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Photo Courtesy: Jan-Otto/E+/Getty Images A total hip replacement, also called total hip arthroplasty, is a procedure in which a surgeon removes your hip to remove the bone and cartilage that have been damaged. There's also a less invasive version of this surgery in which the surgeon makes one or two smaller incisions to install the joint implant. This can result in a quicker recovery time. In the United States, surgeons perform more than 450,000 hip replacements each year. There are a few different reasons why your healthcare provider may recommend you for a hip replacement surgery. Arthritis of various kinds can damage joints not just in your hip, but also in your knees and hands. Fractures or breaks can damage the joint to rub together, which can be painful long term. Learn more about these and other conditions that often result in the need for hip replacement surgery. Osteoarthritis. This condition is the result of cartilage breaking down around the areas where the ends of your joints. When the cartilage starts to disintegrate, the bones of your joint start to rub together, causing pain and swelling. If you have osteoarthritis in your hip, over time, your hip bones may start growing to replace the lost cartilage. These growths are known as bone spurs, or osteophytes, and they also cause stiffness and pain. Hip replacement surgery is an option that relieves pain and stiffness associated with osteoarthritis. Some symptoms of osteoarthritis include: Pain Swelling Loss of flexibility Formation of spurs Inability to move the joint. Surgery is the most effective method of repairing this type of damage to a hip joint. There are non-invasive treatments that help relieve pain associated with damaged hip joints. However, healthcare professionals generally recommend hip replacement surgery when the pain and stiffness begin interfering with your ability to perform daily activities. It's rare to experience an injury after having your initial hip replacement, but if you get a fracture because of an accident or weakened bones, you may need to have the prosthetic replaced. Surgery is usually necessary if a fracture occurs in the bones around the joint following joint replacement surgery. Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteonecrosis Rheumatoid arthritis is a medical condition that develops when your immune system begins attacking the membrane that lines your joint. Rheumatoid arthritis leads to inflammation, stiffness and pain. In some cases, this medical condition can destroy a hip joint entirely. Joint pain and stiffness are symptoms that directly affect the hip. If your hip pain only happens in the morning, it's a sign of osteoarthritis. Osteonecrosis, also called avascular necrosis, is a medical condition that can lead to the destruction of the bone in your hip joint. This causes the bone is restricted, usually due to an injury. This causes the bone is restricted, usually due to an injury. This causes the bone is restricted, usually due to an injury. This causes the bone is restricted, usually due to an injury. This causes the bone is restricted, usually due to an injury. you aren't moving. Osteoarthritis can also occur due to this condition. Both of these conditions are severe and require hip replacement surgery. What Are the Risks of Hip Replacements. But, there are still some risks to consider. Infection and blood clots are the most common risks with a hip replacement, but your doctor will discuss prevention methods with you before surgery. There's also the possibility of leg length inequality, meaning that one of your legs may be shorter or longer than the other after surgery. Nerve and blood vessel damage around your hip area is also possible. The purpose of hip replacement surgery is to remove diseased or damaged areas of your hip joint. This procedure replaces parts of your hip joint with artificial parts. Hip replacement surgery can also help reduce the effects of osteoarthritis and damage as a result of injuries or fractures. Resource Links "Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Minimally Invasive Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis" NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases "Symptoms of Rheumatoid Arthritis" NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replacement," OrthoInfo "Osteonecrosis," NHS "Fracture After Total Hip Replac Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases MORE FROM SYMPTOMFIND.COM When the world stopped, rap kept going. Nothing—not the pandemic, not state-imposed curfews, not widespread malaise or massive social upheavals—could slow down its lightspeed evolution, from Flint to Oakland to Buffalo to Bradford, England. The most resonant rap songs this year, as in any year, are about perseverance, survival, being seen and heard. Lost albums came to the surface, long-running crews finally got their due, big names got bigger, and "WAP" took over everyone's lives. Even though the year felt endless, the best rap still kept up the stakes, knowing the time we have might always be too short. So let's go.