

Wonderful! 421: Not Gonna Rub Stalactites On My Face

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[theme music, "Money Won't Pay (feat. Augustus)" by Bo En plays]

Rachel: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy.

Griffin: Hello! This is Griffin McElroy.

Rachel: And this is Wonderful!

Griffin: Welcome to Wonderful! It's a podcast where we talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into.

Rachel: Can I be honest for a second?

Griffin: Please!

Rachel: And this won't come as a surprise to you. I've been kind of a grump lately.

Griffin: Uh-oh.

Rachel: We had a particularly taxing weekend.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: With the boys.

Griffin: Right.

Rachel: Little Son is just being kind of mean lately.

Griffin: Just a sort of good way to put it, just sort of... just mean to us all the time.

Rachel: Yesterday, we went outside, and we have been graced lately with a very small bunny.

Griffin: Oh, god! This freaking guy...

Rachel: It's a baby bunny, it's the cutest thing I've ever seen. And he's there most of the time when we go outside. Small Son, because he's been so mean lately, we went outside yesterday, and he was like, "Where's the bunny?" And I was like, "Oh, I don't know." And he was like, "I want to see the bunny."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I was like, "I don't really have any control over where the bunny appears." And he was like, "I want to see the bunny!"

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles] And I was like, "I can't do anything to help you, sir."

Griffin: Yeah...

Rachel: Yeah, anyway, so—

Griffin: I made the, I'll tell you what it was, is I made a mistake once of the bunny... I want to ru—I want to pick him up and rub him all over my face.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I have—I harbor a lot of feelings about nature that when I say them out loud, people are very quick to say like, you can't pick the bunny up and rub it all over your face.

Rachel: Yeah...

Griffin: You can't give that duck a big hoagie sandwich, because it'll die from it.

Rachel: Uh-huh.

Griffin: Like, and I understand these things now, but I did—they wanted the bunny to come closer so that we could all pick it up and rub it all over our face, and so I played a video on my phone of bunny noises, and it kind of worked. And so I do think he probably is under the impression—

Rachel: We can summon—

Griffin: That we can summon the bunny by playing YouTube videos of bunny noises.

Rachel: Anyway, I kind of, I feel like I kind of carried my frustrated mood into this morning, and then having to prepare for Wonderful almost felt like a punishment.

Griffin: Okay?

Rachel: In that it was like, yeah, grumpy Gus...

Griffin: That's not a great term to use—

Rachel: Unrelated.

Griffin: Because unrelated grumpy—not the actual grumpy Gus.

Rachel: Grumpy... Gloria. Now you have to find something you like and talk about it, so get it together... lady.

Griffin: Is there a "but?"

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It feels like all of this is like leading up to a, "But then I realized—"

Rachel: Well, I went to exercise, which helped a lot.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then I found a topic that was really nice and I was excited to talk about.

Griffin: Okay, good.

Rachel: So yeah, so I turned it around, but I'm just saying, I want to be honest with our listeners that sometimes when I sit down and I have to think of something nice, I feel very surly and angsty about it.

Griffin: Sure.

Rachel: Like, well, but I'm not in the mood to do that.

Griffin: But don't blame Rachel. If you're listening to this episode and you're like, "Dang, that was a surly one." It's not Rachel's fault. It's our son's fault.

Rachel: Yes. Yes. This is what I realized. I was feeling like, why am I so grumpy this morning? And then I realized, oh, it's because Small Son has been mean to me for like four days straight, and I haven't really had a break from it until now.

Griffin: Yeah. Yeah. But me too. I want you to know that it's not you, and it's not anything that you're doing.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You know?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: He'll at least say that he loves you out loud.

Rachel: [chuckles] Are we competing now for how bad it is?

Griffin: No, no, no, my—I'm just sort of comparing the nature of his affront towards me.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which is a lot deeper, a lot more psychological.

Rachel: True.

Griffin: Yours is very brass tacks like, make the bunny appear, you can't, "I'm gonna fuckin' lose my mind right now."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: His is like, he will say like, "I love you." And I'll be like, "Oh my god!" And I'll be like, "Just kidding."

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: That sort of like rug pull type deal. We're really making him out to sound like a Machiavellian sort of monster. Most of the time, he's pretty good.

