

# BLENDER

OCTOBER 2008

**CALEXICO**  
CARRIED TO DUST

★★★★

TOUCH AND GO/QUARTERSTICK

**The best Western epic since  
*No Country for Old Men***

► Few bands convey a sense of place as deeply as Calexico—but they never stay in one spot very long. Named after a border town, this Arizona six-piece makes music about drifting from crumbling dance halls to off-the-grid cantinas, all richly evoked by Ennio Morricone guitars, mariachi horns and pedal steel. There's a loose story line to their sixth album, something about an L.A. writer who hits the highway and

passes through desert towns, swap meets and places where you better *habla Español*—imagine Belle and Sebastian dropped into the landscape of *No Country for Old Men*. In the end, though, Calexico's words, sometimes overcooked, are the least of it. From the way gently twanging guitar builds to toxic fuzz on "Man Made Lake" to the whistling in "El Gatillo" that nails the stranger-in-town vibe, the band's best stories are in their music.

RJ SMITH

**DOWNLOAD** "House of Valparaiso,"  
"Man Made Lake"