

[Review: Olivia Rodrigo's "GUTS" charts number 1; is it worthy?](#)

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Olivia Rodrigo jump-started her career in January 2021 with her single "driver's license" before dropping her first album *SOUR* months after. Two years later, her second studio album *GUTS* has charted number one on the Billboard Hot 100, but does it deserve it?

The opening track "all-american bi**h" has a string guitar and soft singing then quickly transitions to a heavy electric guitar like her opening track on *SOUR* with "brutal." *GUTS* has an intro that's in your face, and accurately sets the tone for the album. While following the same structure, I prefer its deeper lyricism describing how people view her as the perfect American woman while contrasting this concept throughout the track.

One of the star tracks is "bad idea right?". This song stands out as a story, illustrating how Rodrigo makes internal excuses to justify getting back with her ex-boyfriend. The chorus is catchy, "My brain goes 'Ah, ah, ah.'" It conveys that her brain is controlling her actions and that she's having almost an instinctive reaction to being around her ex. "I should probably, probably not" repeating to herself not to see them tonight. It's an improvement from her last project with better lyrics and a catchy chorus.

"vampire" is often compared to "driver's license," as both singles charted #1 on Billboard's Top 100, but I see it as a massive improvement. The tempo, production, and careful choice of lyrics make it stand out to me, combined with the great highs and instrumental moments, create a memorable track which easily gets you in your feelings.

The following track is one of my favorite songs off the album. "lacy" follows a similar premise to "jealous" from *SOUR*, where Rodrigo compares herself to another girl. Rodrigo sings about how the aforementioned Lacy is so kind and beautiful, "It's like you're made of angel dust." My favorite thing about this track is how she uses a positive description for Lacy and describes her as perfect, but at the end, the singer switches to negative cognates and detailing words for the person who is attracted to her. "I just loathe you lately" and "I despise my jealous eyes." Its slow somber tone works well with its provocative lyrics.

"ballad of a homeschooled girl" is a teen pop punk song that follows a simple structure and has a great chorus detailing how every time she steps outside that its "social suicide." While "making

the bed” is a great step up from her last album with its great production and more fleshed out lyrics. In contrast, “logical” is an amazing slow burning, atmospheric track with a beautiful piano and great vocal mixing that makes a nice echoey chamber effect to give this composition more dramatization.

In *GUTS*'s eighth track, “get him back,” Rodrigo describes she wants to get back with someone because they had fun times, but he also wronged her so she wants revenge. The song's title and premise make for a fun play on words.

Meanwhile, Rodrigo's next track, “love is embarrassing,” stood out for its extremely catchy chorus and its shouting of the song's title in the chorus, with her heavy idea of caring for someone who doesn't care for her. She emphasizes this in the lines “I damn near started World War 3” and “I'm planning out my wedding with some guy I'm never marrying,” showing a deeper side to her mentality. The track doesn't feel like a copy and paste pop track full of empty repetitive words.

“the grudge” is amazing. I love its pacing, lyrics, and rhyme scheme. It shows how she holds a grudge against a guy who treated her terribly and gives up her resentment towards them. “pretty isn't pretty” is progressive in nature about how trying to cover yourself with makeup and trying to look pretty isn't pretty enough and ultimately makes you ugly. It's beautiful and one of the great closing tracks.

The last track “teenage dream” is a slow burn about how she misses her good years of being young. Rodrigo sings “They all say it gets better; it gets better but what if I don't,” repeatedly reemphasizing and bringing the lyric into a high progression with instrumental changes showing her worries.

Rodrigo stands out with an album that holds itself, showing progression from her previous work on *SOUR* and her growth as an artist with themes throughout that surprised me. Scoring an 8/10, its length, production, lyricism was overall an improvement and ultimately deserves the praise and recognition it deserves.