



## ROUGH DRAFT

*"On each of the Rockumentary records there has been a song idea that connected everything together for me and felt like a giant hole in the track list until I figured it out. Snow Day was that idea for [Backstage]."* - Austin Ash Lemon, Sept. 2025

*"People are sick."* - Austin Ash Lemon, Dec. 2025

Throughout *Backstage* (2025) by The Odd Ditties, there's a recurring juxtaposition made between childhood, usually with the connotation of innocence, and some sort of stain. It's introduced early on in the opening track, *It's All Downhill From Here*, with "I wet my onesie, but I'm maturer than then/ Because, now when I wet the bed, it's ejaculate instead." Other instances of this juxtaposition are similarly sexual in nature: *Baby Goes Back* has a "slimy pile of fetishes," *Wake Up* has "My pizza slice's grease is wiped/ On jammies with an open fly." This instance is notable for tying into both *Ode to Procreation* and *Can't Wait!*. For the latter, it's subtler, but it's due to the specific food cited; "pizza-eating record holder" is one of the narrator's earlier, more unrealistic fantasies about adulthood.

The line in question comes at the tail end of the *Wake Up* narrator giving a public (they're a morning zoo host who's on air while this all happens) run-down on all the ways that they're barely fit to be an adult, much less a parent. This is all compounded by the narrator being a "decade older now" than their mom was when she gave birth to them at roughly 16. In this instance, stain motif is also associated with responsibility or a lack thereof.

It's fitting that the next song on the album is entirely about getting a day off of school, free of responsibility, as a kid.

*Wake Up* and *Snow Day* transition directly into each other. The narrator of *Wake Up* ends the song by getting ready to list school closures, and *Snow Day* begins with "the scrolling closures/ on the local morning show." Following these lines, we learn that "bacon stains pajama pants." Two lyrics into *Snow Day*, it's already obvious what the thesis of the song is. The entire song's about childhood being adulterated by and juxtaposed with becoming a grown-up.

*Snow Day* is also about appreciating every moment in life, as is explored elsewhere in *Backstage*. While the title track expresses the sentiment in a very morbid way ("Oh hey, we maybe should mention/ Every second you spend there/ Is one less you get before the dreaded tomb"), as it's repeated it becomes increasingly hopeful. The penultimate lines of the album, and the final iteration, are "All we ever get to live in/ Is the moment that we're in" in *My Room*, a song about growing up and leaving the nest, as it were.

In the title track, the seconds being spent "there" are spent in the womb (backstage, in the green room.) The more time the subject of *Backstage* spends sealed away from the world, the less time they'll have to actually live. *My Room* ends with the narrator leaving their room to go out into the world. *Snow Day* leans more positively with its iteration, telling you to cherish every moment you get. The narrator has presumably left their house to play out in the snow, such as making the snow angels mentioned later on, leaving the green room and going out into the world.

Despite this, *Snow Day* makes it very clear that this is where the narrator's life will peak, similarly to *It's All Downhill From Here*. The two songs convey the same idea of someone's life only getting continuously worse, but in entirely different ways. "You could live forever but it wouldn't get better than this" would normally be considered a hyperbolic statement, not the automatic indictment *Downhill* expresses with its chorus. The joy, "mirth" and freedom from responsibility that comes with a snow day will fade, until "some stormy December/ These grown-ups we sort of resemble/ Will see nothing special." In the context of a snow day, the immediate interpretation of "grown-ups we sort of resemble" is that it describes the narrator's parents, however it likely refers to the adult version of the narrator as well; exempt from the freedom of responsibility the snow day gives and completely unrecognizable to their child-self.

(This fits nicely with the transition from *Wake Up*. While the *Snow Day* narrator gets the day off, the former's narrator is actively at work and on the air, having to recount the very school closures celebrated in the latter.)

Returning to stain motif, it's somewhat abstractly employed when the snow is described as being "perfect like peanut butter/ Before the knife digs deep" in the following verse. These lines reference two cliches associated with childhood: firstly, the specific usage of peanut butter for the simile. It's a very 'childish' ingredient, being the main component of cafeteria lunch staple, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Secondly, it calls to mind the lines "caress the fading escalating lines/ Where mom would carve my height" in *My Room*, with measuring a growing kid's height being almost cartoonishly stereotypical.

