

## **Dream, Ivory - *When You Come Back I Have So Much to Tell You***

The title of Dream, Ivory's sophomore album, *When You Come Back I Have So Much to Tell You*, evokes both anticipation and foreboding. Initially, the duo comprising brothers Christian and Louie Baello thought of the album as a conversation between two people separated by a long distance, their inevitable reunion the sole light at the end of a dark tunnel. But as time wore on, the brothers developed a new interpretation. "The title could just as easily apply to a negative situation. Like, maybe the other person isn't coming back. Maybe the stories that need to be told aren't happy ones," Louie says. The stories on *When You Come Back...* tackle a spectrum of emotion, from the highs of romantic love to the distressing lows of addiction. "Take a look inside the mirror/ There's no time for telling lies," Louie sings on the hypnotic "Not the Best Idea." It might as well be the album's thesis.

Growing up in Southern California, the Baello brothers were each other's universe. "We experienced the world through the same frame," Christian says. That frame was heavily influenced by the number of times they moved, their identity as first generation Filipino Americans, and their parents' love of music. Enlisted in piano lessons by their dad at a young age ("it wasn't a choice," Louie jokes), the Baello brothers cut their teeth covering the music their parents were raised on, everything from ABBA and the Bee Gees to the Beatles. Christian helms the production on Dream, Ivory tracks while Louie is the primary lyricist/vocalist, but every song they make is a true collaboration. Music has always been central to their sense of self-perception, but it's just one of the brothers' many talents. Together, they make all of Dream, Ivory's artwork, videos, and visuals.

During the SoundCloud rap boom, the brothers started uploading their own DIY offerings to the internet, but that short-lived rap project soon evolved into Dream, Ivory. Largely inspired by shoegaze, surf rock, and shapeshifting artists like Damon Albarn, the brothers quickly amassed an organic fanbase online. They have over 450 million streams across their catalogue and their debut single "welcome goodbye" is RIAA certified gold. Dream, Ivory helmed headlining tours and in 2025 they sold out shows in Paris, London, and their hometown of LA. *When You Come Back...* follows Dream, Ivory's 2022 debut LP, *About a Boy*, an album that interrogates difficult topics surrounding mental illness and suicidality with grace and conviction. "When we wrote that album, we were listening to Slow Pulp, pop punk, Smashing Pumpkins, and more," Christian says. "When we write music, we pull from what we're listening to at that very moment."

*When You Come Back...* incubates a distinctive period in the brothers' lives defined by dislocation and addiction. When their parents decided to move back to the Philippines, Louie moved to Los Angeles to live with Christian and his girlfriend, Lilia Shibuya, who contributed writing to the album. Though the brothers have been prolific since their teenage years, they stagnated as cohabitants. "We just didn't really give a fuck about creating in that moment, there

was just no inspiration in our lives,” Christian says. “Instead of writing, we’d get shitfaced drunk. It was bad. We’d record a riff, then take a shot.”

The brothers attribute that lack of inspiration to their early achievements. At 19, raking in tens of thousands of listeners on a single track felt like a major accomplishment, but the more Dream, Ivory grew, the benchmark for success leveled up. “There’s so much riding on our old shit, coming up with something new felt like going to the fucking moon,” Christian says. The moon being far, Christian spiraled. “I was drinking so much and getting caught by my brother, my girlfriend,” he says. “I was kicked out of our place.” But bottoming out eventually renewed his sense of purpose. Christian got sober, moved back in with his loved ones, and with Louie wrote “Lost Angeles,” the first song for what would become *When You Come Back...*

“I don’t think time is on my side,” Christian sings on “Lost Angeles” over an ebullient soundscape that recalls early aughts pop-punk. “All my friends, my housemates, my girlfriend, were trying to reach a hand out to me and I just didn’t really want to take it. I was in my own world, bro,” Christian reflects. “We wrote this song from the point of view of those who were trying to help me,” Christian reflects. The brothers experiment with dichotomy throughout the writing process, juxtaposing sunny production with downcast lyrics and vice versa. On “At Zero,” a guitar glitters over a textured, distorted bassline as Louie sings about “dark content, if you will.” “I planned my life on the seventh story window,” he sings. “If blissfulness had a scale, then I’m at zero.”

If it was hard to get started writing *When You Come Back...*, once they committed, the brothers’ imaginations expanded. The morning of the 2024 solar eclipse, the brothers and Shibuya climbed onto their roof to watch. Though they couldn’t see much, the eclipse generated an incandescent love song. Co-written by Shibuya, “Solar Eclipse” chronicles a romance between the sun and moon, a distant love consummated every 18 years when they cross paths. Drawing from Louie’s fascination with anime and J-pop in general, “Solar Eclipse” relays its story like an epic. “They meet at last/ A simple touch/ That yields obscurity,” Louie sings, the droning wall-of-sound production cradling his airy vocals.

Love, or the promise of it, has guided the Baello brothers over vast emotional distances. The sense of longing that inspired the title runs through the album and is felt most acutely on “Sometimes,” another Shibuya co-write about unrequited love. “Felt the wind in Anaheim/ Like a touch you left behind/ Sometimes I just want it to stay,” Louie sings over a watery guitar part that sounds distinctly tied to the brothers’ home state. “Missing you is like snow in California.” Earnest and pining, “Sometimes” distills that yearning title, *When You Come Back...*, beautifully. “You could even apply the title to the distance between your current self and your past self,” Louie muses. “There’s no one way to interpret it.”