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Raised Catholic, the musician Corook explores queerness and self-acceptance in their new album, "Committed to a Bit." (NCR screenshot/YouTube/hicorook)



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A sense of humor and playfulness toward life can be powerful tools of self-acceptance, which non-binary singer/songwriter Corook uses generously in their music. Corook's latest album, "Committed to a Bit," explores the singer's questions on identity and queerness, beginning with their [Catholic childhood](#).

Corook, who has been touring the United States and Canada this summer, moves through a world that is, more often than not, hostile toward people who dare express themselves authentically. Musically, Corook takes us on a self-love story where struggle and growth intertwine. But even as the lyrics confront the longing for familial and romantic love, and the complexity of coming out, Corook radiates a playful and determined brightness through it all.

"Committed to a Bit" brings listeners along for the singer's journey of carving a space of true belonging within themselves, balancing joy with uncertainty. On the very first track, we hear: "I'll say it all / Comes natural / But I know the truth is / A long long time ago / I made someone up / To help myself fit in."

It can be confusing, this path of finding oneself; it can feel like trying on masks that society tells us we should be wearing.

Growth is never linear, and Corook delves back and forth between questioning who they are and boldly claiming space in this world. Flashes of joy and pride in their newfound identity are accompanied by flashes of doubt and insecurity.

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But, in the end, there is hope. In the final line of the last song of the album, Corook softly sings, "If I could find the younger me / I'd hug her and I'd hold her / Say 'you have everything you need' / I'm okay getting older."

In "THEY!," the most played song on the album, Corook sings about growing up "Christian in a rigid system." Corook continues: "But no one's rushing you / We're just loving you / When you're ready to / We'll be here with open ears when you say / You know how I'm gay? / Well, now I go by 'They' / It's no big deal, I'm more me now."

Corook is more self-assured now than ever, and that includes embodying a sense of playfulness and whimsy in their work. "THEY!" is appealing precisely because it's silly. Random beeps are placed throughout the song, and absurd voices — one reminiscent of Patrick Star from Spongebob — are sprinkled in like confetti. Corook's true self shines so brightly that listeners are invited to wonder what real authenticity could mean to us, too.

Faith spaces might strive for genuine inclusion in theory but still struggle in application. Corook no longer identifies as a Catholic, but their music will doubtless resonate with those in the faith who are exploring their gender identities and sexual attractions.

What does it mean to express one's true self in an environment that might not feel safe? How can those of us with power help make our parishes a place of welcome and acceptance?

Belonging isn't about fitting oneself into existing rigid social structures, but rather about the creation of communities with open arms. Churches have much to learn from Corook's honoring of the full spectrum of human identity, queerness and all.