Keeping on, the snow is described as being clean and perfect "but the sun is scheming to reveal the ground/ A couple snowplows/ And all of it will fade." This is reminiscent of an early line in *Wake Up*, "The rude shampoo and sun/ Collude to shove/ Pollutants into eyes," with the sun being anthropomorphized as scheming. Shampoo and snowplows would typically be viewed as doing a positive service, so it's interesting that in both instances they're negative impacts. It's especially striking that this would normally be considered cleaning, not staining.

Later on in the bridge, *Snow Day* takes a look into the future, after the joy of the snow day's long since faded: "Before you know it the hands of time/ Will trade a box of juice for a box of wine/ Before your eyes, your eyes will be older eyes/ Your snow angels will turn into chalk outlines." These are reminiscent of *It's All Downhill From Here*, specifically its lines "Then without consent/ My head just kept getting upraised! / 'Till I was adult size/ Absurdly, thirty seemed old/ but as I grow older/ The older older grows." Solidifying the ways *Snow Day* already serves as a prequel to *Downhill*, both songs describe growing up as an action done to the narrator (without their knowledge!) versus something the narrator does themselves.

They also bring the lyrics "It would be a lie, if I were to imply I'm qualified/ To be the guy a pair of eyes/ Tiny, spying, open wide/ Should analyze or scrutinize/ Or frighteningly idolize/ To pry advice to utilize/ To strive to go by my design" from *Wake Up* to mind, continuing the idea of the adult and child versions of the narrator essentially being different people.

(As an aside, the lyric "Your snow angels will turn into chalk outlines" symmetrically alludes to both childhood and death. Snow angels and drawing with chalk are both childhood activities, while chalk outlines and angels are both associated with death.)

Then, the penultimate verse, which distills the stain motif to its purest essence: "Grip this before it slips/ No day's quite so okay as/ Snow day/ Before the cynicism wins/ Before the pure is putrid." As you grow up, the cynicism wins and the purity of childhood is marred and stained, so just enjoy it while you can. As a cherry on top, the lines "You will scavenge after dragons/ Scratching savagely/ At some phantom itch." seem to allude to the phrase "chasing the dragon," a drug-related term meaning the fruitless chase of a high off a drug that's equivalent to the first time you used it. The narrator will spend the rest of their life chasing the high of this snow day.

Even within the song, the high seems to wear off. As it goes on, the way the snow day's described becomes increasingly neutral. The song starts with the narrator "lacking an adequate word/ To describe the extent of this mirth" and ends with it simply being "so okay." It's rather similar to how the narrator of *Can't Wait!*'s fantasies of being an adult get more realistic and eventually cynical.

The way *Can't Wait!* sees this evolution is most evident in the lines "Pizza eating record-holder/ Leading NASA space explorer/ As the moments flow/ Watch me grow and grow" (with those last two lines tying back to "before your eyes your eyes will be older eyes," no less), "I can't wait till I'm an adult/ (Baby molars all are removed)/ This phase will pass where I'm such a dolt/ (Trade stroller for a used Subaru)" and "Mortgage payments, brain disorders/ Engagements, babies, other horrors/ Oh, the things you'll fear/ As it shambles near;" the narrator goes from childish optimism to being more realistic to incredibly pessimistic and, in their own words, fearful. In being afraid of their future, the narrator's not able to enjoy the present as much, the exact thing this verse of *Snow Day* warns against.

"Standing on an ancient shoulder/ In the eye of the beholder/ As the thick fog clears/ Oh, dear God, it's here" are the lines that immediately follow the last example. Again, like *Downhill* and *Snow Day* do, *Can't Wait!*

poses growing up as something that's unknowingly been done to the narrator. "Standing on an ancient shoulder" specifically is an interesting turn of phrase. It references the aphorism "standing on the shoulders of giants," a metaphor for building on previous discoveries to make your own. This would mean "standing on an ancient shoulder" refers to building on someone else's age or maturity. Considering the "thick fog" described in the next line and the fact that the narrator of *Snow Day* as an adult is completely unrecognizable to their child-self, the "ancient shoulder" is likely that of *Can't Wait!*'s younger self.

The closing lines of *Snow Day* are the narrator telling you to "cherish every moment/ Every one you spend/ Is one less you get." I wouldn't count on them taking their own advice.

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