



**MERGE**  
RECORDS

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#### TRACK LISTING:

##### SIDE A

1. Balthazar's Song
2. No Lord Is Free
3. Bad Debt
4. O Little Light
5. Straw Man Red Sun River Gold
6. Far Bright Star

##### SIDE B

7. The Serpent Is Kind (Compared to Man)
8. Call Him Daylight
9. Jesus Shot Me in the Head
10. Super Blue (Two Days Clean)
11. Roll River Roll

M.C. Taylor recorded this spiritually devastating, austere antecedent to the widely celebrated Hiss Golden Messenger albums *Haw* (2013) and *Poor Moon* (2011) direct to a portable cassette recorder at the kitchen table of his pine-entwined home in rural Piedmont North Carolina in 2010. It was the dead of winter and the pit of the financial crisis, a moment when the dire ramifications of debt—in its economic, political, and personal senses—had assumed a rank immediacy and terror for many working people around the world, not least of all in the American South. Taylor, his one-year old boy Elijah sleeping in the next room, was compelled to chart the sacred valences of debt, doubt, and family in fresh ways, in the process stripping bare and reinventing his songwriting idiom. In his own words:

*Bad Debt comes from ten dense acres of oak, cedar, and apple trees in Pittsboro, North Carolina, directly south of the Haw River. The house where it was made was built in the early 1970s by a hippie cohort that settled along Brooks Branch; though this may sound like some kind of brag, I offer this to explain just how cold it was during the fall and winter when this record was conceived. Most hippies—except for the most famous one, of course, and probably a few others—are shit carpenters.*

*The record is about my God: that is, whether I have one, and whether there is a place for me in this world. I don't go to church, and I am not saved. I can party too. I can do a saxophone now and again, bang the drum. Bad Debt was my revelation, and there are many for whom I'll never make a record better than this one.*

*Ruminating on the riddle of faith, a firstborn son, and thorny existential questions large and small, the album laid the lyrical and compositional foundations for HGM's critically acclaimed releases to come. Half of these domestic devotional songs appear elsewhere in the HGM discography in radically reinvented arrangements and permutations—Taylor's writing practice revealed itself following Bad Debt as essentially iterative, the deliberate enunciation and re-articulation of koans—but they exist here in germinal, psalmic purity and economy, as unadorned and plain and perfectly ragged as the cedar floorboards in that Brooks Branch cabin.*

*Bad Debt* remastered by Chris Boerner at Kitchen Mastering. Artwork reimaged by Sam Smith (*Lateness of Dancers*).

MRG 623

## Hiss Golden Messenger

### *Bad Debt* (reissue)



67385506231 0

LP



67385506232 7

CD

2018 November 2

vinyl is non-returnable

**Box Lot:** CD 40 / LP 25  
**UPC:** CD is 673855062327  
LP is 673855062310  
**Format:** CD is debossed wallet + printed insert  
LP is debossed jacket + printed insert + LP3 coupon  
**File Under:** Alternative  
**Export:** World excluding North America