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Kris Kristofferson - *This Old Road* (New West)

by J. Poet

Movie star, political activist, Country Music Hall of Famer, Grammy winner, and Rhodes Scholar—Kris Kristofferson has packed a lot of living into his 69 years of life. No matter what's going on in his life, however, he always returns to songwriting, the craft that got him started on his amazing journey. *This Old Road* is his first new album of original tunes in over a decade, and it's one of the most profound, affecting collections of his career, with tunes that can stand side by side with anything he's ever cut. Kristofferson's stentorian drawl is one of the most unique in popular music and it perfectly fits the mood of this album, an insightful meditation on love, loss, limitation, aging, and of course, freedom. He's addressed these topics before, and while the anger and passion are still intact, it's tempered by some hard-earned wisdom. "Pilgrim's Progress" is a jaunty tune that sings the praises of old age and a life well lived while praying for enough strength to lend a hand to those still in need. "Chase The Feeling" is a dark blues about drugs and alcohol without the romantic patina Kristofferson often gave the subject when he was younger. This time he stares the devil in the face without blinking or winking, acknowledging the toll self-destruction takes on those who love the addict. "In The News" is a scathing indictment of the current administration delivered with just voice and guitar, one of the album's most moving moments. Don Was produces with a light hand, building

quiet arrangements around Kristofferson's voice and guitar. Keeping the volume low gives the performances an immediate, confessional feel, like a conversation with an old friend. May we all age with so much grace and good sense.