

= Toil (album) =

Toil is a studio album by the Chicago Celtic punk band Flatfoot 56 , released on August 14 , 2012 , by Paper + Plastick . The release is the fourth studio album released by the group since they were signed by a label . Johnny Rioux , a member of the Celtic punk band Street Dogs , returned as the producer .

The album was released to generally favorable reviews . Critics and fans enjoyed the album 's diversity of sound and song writing . Reviewers described the album 's songs as working @-@ class anthems with Christian themes . The final track on the album , a Celtic punk cover of the hymn " I'll Fly Away " , was well received by music critics . The album produced one single , " I Believe It " , that was released as a music video . Both the album and the single failed to chart . The track " Winter in Chicago " was featured on the soundtrack for the video game Watch Dogs .

= = Background and recording = =

While on tour in 2011 , Flatfoot 56 played at Summerfest in Milwaukee with Less than Jake . Less than Jake drummer Vinnie Fiorello , owner of Paper + Plastick , saw the band play and was impressed by their energy and performance . When he discovered that the band was looking for a record label , he offered to sign them .

Johnny Rioux , who had produced Flatfoot 56 's last album , Black Thorn , was chosen as the album 's producer . The band felt that having the same producer improved communication and allowed the band to work more freely . According to frontman Tobin Bawinkel , this familiarity allowed Rioux to encourage the band to advance musically and think differently . During January 2012 , the band recorded the entire album at the Atlas Studios in Chicago , Illinois .

= = Writing and composition = =

The album 's lyrics have been described as an anthemic examination of the struggles of the American working class and politically liberal . Along with highlighting the struggles of blue @-@ collar America , the lyrics portray the idea that there is hope even when things appear to be bleak and that giving up is not an option . While there are Christian themes throughout the songs , neither Christian nor secular reviewers found them to be preachy .

" Brother , Brother " , the first song on the album , is inspired by the band members ' experience with the drug use of friends . Bawinkel stated in an interview that " a bunch of the tunes cover what we wanted to say to them during those times [when friends returned to using drugs] . " Michael Weaver , writing for Jesus Freak Hideout , interpreted the song as an attempt to convince this individual to turn his or her life around and return to the Christian faith . The next track , named " The Rich , The Strong and The Poor " , tells the story of three men looking for happiness . The first tries to find it in money , but he returns unfulfilled . The second tries looking for happiness in physical strength . He believes that if he proves himself , that he will find peace . Like the first man , he ends up unfulfilled . The final man looks for happiness in basic life needs and likewise ends up in the same position as the first two men . Bawinkel explains that , " all three are very much in the same position in that happiness hasn't been found in chasing these various desires . There is something more which is hopeful for some and frustrating for others . "

The third song on the album , " I Believe It " , was the subject of the band 's only music video from Toil . The video shows the band singing the song acoustically in the studio , much like the version that is featured on the album . Instrumentally , the song is guitar @-@ driven and features the mandolin . The lyrics remind the listener to continue going forward even if it is painful . The song has been seen as symbol of the band 's faith . The title track , " Toil " , is an acoustic protest song that was compared by one reviewer to the Bruce Springsteen album Wrecking Ball . The lyrics tell the story of an unhappy , overworked , working @-@ class man . The song ends with the lyrics , " I'm a slave to that whistle call . I'm a slave . " The tenth song , " 6 ' 10 " " , is an alt @-@ country ballad that was written in response to people making jokes about Bawinkle 's height . The man depicted in

the track is six feet ten inches (2 @. @ 08 meters) tall and has to deal with people questioning him about why he does not play basketball .

= = Reception = =

Toil was received positively by reviewers , though the album and its single failed to chart . Absolute Punk 's reviewer commented that the album was " fun " and a " rabble @-@ rouser . " Jesus Freak Hideout 's reviewer thought Toil was Flatfoot 56 's best work to date and that the album showed the band improving with age . Innocent Words ' reviewer agreed with Jesus Freak Hideout 's assessment , while David Von Bader , from Consequence of Sound , felt that the album was a step towards broader appeal .

The final song on the album was well received by reviewers . The song , a Celtic punk cover of " I 'll Fly Away " , is the band 's take on a widely recorded traditional hymn . AMP Magazine 's reviewer called the cover " perfectly @-@ executed " . Danny Exyle , writing for Punk News , called the song a " crowd favorite " for fans of the band 's live show . Jesus Freak Hideout 's reviewer viewed the release of another hymn on one of Flatfoot 56 's albums very favorably ; the band had covered " Amazing Grace " on an earlier album . He concluded stating " anyone who thought hymns were boring [has] not heard a Flatfoot 56 rendition . "

= = Track listing = =

Brother , Brother - 2 : 32
The Rich , The Strong and The Poor - 3 : 09
I Believe It - 2 : 44
Take Hold Again - 3 : 28
Toil - 3 : 37
Live or Die Trying - 3 : 24
Work For Them - 2 : 15
Terrorizing Truth - 2 : 45
Strongman - 2 : 56
6 ' 10 - 2 : 32
This Time - 3 : 15
Winter In Chicago - 3 : 10
I 'll Fly Away - 2 : 44

= = Personnel = =

Personnel as listed on Allmusic :