apricots. She is the fifth generation of her namesake born there, and in this 11-song collection, produced by Sera Cahoone, family and nature intertwine as guiding motifs, at once precious and endangered, beautiful and exhausting. Cilker moved from California to the Pacific Northwest in her mid-twenties and wrote much of *Valley Of Heart's Delight* while living in Enterprise, Oregon, a small town near the Snake River and powered by the river's massive, publicly-funded hydroelectric dams. *Valley Of Heart's Delight* feeds off of this tension - how we live in and off of nature, how we live within and without family, and why we return to the places we were born.

"I wrote these songs surrounded by the wild landscapes of the Northwest, but I was leaning toward the place I'd come from. I felt cut off from my family and the valley that held them. I spent hours thinking about my sense of belonging. I'd traveled through many places and then, when the travel stopped, I ruminated on where I had ended up. Where were you when the music stopped? I was in Enterprise, OR. And there in Enterprise, my mind drifted back to the Valley of Heart's Delight."

I wrote about family — about death and rebirth, and the arcs of love and art through a family line. There are songs that hint at missteps and redemption. There are songs about trees: in orchard rows, family trees, redwoods. And water: agricultural runoff, wild rivers, dammed rivers, baptismal flows. And there's a [cover] song about a fish, cause it's a damn good song and I wanted to record it."

Valley Of Heart's Delight follows Cilker's critically acclaimed *Pohorylle* debut, which resulted in a profile by **NPR's All Things Considered** for "bridging the urban-rural divide through music" and was listed among the "Best Country Albums of 2021" by **Stereogum**, **No Depression**, **The Boot**, **Glide Magazine**, and more. **Pitchfork** called the record "a vivid introduction to this country artist who pushes against conventions of the genre that don't fit her perspective," and **Rolling Stone** added, "Cilker shows that she is as interested in reinvigorating Southern country-folk storytelling tropes as she is in exposing their flaws."