

EVEN SLEEP IS EXHAUSTING
VOLUME II







THE MOUNTAIN

A confession: the last few weeks have been all kinds of disorienting.

Making an album has been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember. More than playing to a stadium of people, or singing on TV, the idea of quietly posting up in a studio somewhere and writing a full body of work has always been the most intoxicating to me. As the album release date fast approaches, the fact that I've realized that dream is dawning on me.

None of this, of course, would have been possible without JT. JT is the kind of collaborator I dreamed of having when I was fourteen and messaging my music to labels in Singapore, hoping they would listen past the shitty quality of my demos. From the moment I arrived in Nashville last April, I knew that I found a kind of soulmate in him. He is obviously a phenomenal writer / producer but beyond that one of the most compassionate and encouraging people I've ever met.

In this process there were many moments of insecurity, moments I was sure that I was out of my depth and should just quit all together. Moments I felt absolutely insane. Through all of those low points, JT didn't waver in his encouragement. He always arrived at the studio with a smile and his jovial morning greeting. Mind you, all of this just after welcoming a new baby into the world and getting no hours of sleep.

I also owe massive thanks to the other people who helped me climb the mountain - my manager Nathan, my sister Naveena and my best friend Sid, my parents for always picking up the pieces. Jack and Josh for their late nights at the studio. David and Mookie for their incredible playing. Jam & Daniel & Kelly & Myles & Sanj. Neal and Joe for mixing and mastering to perfection. Any and everyone else who worked on

Private Blizzard.

A person is sitting on a rooftop railing, looking out over a city skyline. The skyline includes a prominent tall, thin building (The Shard) and other buildings. The sky is overcast and grey.

PUBLIC BLIZZARD

As you know, I wrote a lot of Private Blizzard outside the studio.
I thought I'd tell you about a few of my favourite spots.

i. Cafe Roze in Nashville

I miss it almost as much as I miss my friends in Nashville. There were many weekend mornings when I would get a booth at this cozy diner-style cafe, order a latte, and disappear into myself to write. It was a five minute drive away from the studio so I'd often be there in the morning to tweak lyrics. When there was a January blizzard (the most snow the city's had in decades) and everything shut down for four days, the first thing I did every morning was check Cafe Roze's Instagram page to see if they were open.

ii. The Standard in London

So this is a weird one. This is a hotel in King's Cross near all the music office buildings. The crowd leaned slightly corporate but the building had a library lounge that I loved working in. Warm lighting, books everywhere, a fireplace, not to mention an easy commute from where I was living at the time. This is where I got the idea for "Tragedy" (story in the previous edition). At least a dozen winter afternoons were spent here in the early stages of writing. Pre-Nashville.

iii. Homeground Coffee Roasters in Singapore

A very late discovery for me. I grew up in Singapore and never once heard of it. Only got to know about it after reuniting with a coffee aficionado friend of mine in Singapore last year. For the couple of weeks I was in town, I went almost every day. A very minimal aesthetic but filled with natural light and served the best coffee. I put final lyrical tweaks on the songs "California Winter", "Lonely City Waltz" and "Speed of Light" here. The cafe that I frequented is closed but fear not for Homeground has another location in the city.

ODE TO BOREDOM



CALIFORNIA WINTER



HOW?



TRAGEDY?



GRIEVING



LONELY CITY WALTZ



SPEED OF LIGHT



ANY DAY



DAGGERS



THE MORNING



ILLUSIONS



ONE AND ONLY



Forecast



EVEN SLEEP IS EXHAUSTING

We have arrived at the title of this zine “Even Sleep is Exhausting”. Twelve hours from writing this, the new single “Grieving” will be out. It’s one of my favourites on the album. The title of this zine was birthed from a lyric in the second verse:

*Memories are stray bullets
They wound my frail subconscious
Even sleep is exhausting*

The song is accompanied by a music video shot on black and white film.