Rachel: I think people know that. [chuckles] I think people know we love our children.

Griffin: Okay, good.

Rachel: I don't think we have to—

Griffin: I don't know, maybe this is someone's episode? They don't know we love our kids.

Rachel: We do.

Griffin: I'll add it to the intro. We talk about things we like, that's good, that we're into. We love our kids.

Rachel: We love our kids. [chuckles]

Griffin: We love our kids! And we should say it like we're at—we're on—at gunpoint.

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: Do you have a Small Wonder you'd like to do?

Rachel: Oh, I will say, we went and saw Andrew Bird.

Griffin: Yes!

Rachel: Which was really great.

Griffin: With the Philharmonic?

Rachel: The National Symphony Orchestra.

Griffin: The National Symphony Orchestra, even better!

Rachel: And he did all of that album.

Griffin: The Mysterious Production of Eggs, yeah.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Which I think came out like, man, it came out a long time ago—

Rachel: 20 years ago! That's the whole—

Griffin: Oh, yeah!

Rachel: Thrust of this tour, is that it is the 20th anniversary.

Griffin: Yeah, it was so good. Big ups to Pops, to Peeps, to Clint, for getting us tickets—

Rachel: It was your birthday concert.

Griffin: For that, for my birthday. Yeah, it was great. Arrangements of all songs off that album with 70 other musicians on stage with him.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I thought like, man, that's gotta be... when he busts out the violin, that's gotta be intimidating, right? Because you're up there with the National Symphony Orchestra. And then he started to play like his like solo in the middle of like MX Missiles. And I was like, oh, goddamn, never mind, he's incredible. Like he's actually—

Rachel: he's very, very good.

Griffin: So fucking good. And his whistling is unbelievable! Every time I see this dude in concert, I'm like, how is that noise coming out of that small an aperture?

Rachel: It seems so risky to get up on stage and to be so confident in your whistling ability that you're like, "I'm going to stop everything and just whistle here."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "And I'm going to nail it, and I'm not worried about not nailing it."

Griffin: Yeah. Met some really lovely listeners, too!

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: At the—at the show. Thanks for coming up and saying hi. It's always nice.

Rachel: Yeah, we had a couple write us a sweet little note talking about how they met through like a MBMBaM—

Griffin: Real good.

Rachel: Fan group.

Griffin: Real good. We did have to leave early, because it was a late concert and we felt bad about our babysitter staying too late.

Rachel: Yeah, we didn't get home until like after 10 PM, which is like unprecedented for us.

Griffin: Musicians, please don't start your shows at eight o'clock.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I need a tight—a 5:30 concert? *Ah*.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Can you imagine? 5:30 concert and a dinner at the same time? *Ah!* The best.

Rachel: Wait, you're eating while you're at the concert?

Griffin: You're eating while you're at the concert.

Rachel: Okay. Like Medieval Times? [chuckles]

Griffin: I guess my dream experience I'm describing is Medieval Times. I'm going to say, hm...

Rachel: I did kind of take baby bunny, and I'm sorry about that.

Griffin: Baby bunny's so good, you guys. I mean, okay, I'll say this. This is my Small Wonder. Big bunny. The other day, baby bunny came out and we were like, oh, shit. Guys, I'm not kidding, he's the size of my hand! He's like hands—he's hand sized, right? I'm not—I'm not exaggerating. This bunny is—

Rachel: Babiest bunny I've ever seen.

Griffin: This bunny is four inches long! This is a little fuckin' guy.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And then a big bunny came around, who I think is his dad. You seem convinced is his dad. And they—I've never seen 'em both at the same time. I thought there was just one bunny who shrank and grew depending on like the weather or the humidity or—no, there were two bunnies. And we were all like, what if they started to frolic? And they did! The big bunny was chasing the little bunny around. It was so good.

Rachel: And I feel like we've been there since the beginning.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You remember when we used to see this bunny who was gathering like clumps of grass and running under our deck?

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: Like, we have been with this bunny since before birth, I feel like.

Griffin: Yeah. I'd do anything for them. I would do anything for this rabbit family.

Rachel: Yeah. Me too.

Griffin: And I'm not going to rub them all over my face, because I imagine there's some like essential oils that humans produce.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That's what it always comes down to, isn't it?

