



# Okkervil River

## I Am Very Far

[www.okkervilriver.com](http://www.okkervilriver.com)

### Tracklist

1. The Valley
2. Piratess
3. Rider
4. Lay of the Last Survivor
5. White Shadow Waltz
6. We Need a Myth
7. Hanging from a Hit
8. Show Yourself
9. Your Past Life as a Blast
10. Wake and Be Fine
11. The Rise

"The goal was to push my brain to places it didn't want to go. The idea was to not have any idea - to keep myself confused about what I was doing," frontman Will Sheff says about Okkervil River's newest album. The resulting record, 'I Am Very Far,' is a startling break from anything this band has done before. By turns terrifying and joyous, violent and serene, grotesque and romantic, it's a celebration of forces beyond our control.

On 'I am Very Far,' Sheff emerges not only as a songwriter of the highest caliber, but a producer and arranger of singular vision. Abandoning the tidy conceptual arcs of Okkervil River's previous albums, 'I am Very Far' is a monolithic, darkly ambiguous work, one that doesn't readily offer up its secrets.

Work on 'I am Very Far' started in early 2009, after a year spent on the music of others. Sheff contributed vocals to The New Pornographer's album 'Together,' wrote a song for Norah Jones' 'The Fall,' and helmed the Roky Erickson record 'True Love Cast Out All Evil,' for which his album notes received a GRAMMY nomination. Immediately upon wrapping up work and leaving Erickson's company, Sheff drove to his home state of New Hampshire for lengthy isolated writing sessions. "I wanted to go back home and re-start writing again, like I'd never written a song previously," he says, "and I wanted the music and lyrics to be both completely wedded together and a little bit beyond my control."

Sheff emerged from the writing process with 30 or so songs, which he narrowed down to 18. In contrast to Okkervil River's usual practice of holing up in one studio for months on end, he opted for a series of short, high-intensity sessions, each in a different location, each employing completely different methods than the one before it. For songs like "Rider" and "Wake and Be Fine," Sheff gathered together a massive version of Okkervil River - two drummers, two pianists, two bassists, and seven guitarists, all playing live in one room - and led them on a week of live-in-the-studio marathon session, performing a single song obsessively over and over for as many as 12 hours to capture just the right take. Finishing the record from home, Sheff constantly edited and reworked the album, reinventing the song structures, re-recording vocals, re-writing until the very last minute, reshaping even the tiniest of details, ultimately creating an album that plays not only as a lush, seamless epic, but also as the most deeply personal effort of his career.

What can listeners expect? Richer and weirder than 'The Stage Names' and deeper and moodier than even 'Black Sheep Boy,' 'I am Very Far' is dense, fragmented, opaque. A reverie of uncertainty, it feels at once disorienting and oddly familiar, threatening and friendly. Okkervil River have thrown away all maps and compasses but they continue to chart their way, unblinking, toward destinations unknown.



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