

How Coition Makes Existence Run

by A. U. Grimalkin

Ode to Procreation and *Ballad of Being Born* are two of nine tracks on *Backstage* (2025) by The Odd Ditties. One might note they follow a similar format in their names; "ode" and "ballad" are both specific types of songs, and then something relating to reproduction. This paper aims to analyze and suss out the implications of these similarities.

Ode to Procreation is a song about, primarily, sex, masturbation, and suicidality; these intertwine in deliciously psychologically foreboding ways. Namely, the bridge has the narrator, in reference to ejaculate, state that the "wasted seed" is alright due to no-one needing "more of these." Following this, the narrator states outright that they have no desire to "make more of [them] / they mean so little, they are so trivial!"

Most of the sexual language in *Ode* implies that it automatically leads to, or is only rightfully for, reproduction; the song is called *Ode to "Procreation,"* the narrator's existence is "all thanks to sex," ejaculation from masturbating is "wasted," and the song closes out with the narrator proclaiming they don't mean to be "crass," they just want to acknowledge how sex "makes existence run;" this is immediately followed by "ovens burst with buns," a metaphorical way to refer to pregnancy.

Existence running is an interesting turn of phrase with respect to the combined themes of progeny and suicide; this combination is also found in *Ballad of Being Born*.

On its face, *Ballad of Being Born* has nothing to do with birth or giving birth. The only relation to it is the fact its setting is a child's birthday party. Instead, the song is narrated by said child's drunk father, telling them that "everybody dies / you, your mom, and I / oh come on don't cry, it's your birthday." The song continues to be similarly morbid and death-focused from there. This narrator being someone's father is interesting, especially in comparison to *Ode's* own coupling of parenthood and death. *Ballad's* insistence is that death is inevitable and even "nigh;" the narrator already being a father can be taken as an inevitability as well, continuing this pattern.

There is something to chew on here with respect to *Ode*, considering its own narrator's complex opinion on sex/death; although the narrator proclaims they're "less acquainted than [they] would choose" with sex, they *only* associate sex with having children and starting a family; childrearing is viewed as an unnegotiable

milestone of adulthood throughout *Backstage*. Aging *has* to involve procreation and childrearing, the same way life *has* to end with dying. This is, perhaps, why the first words after "everybody dies" in *Ballad* include pointing out the birthday kid and their parents.

Birth/death as a juxtaposition is also notable in the b-side for the *Ode to Procreation* single, a cover of Elton John's *Circle of Life*. "It's the circle of life / And it moves us all" in particular fits the idea of existence running mentioned at the end of *Ode to Procreation*.

More generally, beginning/end is seen elsewhere in the album. *It's All Downhill From Here* and *My Room* both contain the line "'cause every end's just the beginning again;" besides being the opener and closer, respectively, they also describe the beginning and ending of a more childish era. *Downhill* begins with "the first song / we all sing / colic sobs / to Mom's beat," and *My Room* is about moving out of your childhood home. Although *My Room* doesn't deal with *death*, per se, it is *an* ending, which pairs with the birth (and beginning!) in *Downhill*.

Downhill connects back to inevitabilities of death and procreation when it comes to adulthood, albeit largely vaguely with "but I'm maturer than then / because now when I wet the bed / it's ejaculate instead!," with sex (and its *heavy* association with procreation) implicitly making someone more mature; the lines "And yet descends all downhill from here / I will die upon this hill" immediately follow.

In conclusion, *Ode to Procreation* and *Ballad of Being Born's* similarities are more than simply superficial, as both songs revolve around the coupling together of procreation and death; the more general coupling of beginnings and ends in *Backstage* is seen in these songs and beyond.

FURTHER READING

Grimalkin, A. U. *Before The Cynicism Wins! (Before The Pure is Putrid).*
The Odd Ditties. *Backstage.* Needlejuice Records, 2025.