



“Never settle for anything less than you want,” sings PJ on her life-affirming Atlantic Records debut single. It’s a simple philosophy, but one often abandoned as dreams get discarded and visions altered. At its most uplifting, music reminds of us of the possibilities of what can be—and few contemporary singer/songwriters express those emotions better than PJ.

Raised between North Carolina and Atlanta, the songs from the R&B magpie reflect an intense drive and unyielding hope. They inspire. They remind you what you’re really living this life for.

“If you’ve ever felt overlooked, I’ve been there. I know what it’s like when you feel like you’re the only one fighting,” says PJ. “I don’t write much about love, because it’s never been a huge part of my life. I write about being counted out or not being checked for, or school, or problems with money. These are things that everyone I know has always had to deal with.”

The ascendant talent born Paris Jones first became drawn to music through Disney sing-a-longs. Constantly rewinding *The Lion King*, she inadvertently acquired a sense of whimsy and classic song-craft—one applicable to soul, R&B, hip-hop, or pop ballads.

As a teenager and young adult, the iconoclastic singer absorbed multiple influences, including the hyper-melodic cadences, lyrical nuance, and intellectual independence of Kid Cudi, Kanye West, and Drake. The finished product sounds something like an urban version of Adele. PJ’s songs are street-smart but sophisticated. She is the quiet girl in the back of the class with big dreams, ready to wow the room when called upon.

Her path hasn’t been without obstacles. There have been financial struggles, dull jobs, and people skeptical that her styles were too far-flung. Ultimately, her stellar ear, beautiful voice, and champion’s spirit won out. Since signing to Atlantic in the first half of 2014, she’s penned infectious singles for Meek Mill (“I Don’t Know”), Wiz Khalifa (“True Colors” ft. Nicki Minaj), and B.o.B (“Not For Long” ft. Trey Songz).

“The stars aren’t always the people trying to grab the most attention in middle school,” says PJ. “It’s okay to be normal and it’s okay to be strange. I feel apart of the generation that doesn’t know what’s next...one that graduates without a clear plan.”

This sense of ambiguity lends a rare honesty to the music. PJ did go to college, graduated, and immediately grappled with that sense of feeling lost. She sought stability through various jobs and internships. She ultimately found it in music.

The full range of her abilities is evident on her debut EP. You can hear the meticulous writing, gossamer voice, and gift of levitating over the tracks. Most of all, you meet someone who wants it all with skills to obtain it. It’s for anyone burdened by the responsibilities of day-to-day life, but determined to triumph in spite of the hassles and haters.

“I’m not trying to be a star. I’m just a person who has something to say, and I feel like a lot of people are willing to listen,” PJ says. “Even though there are serious tones in my music, I don’t want to be taken too seriously. I just want to represent the regular guys. The ones who are still trying to figure it out.”

