**Victoria Canal**

*WELL WELL* EP

For almost two years, singer-songwriter Victoria Canal used her gift primarily as a way to process grief. The result of this transformative period was 2022’s *Elegy* EP, a bittersweet collection of tracks including “swan song,” hailed by Coldplay’s Chris Martin as “one of the best songs ever written.” Now, after experiencing creative and emotional catharsis, Canal is turning the camera back on herself and zooming in further than ever before. Grown from heartache and made with unabashed honesty, *WELL WELL* finds the artist at her most vulnerable—and her most courageous.

Canal, who received the 2023 Rising Star award at the prestigious Ivor Novellos, embraces the discomfort of self-analysis. “These days I’m writing mostly to confront things about myself in order to gain more of an understanding and acceptance of them,” she shares. She first started sowing the seeds of *WELL WELL* during quarantine, in part while watching the TV show *Parenthood*. She recognized herself in a people-pleasing character, remarking, “I’ve definitely shrunk myself down before to please everyone else. I deserve to take up space.” “Yes Man,” the first song written for the upcoming EP, sprung from this feeling: Prioritizing someone else’s comfort isn’t worth the price of losing yourself. “*Well well, what do you know? / You took so much space, seems I lost my place,*” she sings.

Canal challenges the habit of self-shrinking across all of *WELL WELL*, magnifying parts of herself that she’s never openly shared before. The gentle gut-punch of opener “Shape” delves into the complex and intimate topic of body dysmorphia. Against folky guitar and airy backing vocals, her retrospective lyricism brings to the surface internalized moments, like the lasting impact of passing cruelty (“*All it takes is once/Some kid in math class likens you to a bus*”) and the relationship between self-image and faith (“*And I’d trade being mad at God/For liking what I’ve got*”). These experiences are all too common for anyone who sits outside the status quo, and Canal reclaims her own power by bringing them to the surface on her own terms.

“She Walks In” continues to explore body image, this time from a more current perspective. “The idea of this song stems from a beautiful girl turning heads when she walks into a room. I have the experience of people staring at me, but it’s because of my limb difference,” Canal shares, “There’s an inherent yearning for people to look at me the way that they look at her.” This vulnerability comes through in her poignant reflections set against waltzing watery instrumentals. “*It’s okay, I feel your rejection*,” she sings in soft stacked harmonies, “*I think about it all the time*.” Its candid delivery and gentle rocking almost makes you forget its devastation. But she ensures that it can’t be ignored.

Canal recently made her acting debut exploring the ideas of confidence, belonging, and self-awareness with regard to limb difference in Apple TV+’s acclaimed anthology series *Little America*, where she brought to life the story of an El Salvadorian amputee struggling to adjust to life in Beverly Hills. She has also been featured in campaigns for Nike, LinkedIn, and Mastercard.

The EP’s commentary on comparison exists in “Braver (ft. Madison Cunningham)” as well, but served with a sugar-dipped spoon. This track chronicles the life of Canal’s mother, from growing up poor in the South to falling in love with someone halfway across the world. “You’re braver than I’ve ever been,” Canal sings, “What I’d give to have known you back then.” It’s an ode to the sacrifices of past generations, the kind of sentiment that makes you want to call your relatives simply to listen.

The warmth of “Braver” carries over into “Company,” arguably the EP’s lightest track. It centers on a simple idea repeated like a grounding mantra: “*Honestly, I love your company*.” The song came about quickly: Canal dreamt up the guitar part alongside a few friends, recording placeholder lyrics one line at a time until suddenly, they had completed the song. “The more that I sat with it, the more I thought the simplicity was lovely,” she reveals, “I just wanted a light love song.” The track considers the liminal space between platonic and queer love, resolving that it’s okay to live without clear definitions; what matters most is wanting someone around.

This EP marks an expansion for Canal, not just thematically, but also with regard to collaborators. Working with the likes of Sean Carey, Madison Cunningham, Tony Berg and Jacob Collier helped push the musician creatively in a way she’s never experienced before. “In past projects I’ve been on my own or working with my buddies, which is amazing,” she remarks, “But this time I got to work with some of my heroes while also holding my own in the studio.” The artist attributes *WELL WELL*’s cohesive sound to her clear vision and the fact that everything was mixed at Sound City by veteran engineer Joseph Lorge (Blake Mills, Perfume Genius, Jon Batiste).

*WELL WELL* closes with a magnum opus of lyricism and production. “Black Swan,” a song Canal describes as the “resentful older sister” of “swan song” is a haunted exploration of perfectionism and the desire to change yourself. “*Still making amends with my personality, contortionist*,” she sings over tortured electric guitar and a defiant stomping beat. Recorded with Phoebe Bridgers’ collaborator Tony Berg and Ben Folds’ Ryan Lerman, this track was an experiment for Canal. “Creating it was like splatter painting,” she reflects, “It was definitely new for me to go that big.” After an explosive climax, “Black Swan” retreats back into itself, closing the door to the EP with a forgiving hand.

“The phrase ‘WELL WELL’ struck me as a natural follow up to *Elegy*. I’ve grieved this person and now I’m dealing with what’s left,” Canal resolves, “I needed to stare myself in the face and realize that this is it. It’s a wounded rebirth.”