

“I learned at an early age that life may not be worth living,” relays singer Jeff Glazier. “Once you make that discovery, you really can’t go back. Things like that cannot be undone.” And as the sun set over the quaint coffee shop where I found myself lost in his stories over a so-so espresso—Glazier himself did not drink (“coffee tastes like crap”)—I realized that the man I was interviewing was a kid inside, someone for whom life has been a tremendous struggle and who terribly misses the days before he grew up and became “self-aware.”

While overall he is one of the friendliest, most social, (and can you believe polite!) rockers I’ve interviewed, getting information about A Raven’s Sorrow from Glazier can be most aptly compared to getting your teeth pulled at the dentist’s or perhaps more so mining for gold back in 1848, knowing the odds are stacked against you but that the reward would be a thousandfold if Lady Luck is on your side. I couldn’t help but feel that he constantly had something to hide. Even the most basic questions (“who would you say your influences are?”) generate almost brick-wall responses (“you know, I sound like me”). When pressed, he would shut down. The further I strayed from the bread-and-butter questions, the more amicable he became.

I didn’t quite know what to expect. After listening to the two five-song demos that the band has cut in the last few months, I was a bit surprised by how different, and yet how similar, they are. One, called “Chrysalis Demos,” is a set of demos from what Glazier refers to as “a quasi rock album about the senselessness and emptiness of life.” The other is entitled “The Hail Suicide Demos”—and yes, Glazier is strangely particular about the “The” before the one title and not the other (“it just flows right, it just makes sense, these are The Hail Suicide Demos, whereas with Chrysalis, well those, it hits you like a hammer over the head, they’re powerful, to the point—[with punctuating hand gestures] Chrysalis Demos.” I must admit I didn’t really follow his logic. He seemed lost in his own world, as seem to be most artists who actually have something to say. The music, though, speaks clearly enough for itself. The Chrysalis Demos were raw, emotional cries that were so exposing I at times felt uncomfortable. The Hail Suicide Demos were rock, but in a way I’d never quite heard before, and similarly sounded like the pleading cries of a man on the brink of a breakdown.

I naturally wondered about the name of the band, which to me evoked Poe-like images of sorrow and sadness, but was told that the group was in no way named after Poe or his famous poem, “The Raven” (“why does everyone keep asking me that? It’s ridiculous. As if there’s only one raven in the world, and any time that word is mentioned, people think of that poem. I don’t even like that poem. He wrote much better ones than that”). Rather, the band was named by its keyboardist and Glazier’s closest friend, Jason Percival. While I didn’t have the opportunity to interview Percival directly, as unfortunately our schedules didn’t align that day (Glazier had actually asked that he be there), he sent me a few thoughts on the band prior to the interview by e-mail: “It is a funny thing how all of our regrets, anxieties, fears, and discontent fill us with such a strong desire to escape life, but yet also make us feel alive,” he wrote. “Perhaps it is this struggle between wanting to make an end yet feeling obligated to endure that makes us human, and ultimately gives unyielding truth to the music we create. When the lights go down and A Raven’s Sorrow takes the stage, we don’t even know what you’re in for.” In the context of speaking with Glazier, sitting just two feet away from a man who seemed to walk the

delicate balance between giftedness and insanity, I couldn't help but feel the truth in his words and realized more and more that this is indeed a band not to be missed.

And as I finished up my espresso, savoring every last sip as long as I could in an attempt to stall just a moment more to see if I could strike gold, I felt a sigh of relief sweep over me, as his intensity was almost too much for me. I felt drained, like those 45 minutes had lasted for hours. And in a sense they had—as I couldn't get his image, persona, or sharp, cutting voice out of my mind for the rest of the day.