

The Stages of Heartbreak: A Review of Lorde's *Melodrama*

By Meghan Keeney

It's the summer after high school graduation. It's a comfortable 70 degrees and I'm driving with my closest friends down a deserted road as the sun sets. We hook up the music and start sharing our favorite songs. An anxious but optimistic mood hangs over us as we drive to nowhere in particular. This feeling of anticipation and invincibility is encapsulated at the start of Lorde's *Melodrama*.

Melodrama is Lorde's third release, coming after "Pure Heroine" and "The Love Club" EP. She asserted herself into the music scene at 16 years old with her hit "Royals." Her latest compilation proves that she has matured musically and emotionally in the three-year hiatus between albums.

"Green Light," the first track, starts boldly as Lorde's voice pierces through the airwaves above simple piano chords. Gradually, an electronic dance beat kicks in, driving the melody to an explosive chorus that could make anyone dance like they are a few vodka-sodas in at a concert. Extravagant crescendos, minor chords, and Lorde's expansive range of emotions continue to fuel the album as she guides her listeners through the stages of heartbreak: denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and acceptance. Each song finds her at a different stage of grief, leading her to finally accept her reality by the end.

On her journey of self-reflection, Lorde emphasizes a secret Truth through her upbeat pop-songs and heart-wrenching ballads. In "Green Light," she wants to "scream the truth"; in "Sober" she

“dances with the truth”. The repeated *denial* of the Truth leads to drinking and partying as her vice. “Liability” and “Writer in the dark” separate themselves from the rest of the pop-centric album, as they feel raw and vulnerable. In “Liability,” Lorde histrionically sings alone to a piano as she admits her Truth— people always end up leaving her.

The last song, “Perfect Places,” acts as a rebuttal to the partying and carefree attitude set in “Green Light.” Over the warm, full tones set by the synthesizers, she questions her cycle of getting “lost” in a drunken haze and gracelessly hooking up with someone at that night’s party to escape her problems. The song ends the same way the album starts—Lorde singing over minimalistic piano chords. As the last note fades away, my friends and I are transported back into my car, feeling optimistic about the uncertainty of the next chapter of our lives.