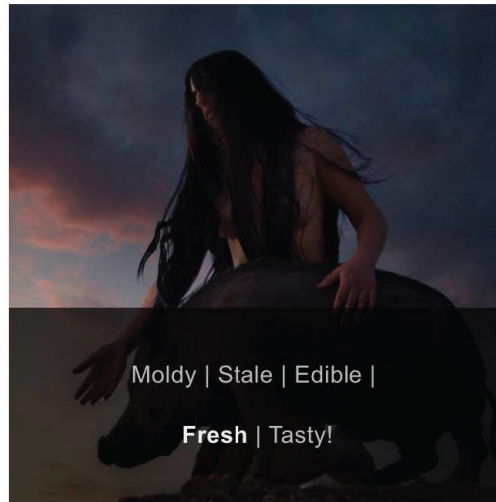


I Got Heaven - Mannequin Pussy



Tasty Tracks: "I Got Heaven," "Loud Bark," "I Don't Know You"

The world feels foggy as bed and body separate after days of being melded together. The pillow is damp, and the first light that has hit the room in days shines on pints of ice cream and empty tissue boxes scattered across the floor. A cloud of regret forms overhead from reflections on angry paragraphs and drunk voicemails hardly intelligible through screams and sobs. This was the state of Philadelphia punk band Mannequin Pussy (MP) on their 2019 record *Patience*. Crushed by the world-ending weight of heartbreak, they were spontaneous, confused, and angry. Five years later they have recovered from the grief of lost love, and just as life reaches normalcy, they bump into a stranger getting off the train. As the dark, flowing hair and bergamot and citrus scent slowly fade, MP realizes they have a challenge to face — confronting new love having just pieced their life back together.

On *I Got Heaven*, MP walks alone through the vast plains of their minds. The angsty punk sound that defines them is still dominant, but their rage stems from a different place than their previous records. Healed from being wronged in the past, MP reflects on their own character and place in the world. While on the surface they are content in their journey of being alone, they are one inconvenience away from setting it all ablaze. Eyes to the sky to avoid contact with others, they suppress all thoughts of future romance. Lust swirls around in their heads, and overstimulation takes hold of them manifesting as screams from lead singer Marisa Dabice and noisy, fast-paced tracks like "Of Her" and "Aching." However, the control they exert over their introspection brings a softness that they have yet to explore.

There is a light playfulness throughout *I Got Heaven* that comes with the control of being alone. Highlights "Loud Bark" and "I Don't Know You" feature it best. Lyrics "loud bark, deep bite" are repeated in a rhythmic cadence as Dabice continues with the backing of light drums and laid-back guitars. They progressively get louder and more complex, and she goes from singing to screaming along with them. "I Don't Know You" revolves around a simple counting pattern reminiscent of a children's nursery rhyme. It is atmospheric and rich, building a wall of sound that raises the noise level yet still feels ethereal — a release as they allow themselves to indulge in the fantasy of new love. Such extremes within each song bring out MP at their most unpredictable and their most intentional. The range of *I Got Heaven* paces its story and highlights MP as a more dynamic band with a command over the emotions that ruled over them in the past.

MP is a coin spinning through the air where one side is peace, and the other is chaos. They flip through the first half of *I Got Heaven* before a sudden stop — caught in mid-air by desire. Completely thrown off course, MP is appalled by their own temptations. How dare they catch feelings for someone new before they have found themselves? "Fuck a future" they scream on "OK? OK! OK? OK!" directed at both their future and the person they want one with. With every positive intention, the ideal lover is poised right in front of them, begging for their attention. Although they want to reciprocate more than anything, all they can ask is, "What if one day I don't love you anymore?" Despite the waves of passion that crash on their shore, the thought of another heartbreak is unbearable and makes them more enraged.

Shocked by the unexpected remnants of their past scars, MP barrels through the second half of *I Got Heaven*. The tracks are shorter and more aggressive, bursting with energy that was carefully balanced earlier in the record. They chase new love against the grain of self-sabotage — fighting to get back the feelings they once had while knowing they aren't ready yet and demanding the power they had before.

The tension that builds throughout *I Got Heaven* culminates in the beautiful closer "Split Me Open." Finally giving over to the "power of a thousand suns burning as one," MP realizes there is no reason to deprive themselves of pleasure over fears from the past. Infatuation, fear, excitement, unease, anticipation, jealousy, and satisfaction strike at once, overwhelming them. Dabice is calm and cheery as she vocalizes while a storm of guitars and drums pour down behind her. Alone in the eye of a hurricane, MP sees with clarity they aren't ready for love again, and as the storm clouds part, the final note rings out — a moment of bliss as they look out at the world with a newfound sense of self-assurance.