

Shy Curves *Stay Home EP*

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New emo duo, Shy Curves, debuts with dreamy vocal-driven *Stay Home EP*

On the debut EP of dream pop duo, Shy Curves, clean vocals and expressive layered guitars come together to deliver sparse, often devastating scenes set to major key melodies. *Stay Home* is the first release of Cambridge, Mass duo, Omar Lizarraga and Tom Pettyjohn, who first met on tour with previous bands but now both attend Harvard University. Shy Curves is apparently the result of mixing Ivy League educations with emo—and it proves to be a fruitful experiment. The record manages quite a feat for a debut project: it stays sonically light and mellow while also sinking its listener deep into reveries about lost love.



Stay Home opens with “Dreamboat,” in which the first lyrics of the EP are delivered with urgency and reflect the band’s post-emo ethos: “I just wanted to be seen/I just wanted to be burnt on you.” While Shy Curves is influenced by fuzzy shoegaze aesthetics on their debut work, there’s also a tangible clarity throughout the record—of production, of intent, and of voice. Lizarraga’s vocals don’t fall into the haze of reverbed guitars; instead, they float effortlessly atop the gently delivered percussion.

Shy Curves’ debut finds a surprising amount of sonic diversity within the range of their genre and in only five tracks. “Scrub,” the most upbeat tune of the bunch, centers around a psychedelic guitar theme and brings in bright keys for the chorus. “Love Bites,” quite aptly, has the most biting guitar tones of the EP, tinged with just enough distortion to bring grit to the song. The instrumentation perfectly matches the lyrics, which hinge upon the ironic, undelivered promise of lovers being “soft and delicate” with each other.

The most narratively rich moments of the EP come from the middle. “Dashboard” is a lyrical stand-out that shows off the duo’s imagistic abilities: vivid images of kissing goodbye, smoking a cigarette, and crashing the car are all condensed into a few words. Then, in a shift of tone, the next track “Juniper” briefly holds up rose-colored glasses through which to view the relationship of *Stay Home*’s focus, only to ultimately collide back into that devastating car crash.

Stay Home, other than being a title fit for the lockdown era, at once looks inward (ripe with introspection, allowing its listeners to hole up in their rooms) and looks outward (colored by scorn but still telling the lost lover to stay). Shy Curves, on their first release, has already concocted a memorable piece of dream pop. *Stay Home* is one that will stick with you; its sound submerges you in dense textures but its poignant, pained words resound clearly from the abyss.