**Sydney Rose**

*One Sided*

Sydney Rose has always gravitated towards the simple things: An acoustic guitar and her voice is all she’s ever needed. Growing up in Georgia, she learned how to use her songwriting as a vessel for emotions that were anything but simple. In 2022, her debut EP *You Never Met Me* and its follow-up *This Kind of Thing Doesn’t Last* showcased intimate lyricism and a knack for candid honesty, with the help of understated synths, muted drum machines, and stacked harmonies. Now, with her debut album *One Sided*, Rose returns to her stripped-back acoustic roots, offering tenderhearted meditations on childhood, love, and the evolution of friendship, with a guitar in hand.

*One Sided* is about growth: growing up, growing apart, growing within. During a recent period of transition, Rose often found herself in solitude, writing music to work through her innermost feelings about the changes that had flooded her life. She had graduated from high school, left her childhood behind, lost meaningful relationships, and lost herself in the midst. Through all of this emotional commotion, the album was born. “It felt really natural for it to come together,” Rose shares, “I don’t like to force anything.” Songs like “Growing,” co-created with Jared Scott and Sam Martinez, were synthesized in only a matter of hours, like a diary entry jotted down in its most uninhibited state.

Rose penned the captivating opening track “Filing Our Papers” as a form of processing, without knowing that it would become the cornerstone of the album: “I was listening to it while driving, and I heard the line ‘*It’s always one sided*/*I’m too excited*.’ I realized every single song, in a way, is in reference to a one-sided relationship. It made so much sense that it would be the opening track and the title of the album.” “Filing Our Papers” acts as a musical trailer of what’s to come. At a minute and a half and recorded in just one take, it’s a microcosm of Rose’s ability to express a wealth of insight without any sense of pretension. Against a lilting acoustic guitar, her pastel vocals unfold like an early-morning whisper: “*You don’t care to kiss me*/*You hated my flavor*/*And you’d rather be alone*.”

The theme of relationship imbalance continues in “Unmade Bed.” With the sway of a melancholy waltz, she vocalizes the anxious thought that plagues too many people in relationships: “*If I could change today*/*Be more soft to make you stay* [...] *Maybe then I could be*/*Half of what you want from me*.” This idea of shifting identity is explored further in “Cool Girl,” where Rose insists she can be nonchalant, faking who she is because she doesn’t really know who she is. “Women all the time feel like they have to be someone else so that others like them,” Rose reflects. If you shed the ‘cool’ persona and show that you care, you run the risk of losing people (or so our anxiety tells us).

Every track on *One Sided* stems from Rose’s own life experience, except for “Same Car,” which she wrote for a close friend going through a difficult time. The song itself sounds like a sonic hug, one voice in each ear surrounding you as you heed her comforting words. With the help of soft interluding trumpets, Rose assures her friend that everything will work out: “*Be okay with the mistakes*/*You’re still a perfect daughter*/*You’d watch the sun come undone in your house by the water*.” It’s the heartwarming flip side of songs that touch on distance between friends, like “The New Kid” (“*Friendship bracelets, there will be a million replacements*/*For when I have to leave*”).

“The New Kid” is one of several tracks that explore the idea of turning the page to a pending chapter of life: Rose asks, without an answer, “*Am I lonely, or am I free*?” “The House I Grew Up In” is a bittersweet reflection on the innocence of childhood, a comfort that Rose expresses a desire to return to. “I’ve always had the fear of not being connected to who I was as a child,” she shares. With imagery of Christmas lights and the windowsill of her old bedroom, she draws a comparison between then and now that spans across the album; as a kid, she wanted to sleep in her mother’s bed, but in “Pretty Words,” she’s alone and she walks “*without a home*.”

But the idea of home is malleable, and Rose has come to define it as the people she’s with. She considers the first single off the album, “You’d Be Stars” featuring Chloe Moriondo, to be a “love letter to friendship.” “Being friends with this certain person opened up my eyes to not taking things for granted. I started noticing the smallest things that friends do, and how special female friendship is,” she reveals. In an album that dives deep into relationship fall-out, the song acts as a reminder of how beautiful it can be when one perseveres.

Rose shares that for a period of time, “All I wanted to do was hang onto things that I wanted to stay the same. The more I held on, the more things got worse, and I always blamed myself.” In “Out of Service,” she compares herself to a defunct vending machine, stuck where everyone left her: “*I’m starting to admit that I’ve already lived through it*/*The best years of my life is all that’s left behind*,” she sings above ebbing piano and yearning strings. Closing track “Throwing Rocks” begins with a similar sentiment, but ultimately resolves with sage self-forgiveness: Maybe it wasn’t her fault after all, maybe it’s just how life happened to unravel. Rose ends *One Sided* with this gesture of self-love, allowing a sense of hope to linger on after the last note is played.