We captured a lot of it on a windy day along the “beaches” by the Thames river. “Beaches” in quotation marks because it was mostly pebbles and fragments of green beer bottles.

This day made me think about how slick music videos look in their final form versus how frantic and unglamorous making them can be. This one was especially chaotic because we were negotiating with the tides. It wasn’t even midday by the time my shoes were completely submerged in muddy water and we had to wrap the shots at the river. Later in the day, for a completely different shot, I ungracefully hopped a barbed fence to get on a dodgy pier. I guess that’s one of my favourite things about being on set for videos: the shared commitment to get the take. Whether its embarrassing, or dangerous (within limits) or seems impossible - everybody is putting their heads together to get that money shot.

Our production base for the Grieving video was this pub called “The Angel”. We stopped there for a delicious lunch before filming the video’s final sequence in an underground foot tunnel.

GRIEVING came out on
AUGUST 2, 2024

HANGOVER EGGS

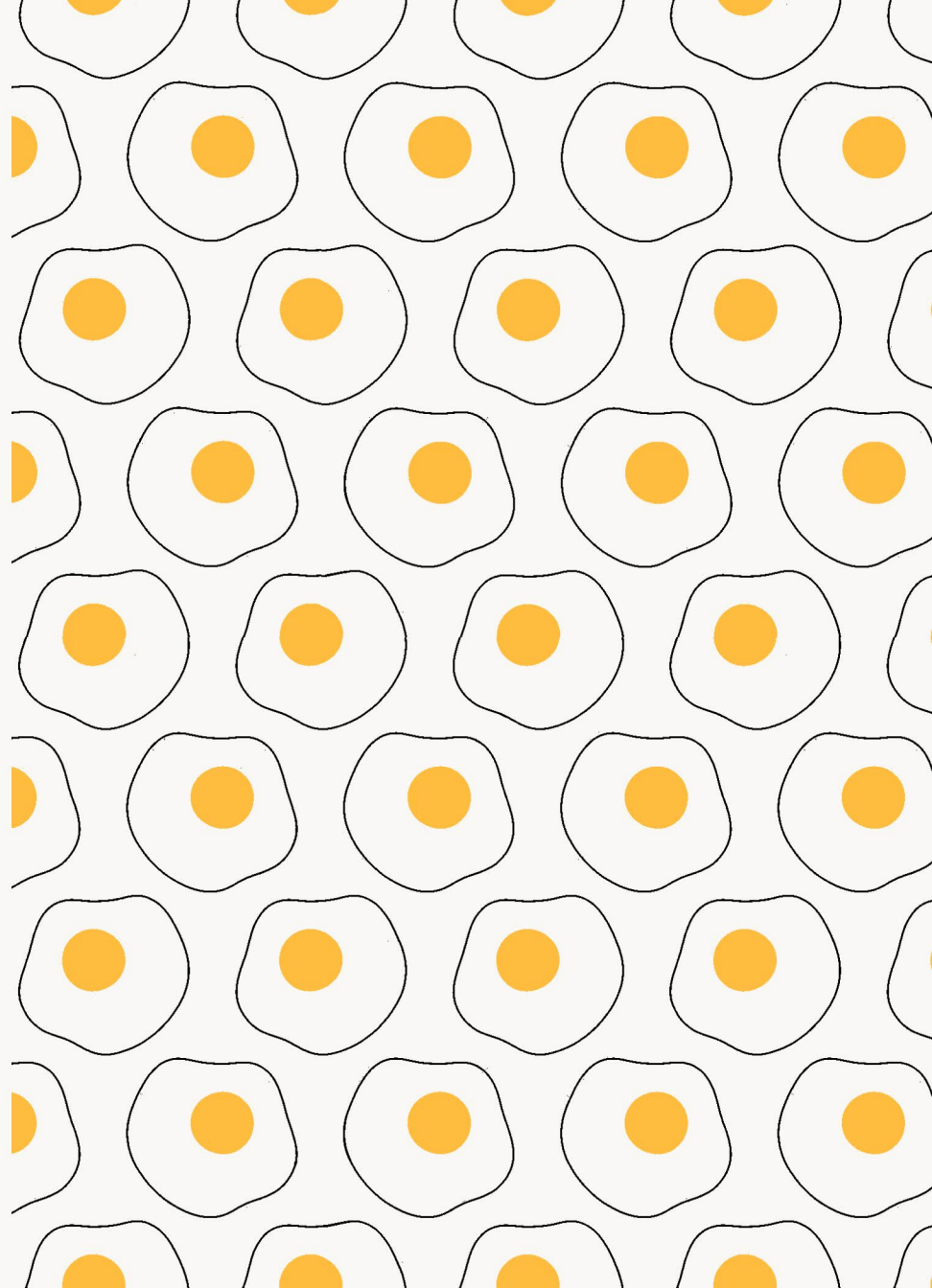
In the last edition, I published a poem called *Lonely City Waltz* which you now know I adapted into a song. For this edition, I thought I'd do something unserious and share a family recipe for the best eggs you'll ever have in your life. This is my uncle Arvind's recipe which I first tried on a very hungover morning five summers ago. He kindly passed the recipe onto me and it's been a staple breakfast at my house ever since. It's an Indian spin on a classic scramble.

