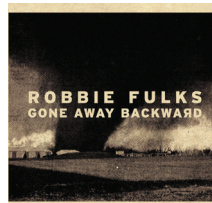


## REVIEWS

## ROBBIE FULKS

*Gone Away Backward*

[Bloodshot]

Smartass singer-songwriter Robbie Fulks has been a fixture in the alt-country scene for nearly two decades, penning clever and catchy songs about everything from patricide to Susanna Hoffs, lead singer of the Bangles. On *Gone Away Backward*, his first album since *Happy*, his 2011 tribute to Michael Jackson, Fulks trades twangy Telecaster and pedal steel for the acoustic sounds of folk and bluegrass. Backed by a stellar band that includes Mike Bub, Ron Spears, Jenny Scheinman and Robbie Gjersoe, this natural-born storyteller effortlessly depicts nuanced characters like the downwardly mobile protagonist of “I’ll Trade You Money for Wine,” and a failed singer who, after embracing Music City sheen in a bid for stardom, realizes “Sometimes the Grass Is Really Greener” and returns to his mountain roots. Fulks and his band show off their picking prowess on a pair of traditional instrumentals, and while *Gone Away Backward* is planted in the rich soil of acoustic roots music, Fulks tackles many modern issues. “Where I Fell,” about the decline of small-town America, isn’t the most uplifting song of the summer, but it’s certainly the most captivating. —Juli Thanki

**‘On *Gone Away Backward*, his first album since *Happy*, his 2011 tribute to Michael Jackson, Fulks trades twangy Telecaster and pedal steel for the acoustic sounds of folk and bluegrass. It is planted in the rich soil of acoustic roots music.’**

