

Dominic Fike's Sunburn(ing and healing)



Dominic Fike's *Sunburn* is like a summer in Florida, where the artist grew up. It's like days in July with bright sunlight pounding your skin, sweat glistening with rollerbladers passing you by, and trying to lick off the melted ice cream from your cone before it falls to the ground. It's like jumping around in your bedroom with earphones on full blast, like sneaking off to skateboard after a bad day at home. Fun, eccentric, and catchy. But with an air of underlying edginess. Fike dances with ideas of childhood, relationships, growth, and changes, and this album is a fresh take on music that exists as a fusion of genres.

The album starts with "How Much is Weed," a playful name for a song recounting moments in Fike's childhood. He talks of his family struggles growing up and his journey with, "I did my best, I needed rest, I got arrested, everybody looking at me like I'm not invested." Parts of the song are so fast - both lyrically and musically - you feel like you're running through it, but lighthearted sections change up the pace, such as "I

don't even dance, but sometimes I like to juk, juk, juk, juk, juk, juk.” Lyric-wise, this song is generally serious, despite its juxtaposition with bouncy beats, but certain parts give the listener time to just groove out to almost pure beats in a silly manner. A standout song for me is 5 songs into the album, “7 hours,” discussing how far he’ll go for someone he loves “just as long as you don’t leave me, just as long as you don’t lie.” He’ll drive 7 hours like it’s “life or death” for a person who seems to barely care. This song steps away from family topics and into ideas of love and relationship, but stays generously funky and still contrasts its somber lyrics. There’s a total of 15 songs in Sunburn, each never straying too far from the playful vibe, but the album mellows out the most with What Kinda Woman, the last song on the album. Unlike all the previous songs, this one is fully acoustic, much softer and much gentler. What Kinda Woman is about a woman who makes life hard for all the people around her, and leaving Sunburn on this note is vastly different from the livelier way Fike recounted his memories in the opening song of the album.

The melodies in Sunburn are so catchy and so captivating, that the contradictions in the songs can easily slip by. This album is a fun listen to begin with, but once I noticed the juxtaposition between the happy-go-lucky beats and the unassumingly gloomier lyrics, Sunburn became all the more intriguing. Perhaps these contradictions serve as a representation of his turbulent past. Fike is a fighter, but a playful one. Sunburn is experimental, with risky moves and decisions, but at the same time, “If sunburn feels casual, well, that’s because it is” ([The Guardian](#)). Sunburn was a collection of different pieces he just wanted to get out there. Rather than honing it to what felt like perfection, it serves as a more raw reflection of his feelings and thoughts regarding his past and how he chooses to view it. The contrast between the lyrics and beats may show the difference

between the reality of his struggles and the attitude that he decided to view them with, and all the beat changes work to engage the listener through all the ups and downs he felt throughout his journey. Even Fike's music as a whole is a mix and concoction of genres, tying the unexpectedness of Sunburn to Fike as an artist. Fike's discography is a combination of what you would not expect to see together, from heavily contrasting lyricism and musicality, to a mix of genres including rap, indie, and rock ([Miami New Times](#)). Yet, it all blends beautifully, creating music that is fun and reflective simultaneously. Sunburn in particular allows Fike to present his past in a way that takes the listeners alongside memory lane with him. The lyrics of the album tend to be vulnerable while the melody is uplifting, making the experience of listening to Sunburn bittersweet - burning you and healing you at the same time.