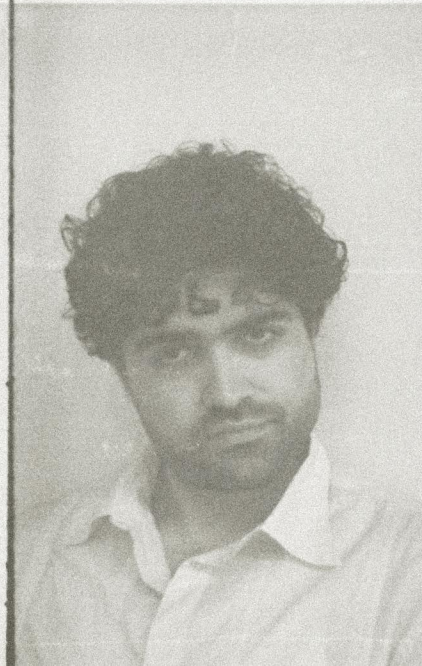
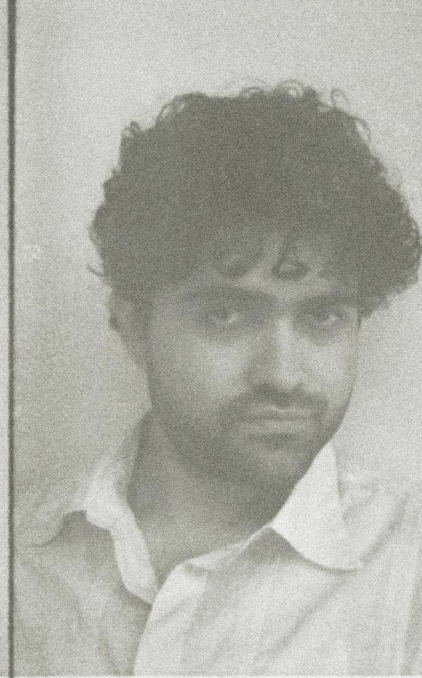
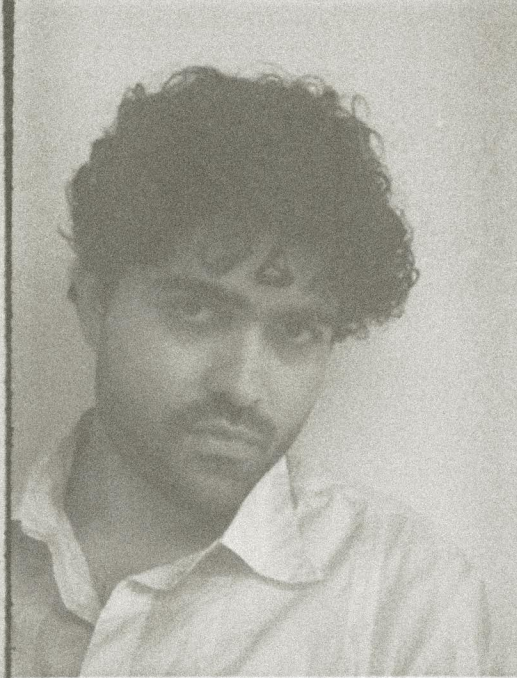
INGREDIENTS

