

**Song Exploder**  
**Beabadoobee - Coming Home**  
**Episode 278**

Hrishikesh: You're listening to Song Exploder, where musicians take apart their songs and piece by piece tell the story of how they were made. I'm Hrishikesh Hirway.

*("Coming Home" by BEABADOOBEE)*

Beabadoobee is an award-winning singer and songwriter from England, who's been releasing music since 2017. Her third album is called *This Is How Tomorrow Moves*. It came out in August 2024 and it went to #1 on the UK charts. She made the album with her bandmate Jacob Bugden and with producer Rick Rubin at his studio, Shangri-La, in Malibu. And for this episode, I talked to Bea about a song from that album called "Coming Home."

*(Vocals: "A hotel room only means I'll be with you soon / An American state makes me feel so far away / So I promise this time I won't be late")*

*(music fades down)*

Bea: My name's Bea, but my artist name is Beabadoobee.

*(music fades out)*

I was in a hotel called the Thompson. It's in Hollywood. I had, like, a little break before the next leg of the Eras tour with Taylor Swift. And I was like, on my bed. Quite sad.

And not to say that it wasn't really fun playing those shows. It's just every time I go on tour, I get very homesick.

I had been in that hotel for a couple of days now. And I've had very lonely mornings. I just felt like I really missed my boyfriend. I think we had just said goodnight, and we had a really long conversation.

So after this phone call, I realized I was alone again. And every time I have a feeling, I always pick up the guitar.

*(Early voice memo: humming and figuring out guitar chords)*

I just put my fingers on the strings and see what happens.

It definitely matched the feeling I felt at that moment. I was missing someone I really loved and I was missing home.

There was a longingness to the sound the guitar made every time I pressed my fingers on the strings.

*(Early voice memo fades out)*

I love the idea of singing about mundane things and making it sound pretty, like doing the dishes and doing the washing up. And I always thought of Adam Sandler. You know, *The Wedding Singer*, when he sings on the intercom of the airport to Drew Barrymore.

*(“Grow Old With You” clip from The Wedding Singer: “I’ll miss you, kiss you / Give you my coat when you are cold / I’ll need you, feed you”)*

And he’s like, “I’ll even let you hold the remote control.”

*(Clip continues: “I’ll even let you hold the remote control”)*

That was one of the first songs I’d ever covered. And I always thought that was sweet, and I wanted to make a song like that one day.

*(Second voice memo, vocals: “You do the dishes, I’ll carry the load / To make up lost time / The trash to the brim, I’m scared of it”)*

It felt like I was writing a letter to my boyfriend.

*(Vocals: “But you always know just what to say / And I’m sorry if I’m coming home too late”)*

Me and Jacob Bugden – he’s a band mate of mine, but also is a main collaborator of my music – we went to the studio the next day, and recorded some demos.

*(demo guitar)*

I recorded the guitar first.

And that studio had these two massive doors that led out to a big balcony. And we left those doors open. It was a hot day. So all those sounds naturally bleed in with whatever you’re making.

*(demo instrumental featuring birds chirping and click track)*

You could hear little birds chirping in the back. I really fell in love with those sounds, and I wanted to keep them in.

It suited what this song felt like.

*(demo instrumental ends)*

And then we moved on to vocals.

And one of my favorite lines in that first verse is "The trash to the brim, I'm scared of it, but you always know what to say."

*(demo vocals: "The trash to the brim, and I'm scared of it / But you always know just what to say / And I'm sorry if I'm coming home too late.")*

And it is mundane. The trash always gets up to the rim of the bin in my house, because everyone, like me and my boyfriend are terrified about putting it in the bin outside.

But I was that far away from home that I wanted to take the trash out really badly.

And, like, I was in a hotel for such a long time, it almost feels like a little prison, like... And that's, I think, where the lyric, "I'm waking up to the gap in my blinds, peeking sunlight," and wishing you were there. That lyric kind of stuck to me.

*(demo vocals: "I'm waking up to the gap on my blinds / Peeking sunlight / I'd do anything just to be with you / To sit and watch you slowly wake / And I'm sorry if I'm coming home too late")*

I always felt the need to make up for things because I was busy and away from home a lot. And I felt like I was losing time with someone I truly, truly loved. And I felt like I was wasting it. Like, there was almost like a time limit. There's some part of my brain where it feels like things don't last, and so I have to use up every single second to make it worth it. That's what made being away from home so frustrating for me.

*(demo vocals: "And I'm sorry if I'm coming home too late.")*

There isn't a solid chorus. Which I was always self-conscious about.

But that's how I wrote it. And I didn't wanna change the way I wrote it. You know, there's just a moment in the middle of the song:

*(demo vocals: "A hotel room only means I'll be with you soon.")*

My drummer was staying in LA too, but he could also play some beautiful piano.

