

You’re in your early twenties, and you literally just got everything you’ve ever wanted... You’re working your *“dream job*,*”* you’ve earned the respect of your idols, and you’re traveling the world for the first time *(with your homies, no less)*. You’re on cloud nine—until reality pulls you back to earth. It makes you wonder, but it really makes you grow up *(sort of)*. So, what do you do?

If you’re Games We Play a.k.a. Emmyn Calleiro, you pour all of the happiness, sadness, and realness into your full-length debut, *Life’s Going Great* [DCD2/Fueled By Ramen]. It’s not all heavy emotions though. As if riding shotgun in his *“RAV-4 from 2016*,*”* you’ll also get to meet the characters he’s crossed paths with in Los Angeles, such as an assortment of *“sugar daddy famous”* trust fund babies, girls *“who could be from outer space*,*”* and all manner of *“cool kids*.*”* You’ll also get to know Emmyn.

“I’m overly confident on stage, and I post pictures of my butt on the internet, but there’s a lot more to me than stupid sex jokes—mind you there are one or two of those on the album,” he exclaims. “*Life’s Going Great* is still me, but I’m showing all of my insecurities. I’ve been doing music for eight years, and this is the first year it’s really worked despite my personal life falling apart. I’ve learned even when it seems like everything is going amazing, it could be a shit show behind the curtain. That’s what this record is about.”

It represents how far he’s come. The Florida-born singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and producer relocated to Nashville in his teens and served up the independent *Senior Year* EP in 2018. Simultaneously, his sense of humor, relatability, and sharp songcraft endeared him to a rabid fan base on the internet as his breakout single “I Hope You’re Happy” caught fire. After finding a mentor in Fall Out Boy bassist Pete Wentz, he wound up signing to Fueled By Ramen/DCD2 Records and dropped his major label debut EP, *Get A Job*, in 2022. Beyond reeling in tens of millions of streams, he incited the applause of *Consequence*, *Alternative Press*, *Loudwire*, *Rock Sound*, *Kerrang*, and more. Renowned for his energetic live show, he toured relentlessly alongside everyone from All Time Low and The Band CAMINO to YUNGBLUD and Fall Out Boy. Along the way, he crafted what would become *Life’s Going Great*, chronicling his growth in real time.

“*Get A Job* was like an opening *‘Hello’*,” he says. “This body of work is what’s going on in my life now. I like to joke around, but I also try to tackle some of the heavier stuff I’ve been dealing with lately. I’m thankful, but I’m insecure and have gone through a lot. I was finally able to convey all of that on this record.”

To capture this feeling, he found a creative kindred spirit in Larry Hibbitt [Marmozets, Nothing But Thieves]. After hearing the producer’s work with Dinosaur Pile-Up, he invited Larry to a UK gig. They hit it off, and Emmyn skipped his flight home in order to record with Larry. Proverbial sparks flew.

“The sound was exactly what I was chasing,” he recalls. “I wrote a few more songs in America and went back to the UK to finish the album with Larry.”

Games We Play set the stage for the record with the anthemic “All My Untalented Friends (Ooo La La)” before cutting deep on the single “too young.” On the track, acoustic guitar brushes up against his heartfelt delivery. He processes relationship trials and tribulations on the verses before the hook laments, *“Swore to God it would never be us saying, ‘We were too young’*.*”*

“It’s the hardest and most important song I’ve ever written,” he sighs. “I got into a relationship very early, and we split up for a bit during this time. As kids, I’d tell everyone we were the exception. It felt like everybody who said we would fail was right. *‘Too Young’* communicates exactly how I felt about our split last year. It’s a weird one, because it’s so personal.”

Then, there’s “Girl Shaped Crater.” Breezy guitar coasts beneath breathy verses before strings boost the refrain into the stratosphere. It bottles an out-of-this-world love in lines like, *“If you don’t have a God complex, I’ll give you one*.*”* He smiles, “That’s probably my favorite line on the record. It’s about the most amazing person in the world who doesn’t see herself as you do. This girl is irreplaceable, and it’s like she came from another planet. There’s a hole in the earth, since she arrived so fast and crashed so hard.”

By fall 2023, he thought the album was done and was scheduled to hit the road. However, life had other plans. So, he canceled the tour, worked on himself, and revisited the record. In early 2024, he continued writing and rounded off the story with a handful of tracks. Around the same time, he reconciled with his wife…

“I felt like the album wasn’t done,” he admits. “I didn’t want to give everyone just a glimpse of my bad side; I wanted to show everything. I’m still loud, funny, happy, dance-y, and say inappropriate things in my songs. I wrote these songs to complete the album.”

On the gleefully spiteful “Petty Fkn Enemy,” a snappy groove breaks like a wave on an acoustic bridge. Anchored by soft strumming, Emmyn exacts verbal vengeance with a heartbroken *(yet kind of hilarious)* wish, *“I hope you cry on your birthday cuz no one showed up…you meet all of your heroes and they think you suck.”*

Clean guitar coasts over a steady beat on “She’s The Girl” where he balances *“girl worship”* with stark regret. He adds, *“This girl is perfect and amazing, but I keep letting her go and messing it up*. *‘She’s The Girl’ captures the back-and-forth.”*

Inspired by a heavy dose of old school Third Eye Blind, “Typical Me” bobs and weaves with a rhythmic cadence, well-placed samples *“you have got to get your life together!”*, and turntable scratching as he laments, *“I don’t do shit. I can’t pay bills. I got a small ass dick, and everything is killing me. I always quit right before the finish line*.*”*

“It’s certainly self-deprecating, but It’s one of the more positive songs,” he grins. “These songs have the sentiment of getting the girl you lost back on the first part of the record. I’m recognizing the problem and promising to fix it.”

The title track “Life’s Going Great (Ruin Your Day)” hinges on a plucky riff as a hard-hitting hook, *“I hope I ruin your day*,*”* dissolves into a screeching guitar solo.

“I had paused Games We Play and reset for two months,” he recalls. “I started to feel really good and write in my journal. I liked the new Emmyn and how this was going. It ties into the story, because I’m doing better. Still, I seal it off with a giant *‘Fuck you’*.”

Ultimately, Emmyn soundtracks life.

“So much is going great,” he leaves off. “I live in a van with all of my friends, and I play guitar all day and shows at night. Artists I’ve looked up to my whole life follow me on Instagram. I get to meet so many people who support me on the road. I got to make this album too. I’d say life is pretty good.”