Rachel: Is the essential oils?

Griffin: When someone is like telling you how to interact with an animal in nature, it's like, there's oils on your skin. It's like animals, stalactites, like you can't touch anything cool in nature, or you'll kill it instantly.

Rachel: Your oils will get on it.

Griffin: Your oils will get right on it. And they can't eat fucking anything. I'd Google like, "What do you feed a baby bunny?" And Google was like, "Nothing, dude!" I was like, "Surely, a big strawberry?" And they're like, "No, the strawberry will kill the baby bunny."

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: It was like, god, everything—

Rachel: He eats—

Griffin: They're so gentle!

Rachel: The clovers in our yard.

Griffin: He does love the clovers in our yard.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: He nibbles. He nibbles all over 'em.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: You go first this week.

Rachel: I do. I had a hankering.

Griffin: Oh?

Rachel: And that hankering was for a trip to the Poetry Corner.

Griffin: [sings a tune] Poems.

Rachel: [chuckles] I like the idea that you're going to travel through sitcom theme songs.

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: To...

Griffin: [sings] Poem by poem, line by line! Fresh all over, different every time! The poems we read, the poems we write will make it better.

Rachel: Wow. You hit that note.

Griffin: [sings] The second time around!

Rachel: That's very good, honey.

Griffin: I felt like that started as a joke and then turned into a very real showcase of my range.

Rachel: [chuckles] Your range. Add that to your reel.

Griffin: Yeah, I will.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I'm like one of those family YouTubers who are like, "Today we're going to make a, you know, a rollercoaster in our backyard. But really, we're just trying to soft launch the mom's singing career."

Rachel: Can I tell you, like, because I watched that episode start to finish for the first time.

Griffin: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Rachel: It was—it was about conquering your fears.

Griffin: [laughs] My fear is not being a famous singer.

Rachel: And then—and then they also, here's the thing, hm...

Griffin: God, we're narrow casting so fuckin' hard right now, I do not care. It's all I can think about.

Rachel: They... then I also saw it in a compilation of, "Our daughter doesn't appreciate the value of money, so we have to find ways to raise money. And one of the ways I'm going to raise money is by singing on this boardwalk."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: "But we have to borrow a microphone from an existing street performer."

Griffin: From another busker. Yeah, who probably could use the cash a little bit more than your daughter—

Rachel: Is this the Enzala family?

Griffin: I don't know, I don't wanna call 'em out by name. What if they listen?

Rachel: Anyway, the woman really likes to sing.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And you can tell that she has a pretty good voice.

Griffin: Yeah!

Rachel: And sometimes they have birthday parties for the kids and she—

Griffin: But it's very much a, "Don't make me—don't make me sing!"

Rachel: And she really puts her back into happy birthday—

Griffin: Yeah, yeah.

Rachel: In a way that is unnecessary. [chuckles]

Griffin: Hugely, hugely inappropriate. I'll say borderline problematic for a child's birthday party.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: But whose poems are we reading today?

Rachel: We are featuring the poet Eduardo Corral.

Griffin: Is this from the book that you purchased?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: At Politics and Prose yesterday?

Rachel: Yes, yes.

Griffin: Washington DC's own?

Rachel: Yes. Ada Limón, who is a poet laureate that I have featured on this program before, did a compilation of nature poems. It's like an anthology, I should say, and so it is not exclusively her poetry. But the book is called *You Are Here: Poetry in the Natural World*. And she edited and introduced the book. And one of the poets featured was Eduardo Corral.

Griffin: Okay.

Rachel: And then I happened to find out, he is the current Associate Professor of English at Washington University in St. Louis.

Griffin: Wow!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That's crazy!

Rachel: Yeah, he is—he has also been at other institutions. He's been at North Carolina State University, he lived in New York briefly. So yeah, you

may know him from around the world. But currently, from what I can understand—

Griffin: He's lives in St. Louis.

Rachel: He's lives in St. Louis.

Griffin: Can I interrupt with a brief anecdote?

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Yesterday, Gus asked me what Missouri was. And I was like, "Oh, it's a—it's a state." And I have to explain what a state is, because we don't live in one presently.

Rachel: Yeah, no—

Griffin: We live in a sort of district.

Rachel: I pretend that we do, just for simplification with him.

