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Tom Phillips
High Flyer
Rating: ★★★ out of four

First of all, yes, the Men of Constant Sorrow are missed on Tom Phillips' solo album, *High Flyer*. Phillips is a master of honky tonk twang and tear-in-your-beer sorrow any way you slice it, but his backup band adds a potency to the heartache and the yearning that's hard to say goodbye to.

That said, the Calgary singer songwriter's barebones strummer *High Flyer* has much to offer.

The catchy folk of *Lighter Load*, the outlaw country sentiment of *Cars and Women*, and the lyrically touching *Sinkin' Fast* are among the best songs of Phillips' career.

Meanwhile, one *Man of Constant Sorrow*, Charlie Veilleux still turns up with his achingly soulful pedal steel guitar work and guitarist Kit Johnson fleshes out Phillips' tunes throughout. And guitarist Oscar Lopez shows up to add a tasty Latino touch to *I'm Cursed* and *Twilight*, two more standouts on an album full of standouts.

— Heath McCoy