1. Six Eggs
2. Seven to Ten Fresh Curry Leaves
3. Half Teaspoon Black Mustard Seeds
4. Half Teaspoon Cumin Seeds
5. Half Teaspoon Turmeric Powder
6. Half Teaspoon Red Chilli Powder
7. One Teaspoon Garam Masala
8. Half Teaspoon Chopped and Deseeded Small Green Chillies
9. One Small Red Onion, Chopped
10. One Teaspoon Finely Chopped Ginger
11. Half Teaspoon Finely Chopped Garlic
12. Two Chopped Tomatoes
13. One Teaspoon Dried Fenugreek Leaves
14. One Bunch of Fresh Coriander
15. Coconut Oil
16. Salt & Pepper

RECIPE

Whisk eggs, season with salt and pepper and keep aside. In a shallow pan, heat coconut oil on low flame. Toss in curry leaves, mustard seeds and cumin seeds for a couple minutes till they start to crackle and pop. Then toss in onion, chopped chilli, ginger and garlic. Stir frequently for 7-8 minutes or till onions soft. Now stir in the turmeric, chilli powder and garam masala and continue on low heat for another 5 minutes to let spices blend and cook. Now toss in the chopped tomatoes and stir and blend in for another 7-8 minutes till onion tomato mixture seems almost puréed. Now toss in the fenugreek leaves and fresh coriander and stir in for two more minutes. Finally toss in the whisked eggs and keep stirring till velvety and soft set. Serve on toasted, seeded bread.





THE POWER OF A CRUSH

Now that the track titles are out, it's time to talk about one of the stranger songs on the album. It's the opening track "Ode to Boredom".

I wrote this during a period of feeling pretty uninspired and jaded. Essentially feeling like life was falling into a predictable pattern and begging the universe to shake things up in some way.

One of the best shake-ups you could ask for? A crush. I thought about that a lot - how when you have a crush boredom doesn't really exist. Need to wait seventeen minutes for the next train? No worries. That feels like no time when you have someone to obsessively think about or imagine an eternity with. Sometimes I genuinely feel like I'm raw-dogging life when I have no romantic prospects or interests. My crushes play out like in-built movies I get to watch in duller, mundane moments. Is that relatable at all?

Anyway, this song is structured as a hectic inner monologue sung over a repetitive piano riff. It gets increasingly chaotic. "If someone asks, it's all going well" is the motto of someone who keeps his spiralling to himself. It is the very idea of a private blizzard summarised in one line.

ODE TO BOREDOM came out on AUGUST 23 with the rest of the album.

GRATITUDE

I'm writing this from a plane as I embark on a promotional tour in Asia. Leaving my home and my family is always tough but I can't wait to see so many of you at these listening events. By the time this zine comes out, most of you would have heard the album in full. How crazy is that? Seeing as this zine is coming out after the release of the album, I'd love to end it with the same way it began and give my thanks.

To you, firstly, for sticking with me. I know that I'm not the most prolific artist so it means a lot that you are still here and coming to shows and messaging me and reading things like this. My friends and I made this album with so much care and love and I hope it shows.

I'd also like to express my gratitude for music itself. When I was in high-school and in the closet, music held my hand and saw me through that private blizzard. In this latest period of life, which has been turbulent in different ways, I have again found a sense of rootedness in making songs. No matter how far I stray, it's what it always comes back to.

Lots of love,
Dhruv



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