Griffin: Yeah. And I was explaining it and he was like, "No." And I was like, "Yeah, no, I promise, Missouri is like where St. Louis is, it's where Mommy's from, it's where—" And he's like, "No, that's not it." And then I realized that he was asking me for the definition of the word "misery."

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: Which I explained and I was like, you want to make sure that you hit the emphasis pretty good—pretty good there.

Rachel: I love that he's like, "That's not it. That's definitely not the word I'm talking about."

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: We got there.

Rachel: Okay. Eduardo Corral, in his bio consistently across different platforms and books, he kind of introduces himself as the son of Mexican immigrants, which is something that comes into play with a lot of his poetry. His first book, *Slow Lightning*, won the Yale Series of Younger Poets competition. That is kind of... kind of the biggest prize you can win for like a first book of poems.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: It's been around for a very long time. And that book came out in 2012. And then in 2020, he released a second book of poetry called *Guillotine*. And I wanted to read one of his poems from that book. And the poem is called *Autobiography of My Hungers*.

His beard, an avalanche of honey, an avalanche of thorns. In a bar too close to the Pacific, he said, "I don't love you, but not because I couldn't be attracted to you." Liar. Even my soul is pot-bellied. Thinness in my mind equals the gay men on the nightly news. Kiss by death and public scorn. The anchorman declaring weight loss is one of the first symptoms.

The Portuguese have a word for imaginary, never to be experienced love. Whoop-de-doo. "I don't love you," he said. The words flung him back in his eyes. I saw it. To another bar where a woman sidestepped his desire. Another hunger. Our friendship in 10th grade, weeks after my first kiss, my mother said, "You're looking thinner." That evening, I smuggled a cake into my room.

I ate it with my hands, licked buttercream off my thumbs until I puked. Desire with no future, bitter longing. I starved myself by yearning for intimacy that doesn't and won't exist. Holding hands on a ferry, tracing with the tip of my tongue, a jaw line. In a bar too close to the Pacific, he said, "I don't love you, but not because I couldn't be attracted to you." His beard, an avalanche of thorns, an avalanche of honey.

Griffin: Goddamn.

Rachel: Isn't that lovely?

Griffin: That's... I don't know if "lovely" is the—I mean, extraordinarily evocative.

Rachel: Just like especially vulnerable! And like—

Griffin: Yeah, hugely! Hugely vulnerable.

Rachel: And like beautiful in kind of the way that he communicates—

Griffin: That was really good! That was really, really good. I don't have like a good brain for figuring out what sort of... poetic language is about sometimes, and that one felt really accessible. And I was like, I would—you would be going through a line, I'd be like, wait a minute, what did that—what did that mean? And as I was working through it, he'd come at you with like a whole other like, a whole other metaphor.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: That's crazy!

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: What's that poem called?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Autobiography of My Hungers?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: I remembered it.

Rachel: Yes. So this was a poem I believe that he wrote based on his experience in living in New York City, in 2012. Oh, so this book—this poem might be—well, he may have written it recently, about his experience living there.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: In 2012. But he talks a little bit about his experience there. And in this interview I read, the interviewer asked, "And now you are making art in New York City, which is a new place for you. How have you taken the poetry community here? And in particular, the gay poetry community of which you are also a part."

And he said, "Beauty is on my mind these days. The queer poetry community in New York City is full of beautiful people, which makes me an outsider. I'm not beautiful. I'm overweight. I'm unfashionable. I live in the wrong neighborhood. But let me add, I'm happy. I love myself. I love my life in New York City."

And then he just goes on to talk about how he doesn't really feel community, you know, with like his gay peers in the area. And talks about how one person told him, "You don't look like the rest of us." But he said, "I'm not going to let narrow minds ruin my time in the city. I will continue to show up at readings at poetry events. I'm here. I'm queer. I'm big. Get used to it."

[both chuckle]

Griffin: That's incredible.

Rachel: Yeah! His poetry—and I mentioned, he writes a lot about his experience being Mexican-American, both his parents moved here directly from Mexico. And so there's just this line of like, of vulnerability and just very kind of straightforward experience of kind of who he is and the challenges associated with that, and kind of his unique voice. And even kind of talking about just feeling kind of misfit in a lot of places.

