

*"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*

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 starts 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 due to the pizza reference; "pizza-eating record holder" is one of the narrator's earlier, more unrealistic fantasies about adulthood.

The pizza slice line comes at the tail end of the *Wake Up* narrator, a radio show host, giving an explanation on how 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 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, "bacon stains pajama pants." Without really getting into the meat and potatoes of *Snow Day*, it's already obvious what the thesis of the song is. The entire song's about childhood being juxtaposed with adulthood, and the idea of

childhood being tarnished by aging in a sense. (This is made explicit in no uncertain terms later in the song.)

*Snow Day* is also about appreciating every moment in life, which is seen 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 interestingly seems to get more hopeful. The penultimate lines of the album are "All we ever get to live in/ Is the moment that we're in" in *My Room*.

In *Backstage* the song, the seconds being spent "there" are spent in the womb (or, in the language of the song: backstage, in the green room.) Plainly, the more time the subject of *Backstage* spends sealed away from the world, the less time they'll have out in it overall. *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 also likely had to leave their house to play out in the snow— however, there's never any sort of stereotypical winter-play (e.g. building snowmen, sledding) alluded to, leaving it ambiguous.

Despite this, *Snow Day* makes it very clear that this is where the narrator's life will peak. This harkens back to *It's All Downhill From Here* in a sense. The two songs convey the same idea of someone's life only going to get worse from here, 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." While in the context of a snow day, the immediate interpretation of "grown-ups we sort of resemble" may be the narrator's parents, it also likely refers to the adult version of the

narrator. The grown-up narrator will have changed so much that they're almost entirely unrecognizable as the narrator.

(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.)

The stain motif makes an abstract return 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 as a simile. It's a very 'childish' ingredient, being the main component of a cafeteria lunch staple, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Secondly, it somewhat calls to mind the lines "caress the fading escalating lines/ Where mom would carve my height" in *My Room*, with measuring height as a kid grows up 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.

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 bring *It's All Downhill From Here* back to mind, especially 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.

Then, the penultimate verse, which makes most (if not everything) I've said here explicit: "Snow day/ Grip this before it slips/ No day's quite so okay as/ Snow day/ Before the cynicism wins/ Before the pure is putrid." To top it all off, there's also the lines "You will scavenge after dragons/ Scratching savagely/ At some phantom itch." The phrase "chasing the dragon" is a drug-related term meaning the fruitless chase of a high off a drug equivalent to the first time you used it. The narrator will spend the rest of their life chasing the high of the snow day.

The evolution throughout the song of how the snow day's described, starting with the narrator unable to find a word "to describe the extent of this mirth" and ending with it simply being "so okay" is rather similar to how the narrator of *Can't Wait!*'s fantasies of being an adult get more grounded and cynical throughout.

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!* posits 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 seems to reference the aphorism "standing on the shoulders of giants," a metaphor for building on previous discoveries to make your own. This would imply that "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.

And, of course, "before the pure is putrid" is a continuation on the stain motif. Enjoy your snow day before the pure is putrid, before your childhood mirth is ruined by the fact you've suddenly grown up. The lines that follow, and close out the song, tell you that you need to "cherish every moment/ Every one you spend/ Is one less you get."

Considering the song transitions directly into *Can't Wait!*, I wouldn't count on the narrator heeding their own advice.