

Revisiting Mac's legacy in "Perfect Circle / God Speed"

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By Paige Abid

As I'm sitting on the floor of my room contemplating where I could possibly start on the eternal legacy Mac Miller left behind, I look up at my 2-by-4-foot black and white Mac Miller "most dope" poster.

The casual black and white aesthetic of the poster reminds me of his [2015 studio album](#) cover for "GO:OD AM." His third studio album, released on September 18th, 2015, features 17 tracks. Among those 17 tracks is the 8-minute-long song called "Perfect Circle / God Speed." Although I could go on and on about all of Mac's songs, there is a certain power this one song particularly holds.

For those of you who may not know, Malcolm James McCormick, also known as Mac Miller, was an American rapper and hip-hop artist who tragically passed away from an accidental fentanyl-related overdose in 2018. In his early years, Miller's storylines primarily revolved around hanging with friends in "the Burg," kissing girls and smoking weed. He was always very open about his love for smoking. But as his career began to take off, the drugs he used started to evolve. Mac has always been open about his struggles with addiction.

"It just eats at your mind, doing drugs every single day, every second. It's rough on your body. I don't feel that way as much anymore," said Miller in a 2015 [Billboard](#) interview.

His prior album, "Faces," had a noticeably gloomier demeanor than GO:OD AM. At the time faces were recorded, Mac's drug use was intense and often. Mac found himself in a better place for his next album. When asked why the mood changed between albums, Miller said, "I go outside and live a little bit more. I touch people more. It's so easy to paint this horrible picture of life when you're not giving yourself a chance to live it." You can hear the newfound hope in all of the GO:OD AM tracks, but most prominently hear it in Perfect Circle / God Speed.

The song itself is intended to feel like two. The two parts of the song contradict each other. The Perfect Circle section refers to a time when he was heavily using. It's arrogant, obnoxious and carefree. His words resemble his feelings when he is 'on top of the world,' the feeling he had upon taking drugs. "I wash these pills down with liquor and fall, leave it to me, I do enough for us all (I do)."

During a slow and subtle interlude of instrumentals, Miller includes a voicemail from his younger brother, Miller McCormick. “Yeah, man, I wish you were here, happy holidays...Um, I love ya

And I hope you have a good night/weekend/I hope I talk to you soon. Alright, godspeed.”

Enter the *God Speed* portion where the whole energy of the song transforms. By including the voicemail, he makes it obvious that he's addressing his problem. He becomes vulnerable. He opens up about his reality as opposed to the first half of the song, where he shies away from it.

“Them pills that I'm popping, I need to man up. It's a problem, I need to wake up before one morning I don't wake up.”

Although a lot of his songs have hidden meanings, this one specific song highlights the power of vulnerability. Miller’s ability to be so honest about his struggles speaks volumes to the person he was and will always be remembered as. His music not only provides support to others suffering from drug use but also support for thousands of fans and listeners facing problems of their own. Yes, Mac's impressive discography alone is enough to make him a legend. But the power of Perfect Circle / God Speed perfectly encompasses who Mac Miller was: a human being trying to get better.