He apparently found poetry as a sophomore in undergrad, in Arizona. It wasn't anything that he was planning on pursuing, but he took a like Chicano literature course, and then his instructor was very encouraging and kind of introduced him to more poetry and poets. And then he went to the graduate program, the Iowa Writers Workshop, which I talk about a lot—

Griffin: Yeah! Right.

Rachel: Which is like an MFA program that everybody tries to get into because it's like the most revered. And how he didn't feel encouraged at all! Like how it was a completely opposite experience for him, that he felt very alienated, that it just did not feel like a like safe, supportive environment for him. And so it's just kind of nice, I think, you know... to hear from somebody who is kind of open about... their kind of difficulty fitting in to the world, but then kind of doing it in a way that includes you.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: You know? Like you feel like he is inviting you to kind of learn more about him and, and kind of be close to him, in a way that is really lovely considering that he has felt, you know, kind of different.

Griffin: It's so effective, poems. I have learned a lot, I feel like, just through doing this show with you. And have kind of realized that listening to you reading a poem, which I imagine via the transitive property, if I just read a poem, one of these days like in a book or whatever—

Rachel: [chuckles] Uh-huh.

Griffin: The sort of poetic like traditional poem mechanisms, the way that you write a poem, both like the rhyming nature of it, but also the imagery and everything, I feel like forces you to think about a thing with your—with a less analytical mind, like with a less kind of puzzle-solve sort of brain space. And that makes it a lot easier to really vibe with the author and what they are saying.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I think that when that is sort of used to kind of get across a life experience that is so far removed from my own, it's really transportive, it's really incredible. Who is—who—what was the poet's name again?

Rachel: Eduardo Corral.

Griffin: Cool.

Rachel: He talks a lot about kind of writing about his experience and kind of the challenge associated with that. There's an interview in Bomb Magazine in 2013, and he talks about how difficult it is to write about your personal experience. Because he said, "I forced the language to tell the truth, to stick with what I knew, which is a terrible, terrible way to tackle poetry, because it leaves a great element out, the imagination, the music, and it forces language to do something instead of listening to it."

Griffin: Hm.

Rachel: Which I found really lovely, because I think a lot of times you recognize there is an experience in your life that is particularly poetic, and then you get so caught up in like capturing it exactly as it was. You've made this huge constraint for yourself of like, well, what about like a beautiful way to say something—

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: That is fun to read as a reader instead of like, "I want the reader to know exactly what happened the way it happened."

Griffin: Yeah, sure.

Rachel: And so like in that poem that I read, the Autobiography of My Hungers, like you can tell he's focused a ver—on like a very specific moment, and he's truthful to that. But then he kind of lets the poem do what it needs to do.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And I love that.

Griffin: That was really good.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Can I steal you away though?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Thanks.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

Griffin: I would like to talk about music. A music guy.

Rachel: Okay.

[both chuckle]

Rachel: Welcome to the music guy corner.

Griffin: Welcome to the music guy corner. Plug in, fuckin' tune out, jam off.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I want to talk about Cameron Winter, who, of all places, I found Cameron Winter through grabbing tracks for Fuser.

Rachel: Okay?

Griffin: For my Fuser sets, through—I would say his music is not the most sort of obvious choice to mix into a DJ set.

Rachel: Yeah, not like a dance party kind of jam.

Griffin: Not at all a dance party jam, I will say. But I'm really glad that I found it, because it's really been on my mind a lot in the, what, like two months or so since those Max Fun Drive streams back in April. He is the front man of an indie rock band called Geese, which I'd heard of, but had never really listened to before.

They formed in Brooklyn in 2016, and then he started to release his own sort of solo music very recently. The songs I'm going to talk about today are from his only album, his debut solo album, which came out in 2024, which is called Heavy Metal. But Cameron Winter has a voice that I really just have been thinking a lot about lately, and that far more sort of adept like music critics have written at length about his voice.

I think it kind of defies description, so I'm not really going to try to do that right here. I'm just going to start by playing his biggest song, just give folks listening now a sample of his voice. It is the lead single off of Heavy Metal. It's my favorite song of his, it's called "Love Takes Miles."

