



NORMANOAK

BORN A BLACK DIAMOND

Catalog Number: SC094 Format: CD

Release Date: July 20, 2004 Barcode #: 656605009421

1. The Curse 2. It Is Impossible 3. Watching Your House Burn 4. Even the Golden Child 5. Baby Trees 6. Our Place In The Sky 7. Sun Enters Capricorn 8. Here They Are 9. Changing My Course 10. How Do You Stay Sane? 11. Slow Explosion 12. The Wild Itch 13. Born Again 14. The Ballad of NormanOak

NormanOak is **Chris Barth**. *Born A Black Diamond* is NormanOak's debut — a wind chipped, folk meditation on the universe's creation, mycology, the Tree of Life and a bit of **Aleister Crowley** mysticism. NormanOak has taken the form of a glacier, a coyote, and a woodpecker over the past few centuries, and now he has decided it was time to sing and play for the world.

Born A Black Diamond was recorded over the 2002-2003 winter while NormanOak's band **the Impossible Shapes** (in which he is the songwriter, lead vocalist, and plays guitar) were sequestered in the forest outside of **Bloomington, Indiana**, recording their fourth album *We Like It Wild*. *Born A Black Diamond* was recorded during the evening down-times onto cassette tapes in various hallways, bedrooms, and basements that were ceremoniously charged with magickal energy following each session. It is a self-recorded time capsule with only a little help from whoever happened to be supplying that night. As a fervent backpacker and wayward trail guide, NormanOak was able to employ a host of wild animal dealers and friends on these recordings to bring them to life, such as Eric "The Panther" on vocals and Andrew "The Black Bear" on drums, among others.

Though sharing a lot of the same themes, *Born A Black Diamond* is a more meandering and spontaneous record than the decidedly methodical *We Like It Wild*. Barth takes a similar free-spirited hippie wanderer approach on *Born a Black Diamond* that psychedelic forefathers like **Donovan** and **Marc Bolan's Tyrannosaurus Rex** took a few decades earlier, a time when NormanOak was pecking the trees. Though inside the strums and animal claws, there is a complexity, a sap that has flown from the leaves of **Ya Ho Wa 13** and **Robert Wyatt**. He takes great pride in his use of the 4-track (which has been squashed over the past several years due to the ubiquity of digital recording), which may be enjoying a renaissance of sorts as like-minded artists like **Iron & Wine**, **Devendra Banhart** and **The Blithe Sons** have been making champions of albums with its use in the past two years. On *Born A Black Diamond* NormanOak makes this aural nature scene complete, not with field recordings but by harnessing his unique primal call of voice and guitar into a gently rippling wind of freedom and change.

Selling Points

1. First album by Chris Barth as NormanOak, lead vocalist, guitarist and primary songwriter of the Impossible Shapes, who have released four albums (on Secretly Canadian and Recordhead/Mr. Whiggs) and toured the States extensively over the past four years with **Songs: Ohia**, **June Panic** and **John Wilkes Booze**.

2. Barth also plays bass guitar in **John Wilkes Booze**, whose album *Five Pillars of Soul* was released on **Kill Rock Stars** in April.

3. Two different solo albums by two members of the Impossible Shapes are being released simultaneously and should result in additional exposure for the two respective albums: Chris Barth's NormanOak *Born A Black Diamond* and **Aaron Deer's Horns of Happiness A Sea As A Shore**.

Also Available

The Impossible Shapes *The Current* LP (SAINT04)

The Impossible Shapes *We Like It Wild* CD/LP (SC85)



SECRETLY CANADIAN
1499 W. 2nd St.
Bloomington, Indiana 47403
www.secretlycanadian.com

For distribution contact Sarah at:
(812) 335-1572 telephone
(812) 323-8494 fax
sarah@scdistribution.com