(The following list, sorted alphabetically, includes albums and tracks found on Pitchfork's main year-end tallies, as well as additional entries that did not make those lists but are just as worthy of your time.)Listen to selections from this list on our Spotify playlist and Apple Music playlist. Read more in our guide to Michigan rap, 2020's most exciting regional scene, and check out all of Pitchfork's 2020 wrap-up coverage here. From the very first Earth-shaking piano note, Baby 9eno summons an atmosphere of menace and retribution. Powered by a flawless piano production that sounds like it was ripped directly from the background of an episode of "Inspector Gadget," the Maryland native rips through punchlines, methodically lays out threats, and bluntly promises to carry each one out. "The opps keep dying, they tryna call a truce/Whip a nigga ass like we on Roots," mutters 9eno in a laidback, almost lackadaisical tone. If he was standing over you after he took you for your Foamposites and delivered any of the bars from this track, you really couldn't help but let out a light chuckle. That's the mark of talent. -Matthew RitchieListen: Baby 9eno, "UUV" Bad Boy Chiller Crew; between the mullet, the babyfaces and the West Yorkshire lad swag, their aesthetic teeters on parody, evoking more Kurupt FM than Kurupt. But despite their start doing Jackass-style pranks for laughs, the Bradford, UK, bassline rap crew are shepherds of the 2-step and speed garage riddims that took hold in North England's clubs at the turn of the century, building frenetic car and crime raps from their parents' party tunes. "450" is their official debut single, a romp that's both tongue-in-cheek and dead-serious, driven by a relentless four-on-the-floor house beat wormholed from 1999. By the end of the track's blistering three-minute runtime, the question of their seriousness seems moot—a banger is a banger. -Matthew Ismael RuizListen: Bad Boy Chiller Crew, "450 (2020 Remix)" [ft. S Dog]Brittnee Moore has started an online apothecary, raised two sets of twins on her own, and delivered a dozen EPs, all as the Chattanooga rapper bbymutha. For years, she's brought her whole self to her music, and on "Roaches Don't Die," the first song on her sprawling debut Muthaland, she nimbly weaves in and out of her professional and personal lives. Only after boasting and bucking like the best MCs does she delve into a harrowing and heartwarming account of motherhood. Her kids' father is a pedophile. Yikes. She wants to teach her porn-watching son about consent. Yes. She goes on like this, streaming her consciousness, for nearly four breathless, hookless minutes of pure skill, nerve, and honesty. -Mankaprr ContehListen: Bbymutha, "Roaches Don't Die"There are few acceptable places to play "Free Joe Exotic" outside of your own headphones. On the jaw-dropping track, Flint, Michigan-raised Bfb Da Packman raps about how he would rather hurl himself from a bridge than wear a condom, twists the Sour Patch Kids slogan into a pun about oral sex, and accuses a girl of telling a tall tale about the size of his junk: "She said she can feel it in her stomach, stop capping/Ol' lyin' ass bitch, my dick ain't that big." And all that's in just the first verse. Not even in Michigan, the current rap capital of darkly funny shit talking, will you find anyone thinking more unholy thoughts than Packman. -Alphonse PierreListen: Bfb Da Packman, "Free Joe Exotic" [ft. Sada Baby]In New York, personal top-five rapper rankings have led to countless lunchroom and barbershop fights. On this highlight from his debut mixtape GMTO, Vol. 1 (Get Money Take Over), Bizzy Banks keeps that spirit alive. The only thing not customarily New York about the Brooklyn rapper's single is the drill production. Otherwise, his balance of storytelling and flash—combined with his obsession of an arbitrary list ("You mention Brooklyn, you know that I'm top 5")—will remind you of the city's most complete lyricists. Fashion brands are more than just clothing to him; they're symbols of access