["Love Takes Miles" by Cameron Winter plays]

Griffin: I wanted to read a quote from a writer at Rolling Stone named John Dolan about Cameron Winter's voice, said, "He can hoist his voice into a Thom Yorke-ian falsetto, put on a posh pout à la Julian Casablancas or Ian McCulloch from Echo and the Bunnymen, or lapse into a stentorian yawp that brings to mind Mark E Smith of The Fall or Arctic Monkeys' Alex Turner." It really—like, I can think of a lot of like male vocalists who have a great deal of like range.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: Like a—like a Nate Ruess from Fun or The Format. But there's just kind of an insane versatility to Cameron Winter's voice that is unlike sort of anything I've ever heard.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: It reminds me almost like how Regina Spektor in the span of like one song will like hit you with like a lot of different kind of tones and registers and like textures.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I feel like this dude is really, really, really good at moving through all of those.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And he really showcases his voice with some really evocative lyrics. He credits like beat generation poets—

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: For like informing the—

Rachel: Yeah! I can hear that.

Griffin: Lyrical style of this album. And also like just from a musical level, he cites Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan as sort of just general influences for his solo work. And the result is just like—it is not—I mentioned Fuser at the top because it is not like catchy stuff, I don't feel like. It is not—

I imagine being at a concert, singing along to these songs would be kind of difficult because they are very kind of... I don't know, sort of loose? They don't follow like really super-duper traditional kind of song structures. There is this, I would say, like incredible legacy of somewhat sad, warbly crooners that he kind of slots into, like your Toms Waits, your Lous Reeds.

Rachel: You know what it was making me think of a little bit, was Neil Young.

Griffin: Neil Young! Yeah, for sure. I could hear that. Yeah, absolutely. Especially like late, late-stage Neil Young. [chuckles]

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: That is not really how I should put that. But like all of these artists that we are like describing are older acts, for the most part. And this dude is 24 years old.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: That is crazy to me! That he is able to sort of conjure that up out of, I don't know... Whenever I hear a voice like that, I just assume—whenever I hear Tom Waits sing, I'm like, wow, this guy has been through some shit.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know. I am sure Cameron Winter has his own sort of life experience, but 24, it's just kind of surprising. He was born in Brooklyn in 2002. He was super into ice hockey, and apparently was like going to pursue that at first, but he had sort of ongoing concussion issues that made him have to—

Rachel: Oh, geez.

Griffin: Quit playing ice hockey. So he turned his attention to music instead. He formed Geese in 2016 with some high school friends. Just doing some quick back of the napkin math, he was 14 years old—

Rachel: Oh my god.

Griffin: When he started this band, that is still out there performing today. Him and the members of Geese like blew off college, they got signed by Partisan Records in 2020. And they continue to make music. Geese didn't like break up as he went off to do his like own solo stuff. They put out an album last year called Getting Killed, that is apparently really good. I have not listened to much Geese, because they didn't have songs on the Fuser. [titters]

Rachel: [chuckles] Yeah.

Griffin: Or a setlist that I could find.

Rachel: And there's no way to find music otherwise.

Griffin: There is no way to find music except for pulling stems for a long defunct harmonics rhythm game. Geese and like Cameron Winter have both received like tons of acclaim. They are very much like, I don't know, the indie darling's indie darling. Like they're—they are... they have been sort of chart topping the like best album... This album, Heavy Metal, was on like Consequence, Pace, Pitchfork, Rolling Stone.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Like a bunch of other best albums of 2025 list. A lot of other sort of musical artists in the space are obsessed with Cameron Winter, just for the sort of unique nature of his voice and the music that he makes. I think you gotta be in a certain kind of mood to dig on this music. I think "Love Takes Miles" is probably the closest thing to like a toe-tapping crowd pleaser on the album.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And it does have like a pretty upbeat kind of fun chorus. It has like a Cheers-esque vibe that I do kind of dig, but the rest of the album is a bit more... somber, I will say, but like super-duper soulful. I want to play another track off that album that I really like called Nausicaä (Love Will Be Revealed), which my brain I thought was about the Studio Ghibli movie, but Nausicaä is also a character from The Odyssey, which I didn't know—

Rachel: Oh! Yeah.

Griffin: Because I'm not—

Rachel: Honestly, me neither.

Griffin: Okay, good. I just needed to check on that, because it made me feel very... uncultured.

