REVIEW · BLUES

No Reason | Sunny War

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The music runs. The voice tells of a struggle that is not over yet. Between the brisk pace of the track and the weight of the words a crack opens; all the tension comes in through it, **crack**, like a door that gives way but does not swing open.

Sunny War, born Sydney Ward, has been through punk, life on the street, addiction and long stretches of deep precarity. Punk is part of her formation, not an image added later. Her personal fingerpicking and the models she has named, Nina Simone, Elliott Smith and Bill Withers, reveal songwriting that grew up between different languages, like a road crossing many paths.

The second track on *Anarchist Gospel*, the 2023 album produced by Andrija Tokic, *No Reason* is about the effort of becoming a better version of yourself and the guilt that comes when you fail. Asked who the "beast" in the song is, War answered: herself. She has also connected the song to isolation, depression and self-harm.

The contrast hits at once: the music has energy, while the story circles an inner conflict. This is not despair pushed into the background. It is the movement of someone trying not to stay still inside it, as if every chord were a step out of a locked room. The voice looks at its own self-destructive side without pretending that naming it is enough to make it vanish. The rhythm runs like an engine idling in the night: **vroom, vroom**, promising no easy road.

The album title also holds a contradiction open: *Anarchist*, the refusal of order; *Gospel*, the longing for salvation. Sunny War does not find a synthesis that cancels the conflict. She lets it live in the song, between push and collapse, between guilt and attempt: a flame that trembles, crackles and keeps burning. Her voice is **raw, restless, resilient, intense and vulnerable**, like a taut string that vibrates without snapping.

The blues does not say the problem has been overcome. It lets you hear the work it takes to keep trying.

> ***Does accepting your own self-destructive side mean forgiving it, or finally starting to take responsibility for it?***

LISTEN

No Reason — Sunny War — is in our playlist Acoustic Blues, Roots & Dust.

Sunny War. Updated every Friday. Selected by ear.

LISTEN FIRST. SELECT SECOND.