to spaces he never thought he would reach. You could probably describe an old Jadakiss or Juelz or Memphis Bleek record in a similar way. New York tradition is inescapable. -Alphonse PierreListen: Bizzy Banks, "Top 5" Boldy James' music carries the gloom of persistent Detroit winters, which made him the perfect choice to join the Buffalo-based Griselda crew in 2020. On The Price of Tea in China, he re-teams with the Alchemist, a master of atmospherics mafioso rap from Buffalo to the bayou. "Surf & Turf" swirls a hypnotic melody atop a rambling trap kit, setting the scene for James' bleak realities—a son in want of his father's love, aware of his absence if not his misdeeds. Even Vince Staples sounds atypically subdued. Matthew Ismael RuizListen: Boldy James, "Surf & Turf" [ft. Vince Staples] The best part of the video for "Don Dada"—a cocky, bouncy, sexy slice of hip-house courtesy of New York rapper Cakes Da Killa and producer Proper Villains—is when Cakes, in an ice-white tennis skirt, steals the focus from a leonine model by shaking his ass in triple-time. He's always been less concerned with genre confines than with rapping over anything that ensures that he's the main character, and this Paris Is Burning credits-worthy, vogue-ready burner feels like a final, ascendant role by several orders of magnitude. Hearing a track this haute and juicy in 2020 is borderline rude for how much it makes us miss the rush of nightlife, but Cakes has never really been polite about his spotlight. -Mina TavakoliListen: Cakes Da Killa / Proper Villains, "Don Dada" Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion rapped such a rich tapestry of filth on "WAP" that it earned a face-breaking 93 million streams in its first week and immediately went No. 1. This wasn't a mere lyrical doubleteam, but two women in their career prime overpowering pop with a raw anthem attuned to the very specific frequency of certain pandemic urges; the rare instant hit that exists as a trend and future monument. Of the many words that could describe their duet—dirty, vulgar, nasty, explicit—none come anywhere close to capturing the attitude of the acronym itself. Over the tremors of a Baltimore club classic, "Whores in This House," Cardi and Megan forgo euphemisms entirely ("I wanna gag," etc.) to present an airtight case in favor of women expressing full-bodied lust. Megan presumably stands before an appellate court to do so, admitting, "Your Honor, I'm a freak bitch," while a Cardi verse somehow tributes the unsung uvula amid an imposing tour de force of lecherous metaphors. "WAP" is so decisively absent of shame that it's now positioned alongside similar anthems by the likes of Khia, Lil' Kim, and Trina. It's as resonant as it is unreachable: consider that, in a year of fairly learnable TikTok challenges, the dance for "WAP" asks that you transition from a floor-hump to a windmill split. It's a feat that the song exists at all, encapsulating a year in which women have been leading both the extraordinary power of the word "pussy." -Clover HopeListen: Cardi B, "WAP" [ft. Megan Thee Stallion]The Miami-based rapper Chester Watson makes himself one with the universe, seeing through veils others don't know are there, rapping like he's at the bottom of the ocean, intoning a mystical hymn while wearing one-of-one Off-White sneakers. He wants you to feel this heady and confident on "Life Wrote Itself" as he mutters about pyramids and stardust over an eerie beat produced by Watson and Kanisono. The world's a mysterious place, if you'd like. He's reading the script. -Matthew StraussListen: Chester Watson, "Life Wrote Itself"Yung Miami and JT of City Girls are grade-A, gold-standard shit talkers. It's what makes their music so fun to listen to, and on "Pussy Talk" they're at their best, enlisting Doja Cat in a rundown of all the things their pussies want, can or can't do, will or won't tolerate. When considered as part of a pussy-exalting trilogy, with Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's "WAP" and Meg's "Don't Stop" as the grand finale, "Pussy Talk" gets even better. In 2016, the 45th president all but ruined the word, but now with the end of his reign, pussy can spend the rest of the 2020s reclaiming its identity. According to City Girls, it is multitalented, multilingual ("English, Spanish, and French"), rich, demanding, and in complete control. -Allison P. DavisListen: City Girls, "Pussy Talk" [ft. Doja Cat]In 2019, Charlotte rapper DaBaby bull-charged rap with 100 frenetic variations on a single song, like a jabbering, grinning, dumb-punchline-dispensing