Rachel: I mean, that Christopher Nolan film is going to come out and then everybody's gonna—

Griffin: Everybody's gonna know a lot of stuff about The Odyssey, that's true. Anyway, this song is called Nausicaä (Love Will Be Revealed). It's just really just soulful and rich and good.

["Nausicaä (Love Will Be Revealed)" by Cameron Winter plays]

Griffin: I do want to say that apparently there—folks who are very plugged into the indie music space have probably read stories that have come out this year about how Cameron Winter and Geese allegedly used a digital marketing firm to artificially inflate their fan base and growth.

Rachel: Willd?

Griffin: Which I learned about while I was... while I was learning about this. I want to say this is not that! We are not—

Rachel: [laughs]

Griffin: This is not—we have not been contacted by some PR firm to do that. I just think—

Rachel: Yeah, unless he's Quince. Is he maybe Quince? [chuckles]

Griffin: He might be Aura Frames. No, I just, I... I don't know—I don't know about all that. I just fuckin' dig...

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: I just dig this music. "Love Take Miles," I don't know. I've been listening to in the car a lot. I've just listen to it a bunch, I think it's—I think it's really, really good. And I think, you know, 24 years old, is just kind of—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Just kind of getting started, which is real exciting.

Rachel: Artists that are like that original, it's like you almost picture them living their whole life in a bunker, with like a record player with like seven records.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And then just not knowing anything else, they're just making stuff that appeals to them, not at all like based on what is—what is popular or current.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: Like it just, it feels so remarkable in its uniqueness.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And that seems really hard to do.

Griffin: Yeah, I don't—I can't imagine how one does it.

Rachel: Yeah. [chuckles]

Griffin: But anyway, that's Cameron Winter. Do you want to know what our folks at home are talking about?

Rachel: Yes.

Griffin: Anna says, "My Small Wonder is a desktop mug warmer. There's nothing worse than forgetting about a hot beverage and coming back to find it is now cold, so having this tiny hot plate on my desk to keep my coffee or tea warm indefinitely is a lifesaver, and has saved me many a trips to the microwave."

Rachel: This is a thing that I always see advertisements for like around like holiday time or like, you know, Father's Day, that's like, "Hey, get one of these." And I'm like, eh...

Griffin: This is lukewarm. Can I be honest?

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This is not good right now.

Rachel: It's like, how often would I really use that? But I think probably every day. [titters]

Griffin: I put creamer in the coffee, and so like immediately I am fuckin' around with like the temperature of the—of the thing. It's not a big deal to me, I just don't want to drink lukewarm coffee, because it's kind of gross.

Rachel: Mm-hm.

Griffin: I think I would enjoy it, but also, my desk has so much shit on it already.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: The thought of having a hot plate that I would definitely like set a fucking Game Boy down or something at some point and like burn our house down? I don't know if it's safe.

Rachel: The other day, not to put you on blast—

Griffin: Uh-oh!

Rachel: But the other day Griffin came down, maybe it was earlier today, with like seven mugs that had collected on his desk.

Griffin: Man, that was a—yeah.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: I feel like you can chart kind of...

Rachel: The kind of week you've had?

Griffin: Well, yeah, I think that's a soft way of putting it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Like what kind of—sort of where on the depressive sine wave I'm currently kind of riding, based on how many mugs I gather on my desk.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And this was a six mugger. This was a bad.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: This was a rough one. Again, our son is being so mean to us.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: No, it's not his—it's not his fault. It's genetics, I guess. China says, "I don't think we talk enough about what an amazing innovation the 'did you forget to attach something' prompt is for email. I know for a fact I'm not the only person who's typed up a really professional-sounding email, in which I have with so much hubris said 'I've attached,' only to completely forget my commitment by the end of the email and hit send, and then have to send a follow up email going, 'And here is the attachment.'"

Rachel: [chuckles] Yes!

Griffin: "Now my good friend Outlook says, 'You're about to do that thing again. Would you like to reconsider your actions?' I was so grateful that I attached my file, sent my email and immediately wrote you about it. Happy Wednesday." Folks, this is the shit!

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: Wonderfulpodcast@gmail.com. This is the shit.

Rachel: This is it.

Griffin: This is the shit!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: When you think about it, and you feel it, let us know, because this is really good stuff.