His name's Luca Caruso.

*(demo vocals: "And a bar on the roof's / Not a good way to leave you too")*

That line is so specific to me and my boyfriend. 'Cause I think we had our first ever, like, argument, in a bar, on a roof, in LA. And I think it was me feeling overwhelmed about being away so much and feeling confused about like, am I meant to be in a relationship right now? Like, am I meant to be doing this?

I remember when I played him the song and he heard that line (laughs), I don't think he's ever gone out with a musician before. So he was like, whoa, I didn't realize you'd write about, about, about specific things like that.

*(demo vocals: "And a seat on a plane / Only shows that we're miles away")*

I loved the song. And I loved it more after we made the demo.

The idea of working with Rick Rubin never crossed my mind just because I didn't think it would ever happen.

But we had been meaning to meet, and when I finally met him, I went up to Malibu. And then towards the end, I actually played him that demo on my phone.

And then, I think a week later, his manager hit up mine and said that he wanted to do a record with me, which was mental.

But it was honestly working with Rick and, and going to Shangri-La where I, I really started to believe in myself for the first time ever.

*(bass)*

We didn't start over, because there was a charm to it that you didn't wanna change.

So it was like, if we needed to rerecord something, we'd work from that demo and rerecord whatever instrument we were doing.

And then Jacob had this really cool idea where, at first he was like, there should be drums.

And I was like, really? Drums?

And then he said, you know, those little monkeys with the kind of, like, marching drum sound. Like he wanted to recreate that sound. And I thought that was awesome.

And Jacob isn't a drummer. But sometimes it sounds better if someone who doesn't play drums plays it.

*(add drums)*

I think he almost stood like a monkey as well, banging the drums with both his hands.

It's not perfect, but I think this song doesn't have to be perfect.

If you're talking about real life things, then the song has to sound real, and you have to hear the mistakes, because all I'm singing about in the song is about mistakes.

Forgetting to do the dishes and forgetting to do the trash. There's a beauty in the mistakes you make.

I love when artists release their demos. Like the Beatles, their anthologies came out and you'd see them like figuring out songs. And there's like a realness to that. And it almost feels like you're in the room.

And I wanted "Coming Home" to feel like that.

*(backing vocals: "And a seat on a plane / Only shows that you're miles away")*

I love when Jacob does backing vocals. Jacob's voice is so different to mine, but if you pair it together, it... there's like a, a slight weirdness to it. But it makes sense in my brain.

*(lead and backing vocals together: "And a bar on the roof's / Not a good way to leave you too / And a seat on a plane / Only shows that we're miles away")*

There is something so nostalgic about it, and something quite creepy about it, almost.

I don't know, it sounds like a soundtrack to an old ride in an old theme park.

*(lead and backing vocals together: "A hotel room only means I'll be with you soon / An American state makes me feel so far away")*

There's a Beatles song with a muted trumpet in it. And I was like, that's the vibe I wanna go for.

*(sings muted trumpet)*

This man called CJ Camerieri was an amazing trumpet player.

*(trumpet)*

And he harmonized with his trumpet take.

*(trumpet doubles and harmonies)*

Yeah, I mean, that sounds beautiful.

Rick's main thing was that he wanted to keep the meaning and the songwriting at the forefront.

And so, in terms of the production, the simpler it was, the more it made sense.

*(vocals: "I'll do the dishes, we'll carry the load / Because we have time / I emptied the trash, like I said I would / And you'd never guess what I'd have to say / I'm not sorry 'cause this time I won't be late")*

When I write music, I always want there to be a hopefulness to it, despite maybe not feeling it at the time. So in that last verse, I wanted to say "We'll carry the load, because we have time." And I don't have to be away this much.

You know, what's strange is that I still have the same feeling that I had when I first wrote it. Because I, I'm in LA right now. And my boyfriend was actually meant to come, but he couldn't because he's working. So I really feel it. I really feel it now. Yeah, it sucks. (laughs) I should probably go and write another song about it. (laughs)

Hrishikesh: Coming up, you'll hear how all this came together in the final song.

And now, here's "Coming Home" by Beabadoobee, in its entirety.

*("Coming Home" by BEABADOOBEE)*

To learn more, visit [songexploder.net](http://songexploder.net). You'll find links to buy or stream "Coming Home."

This episode was produced by Craig Eley, Theo Balcomb, Kathleen Smith, Mary Dolan, and myself. Our production assistant is Tiger Biskup. The episode artwork is by Carlos Lerma, and I made the show's theme music and logo.

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I'm Hrishikesh Hirway. Thanks for listening.