

## The First Day Of Spring

*The sky might be massive up above,  
but it's not as blue as love...*

Is there a song more finer than The First Day Of Spring by Graham Parker? Tucked at the end of a largely ignored album, 12 Haunted Episodes (released in 1995), this acoustic ballad has all the intensity of earlier Parker greats, such as You Can't Be Too Strong or Passion Is No Ordinary Word, yet very few people seem to have heard it.

How can one man write so many songs of such beauty and still seem so invisible? Many, of course, will remember the "hits": Hey Lord, Don't Ask Me Questions, Hotel Chambermaid, or his spirited cover of The Tramps' Hold Back The Night. Or the the pub rock sound of his earliest works: White Honey, Soul Shoes and Heat Treatment. Classics, all. They still sound good today.

With the fourth Graham Parker and the Rumour LP in 1979, Squeezing Out Sparks, came You Can't Be Too Strong (the first of many aching beautiful acoustic numbers featured throughout his career). But, these days, you hardly ever hear GP on the radio. It's a mystery! Why isn't Parker's Struck By Lightning album ever included in those All-Time Top 100 Albums lists?

I wake today (a cold, grey Sunday in early December) and play again The First Day Of Spring. Of course, it doesn't have to be springtime to enjoy this fabulous song. Whatever the season, this is a song of great optimism and courage. In times of darkness, it offers some light. "*Come out of the bitter wind,*" GP tells us. Indeed, tomorrow could well be the first day of spring.

Clive, 07.12.08