Rachel: Yeah. Yeah, I believe in this so strongly that sometimes I will have never attended to a—include an attachment. I will just say like, I will reference something maybe later in the email.

Griffin: Yeah.

Rachel: And my email platform will be like, "Did you forget?" And I'm like, thank you. Did I? No. But I appreciate it. [chuckles]

Griffin: I don't know that Gmail's ever got me like that.

Rachel: Oh, no?

Griffin: I don't know.

Rachel: I can't remember if Gmail does it. I know Outlook does.

Griffin: I send maybe two emails a month. I am not a big sort of email guy.

Rachel: [chuckles] No.

Griffin: So my opportunities to fuck this up are limited, but I do still do it. I do still make a mess of this thing. Thank you so much for listening to our show! Thank you so much to Bo En and Augustus for the use of our theme song, "Money Won't Pay." You can find a link to that in episode description.

And thank you to Maximum Fun for having us on the network. Go to maximumfun.org, check out all the great shows that they've got going on over there. We've got some merch over at mcelroymerch.com. A "You're going to be amazing shirt," designed by Sabrina Volante. There is a "20 make it stick" like sticky notes, which are truly darling.

And 10% of all of our merch proceeds this month will be donated to Lambda Legal, which is a national organization working to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of LGBTQ+ people and everyone living with HIV through impact, litigation, education and public policy work. Also, the last book in The Adventure Zone graphic novel series called Story and Song, which also includes the Stolen Century, it's sort of like a double book—

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: You can preorder that right now, it comes out in like a month or so. It's very, very soon. If you go to theadventurezonecomic.com, you can preorder it. There are a couple of like different retailers doing like special editions. Barnes and Noble and Books-A-Million both have like exclusive editions available.

Barnes and Noble includes four collectible trading cards, Books-A-Million includes a collectible poster. Also, when this comes out, I think we will have just announced that we are doing a book release party in Boston, on July 18th—or sorry, July 16th, at the Chevalier Theatre.

Tickets for that go on sale this Thursday, June 11th. Each ticket includes a signed paperback copy of Story and Song, provided by Brookline Booksmith. And we're going to be there and doing a bunch of stuff to celebrate the release of this last book.

Rachel: Yeah!

Griffin: I finally have been reading it. I finally got over my fear of reading it.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: And I'm so—it's been so... Oh, man, very deeply, deeply, deeply, deeply emotionally affecting.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: To a degree that I was not really anticipating, but probably should have.

Rachel: It's very sweet at night to look over and see Griffin reading this and to like, you know, think about how cool that must be to have that.

Griffin: It is pretty—it's is pretty cool.

Rachel: Yeah.

Griffin: It's pretty cool. Anyway, that's it for the show. Thank you so much for listening. And we'll be back with another one next week, so stay tuned and keep it real... keep it real nasty and—don't keep it real nasty. Be good to each other, and to yourself.

Rachel: Mm-hm. Good night and good luck.

Griffin: What is it—is the "be good to each other and yourself," is that Dr. Phil? Let's take his shit.

Rachel: I don't think it's Dr. Phil.

Griffin: We should do Dr. Phil's shit, and just do it.

Rachel: I don't think it's Dr. Phil?

Griffin: We're coming for you, Dr. Phil!

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Your whole game. Dr. Oz, you're next. Are you googling what does Dr. Phil say?

Rachel: I'm googling "be good to each other."

Griffin: And yourself. It may be nothing.

Rachel: Oh, is it "and yourself" at the end? Is that 100%?

Griffin: I don't know, that feels like what he would—that feels like, you know, his flair.

Rachel: None of this has to be in the episode.

Griffin: It does, because we're doing it and we're recording it.

Rachel: Hm, I can't—I can't find it. I mean, I'm not typing—

Griffin: Then this is original—this is an original, cool outro for Wonderful. Be good to yourself. And to a... I just lost it.

Rachel: [chuckles]

Griffin: Now you're just looking at pictures of Dr. Phil.

Rachel: I keep getting "be excellent to each other" from Bill and Ted's.
[chuckles]

Griffin: That's a different thing. Bye, everybody!

[theme music, "Money Won't Pay (feat. Augustus)" by Bo En plays]

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