

## GENEVIEVE STOKES BIO

Rocks skipping across the water, aimless and endless summertime drives, hearts broken for the first time, and new beginnings flicker into focus like old Polaroids in the music of Genevieve Stokes. The 19-year-old Portland, ME singer, songwriter, and pianist enlivens lush alternative pop with details so vivid you can practically grasp them. She simultaneously echoes the nostalgic bliss of an oceanside afternoon and the anxiety of an uncertain crush set to a soundtrack of lo-fi piano bliss. After amassing over 7 million streams independently and receiving acclaim from *Complex*, *Earmilk*, *OnesToWatch*, and *Lyrical Lemonade* who called her “a storyteller, capable of painting her feelings into a cohesive and presentable work of art,” she welcomes everyone into this world on the 2021 *Swimming Lessons* EP [Atlantic Records] and more music on the horizon.

“To me, *Swimming Lessons* is like dipping your feet in the water for the first time,” she explains. “This is my first EP. I’m new to the whole industry, but I’m bringing my perspective to it. I’m drawn to water, because it reminds me of home. I wrote a lot of these songs with the intention of never showing them to the world, so they’re very intimate.”

Growing up in a suburb of Portland as one of four kids, she enjoyed a “a beautiful childhood with a lot of magical memories in the woods behind our house.” At eight-years-old, Genevieve hijacked her older sister’s piano. She taught herself how to play and eventually took lessons. Meanwhile, dad introduced her to the likes of Cat Power and “biggest influence” Regina Spektor. Within a year, she started to regularly play open mic nights. “Music became my identity,” she says. “It was something I always loved, but I got really serious about it in high school.”

In between classes, she recorded on her phone, edited in Garage Band, and uploaded over 50 songs to Soundcloud, beginning with “Little Houses” during her sophomore year. These early compositions informed her creative DNA. Ultimately, Genevieve’s senior project and a performance video she uploaded via YouTube caught the attention of her management in 2019. Throughout the year, she recorded what would become *Swimming Lessons* during a handful of sessions at an Airbnb cabin a stone’s throw from her childhood home. The locale left its mark on the sound.

“It was a really comforting environment,” she states. “We used a lot of random things in the cabin for percussion. We played with some electronic sounds, yet it was still very organic.”

The EP collects experiences from her high school years and examines them with a combination of closeness and distance. Whether it be the dreamy suburban isolation of “Lonely and Bored” or intense connection and lilting piano of “Running Away,” she places you in the moment right next to her.

“When you’re in high school, you can’t really see outside of it, you can’t see who you’re going to be, and you can’t see what you want to do,” she explains. “It was a very insecure time for me. People belittle high school relationships, but they teach you so much. All of the songs come from the same distinct and intense time period. I was less self-aware, but there’s a rawness and sincerity to them I really love.”

Such sincerity defines the single “Surface Tension.” On the track, her voice glides over a steady beat and airy guitar before fluttering on an entrancing piano-laden chorus, “It’s all on the surface. It don’t hurt anymore.”

“It was about a really unhealthy relationship I had,” she admits. “I looked back and realized I was so unhappy. I felt like I wasn’t living up to the expectations he had of me in his head. It was a therapeutic song for me to make because I saw what I was putting up with—and I finally let go. It feels triumphant now as it comes from a higher view of myself.”

Then, there’s “Parking Lot.” The piano lullaby hinges on narrative lyrics as she recalls, “*Seats with hot black leather, the summer felt so much better when I was with you.*”

“That was about the next relationship I had,” she goes on. “It’s about meeting someone who I thought I had a very strong connection with. I was obsessive, and I created a story of what I wished the relationship would be. It wasn’t too delusional, because we’re together now,” she smiles.

In the end, Genevieve captures timeless moments in her songs and makes them forever relatable.

“If you listen to me, I hope you connect to the music, and it brings you to the same place it brings me,” she leaves off. “When I’m writing, it feels like I’m tapping into something better and bigger than myself. I feel like I’m learning who I want to be. It’s been a long process, but I’m starting to see myself form into a real individual.”

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