

Tucker Wetmore

What Not To

Knowing what *not* to do is often just as important as knowing what to do. Tucker Wetmore, at only 25, is keenly aware of that fact, and he shares that hard-won lesson over the 19 songs on his debut album, *What Not To*. Wetmore is a natural observer, and he's paid close attention to how family, friends, and even strangers lived and the decisions they made. What he witnessed — and the experiences he had himself — all made its way into his songwriting.

"*What Not To* is an album that talks about living. It's a diary of life and what you can take away from it, if you allow yourself to learn," he says. "There's no such thing as a bad experience or a bad time. It's all just an opportunity to grow."

Born and raised in the remote, emerald-green forests of Kalama, Washington, on the banks of the Columbia River, Wetmore grew up immersed in music. His grandfather was a pastor and Wetmore's formative years were soundtracked by gospel songs, along with the reggae played at large family barbecues and the soft rock of the Eagles, Jim Croce, and Billy Joel. At 11, he started learning piano and dabbled in guitar and trumpet, but sports soon took precedence — until an injury sustained on the football field while in college changed his life. Wetmore dropped out, returned home, and, at the urging of his mother, took his familiar seat at the piano.

"My mom was working nights at the steel mill and I'd just sit there playing piano. Eventually, I did something I had never done before — I wrote my first song," Wetmore says. "It was terrible, but I wrote it, and I was hooked."

Wetmore committed himself to songwriting and moved to Nashville in 2020 to pursue his craft. It paid off with last year's "Wind Up Missin' You," his first Number One at country radio and, along with "Wine into Whiskey," one of two back-to-back RIAA-certified platinum singles. While the breezy, windows-down jam "Wind Up Missin' You" is a standout of *What Not To*, it's only one facet of a thoughtful and intentional album.

Produced by Chris LaCorte, *What Not To* is rich in interconnected themes ("Like red yarn connecting a bunch of pins on a wall," Wetmore says). Songs like "Casino" and "Bad Luck Looks Good on Me" compare life and love to a gamble. "Goodbye Whiskey" and "Whiskey Again" stand in for an up-and-down romance. And "Brunette" is a metaphor for Wetmore's own battle with anxiety, especially when it comes to relationships.

But all of the album is informed by the message of its title track, which Wetmore wrote with his best friend Jacob Hackworth, LaCorte, and Nashville powerhouses Chase McGill and Jameson Rogers. A deeply personal song to Wetmore, "What Not To" is about struggle, compassion, and salvation.

“Momma said you don’t pray no more/breaks my heart, so I do it for you,” he sings over gentle acoustic guitar.

“That was one of the toughest songs I’ve ever written, but also one of the easiest too, because it just kind of fell out onto the paper,” Wetmore says. “I write from experiences, feeling, and emotion, and it often comes from a higher power that I really don’t understand. That’s how writing that song felt.”

Other tracks are steeped in hooky melodies and clever turns of phrase. The infectious “3, 2, 1” — as in “*three* words, *too* late, damn girl you’re the *one* that got away” — is a radio hit in waiting. “Silverado Blue” aims to capture the fleeting energy of young love destined to fade. And “Takes One to Break One,” another easygoing singalong, touches on all the themes of the LP. Wetmore didn’t write that one, but he was shocked by how the song so fully referenced the ideas he was trying to get across.

“The album is bookended by ‘Whatcha Think Is Gonna Happen,’ a foreshadowing song, and ‘Whiskey Again,’ and every song in between tees up the other,” he says. “The first half begins with my experiences with a girl. We break up and, in ‘Goodbye Whiskey,’ I wonder if whiskey was the problem. But then you get to ‘What Not To’ and we learn that just maybe the problem is something else...”

By the end of *What Not To*, Wetmore is back where he started: navigating another relationship. But this time, he has experience behind him and the knowledge of what not to do.

Wetmore will bring his album and that message to audiences on tour this summer with Thomas Rhett and on his own headlining run. But the singer-songwriter — who’s already been named one of *Billboard’s* all-genre Ones to Watch, along with new artist accolades from Spotify’s RADAR program, Vevo, *MusicRow*, and Opry’s NextStage Class of 2025 — wants fans to know that there’s more to him than what they see onstage, online, and even on the charts.

“I didn’t want this album to be just songs — I wanted them to be songs with purpose,” Wetmore says. “Like me, there is more to music than just streaming or sales numbers on a page. Music makes you feel something. When I was going through things as a kid, I turned to music and it didn’t let me down. I hope *What Not To* does the same for everyone who listens.”