perpetual motion machine. His yearlong blitzkrieg campaign garnered him a No. 1 album, a billion streams on Spotify, and a persistent reputation as a one-note artist. There are entire memes devoted to this idea; DaBaby spoofed it himself in the video for his Lil Yachty and Drake collaboration "Oprah's Bank Account." In 2020, DaBaby showed that he wasn't just unstoppable; he was flexible. Yes, when he opens his mouth it still feels like being trampled by clowns. But on his hit "Rockstar," he also showed that his brand of bottled energy could pop off with pretty much any soundtrack, including the kind of winsome faux-flamenco guitar over which Young Thug might explore his soulful side. -Jayson Greene Listen: DaBaby, "Rockstar" [ft. Roddy Ricch] The world might not need a song of triumph from Drake in 2020, but when he steps into the role of self-aware charmer, it's hard to resist. On "Laugh Now Cry Later," Champagne Papi slips on his silk robe, so unperturbed by old feuds that he's willing to be publicly annihilated by Marshawn Lynch and Kevin Durant in the video and breezy, a form he excels at. Even this stylish opportunist has still got some charisma left. -Isabelia HerreraListen: Drake, "Laugh Now Cry Later" [ft. Lil Durk]Drakeo the Ruler has long been unfazeable, but on his latest LP, Thank You for Using GTL, recorded on a payphone from the Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles County, ice water flows through his veins. Staring down trumped-up conspiracy charges in which his music was on trial as much as his actions, Drakeo oozes with swagger over a moody JoogSzn beat on "Backflip or Sumn." He casually drops threats and flexes on the case he eventually did manage to beat, all the while stressing how unimpressed he is by it all. That he would cut a record full of the same kind of lyrics being used against him in a sham court proceeding is more than just chutzpah. It's evidence that he remains unfazed—by the county sheriff, by the prosecutor, and by that giant bag of money at the strip club. -Matthew Ismael RuizListen: Drakeo the Ruler, "Backflip or Sumn" Earl Sweatshirt and Maxo have both made their homes in the rain-blurred realm where raps feel like unspoken thoughts, where beats resemble humming machinery a block away—a world of smudged loops, two or three notes long, punctured by diaristic jottings that flash like lightning. "Devil hittin' my peripherals," Maxo mutters on "WHOLE WORLD," over a three-minute heart-murmuring loop from Alchemist. Earl's own flow is hesitant, probing for meaning in the cracks between sound and sense: "Anxious, moving at a pallbearer's pace/My family flank me in the rain." The two of them are standing completely still, speaking in code, letting the wind take their thoughts to whoever might hear them. -Jayson GreeneListen: Earl Sweatshirt, "WHOLE WORLD" [ft. Maxo]Flo Milli's "Like That Bitch" is like a shot of bad bitch juice, a potent steroid for dealing with enemies, envy, and haters in general. Over three and a half breathless minutes, she shoots off rounds of snappy taunts and neck-breaking flexes; you can practically feel Flo Milli curling her lips and flipping her hair as she compares you to "a toilet with some lips." The Alabama rapper serves up plates of deliciously petty barbs and flaunts four different flows, offering us a taste of her lifestyle of money-making and man-taking. All you can do is bask in the power of Flo Milli shit. -Isabelia HerreraListen: Flo Milli, "Like That Bitch" Alchemist's flickering piano keys are ideal for spilling loose ruminations. Freddie Gibbs floods the screen with drama—a police traffic stop that risks turning violent; warning cops about his personal arsenal—but when he repeats, "The revolution is the genocide/Look, your execution will be televised," it feels like the perfect flip of Gil Scott-Heron's message for an era when footage of Black death floods the news. Then Rick Ross rides in to drop his best guest spot since "Devil in a New Dress" and the message of "Scottie Beam" [ft. Rick Ross] Hook's "Answer!" could be the waviest hold music, or it could be what the cosmic slop of a breakup sounds like. Fizzling like phone static, it finds the Inland Empire rapper stuck in her ex's voicemail, trying to call him. She floats over MexikoDro's spritely sludge like a ghost, and as she starts to pull away, she finds herself back where she began. It's a quintessential song about the cold war of heartbreak, a tense, transcendent moment from an artist best known for causing small earthquakes. -Mano SundaresanListen: Hook, "Answer!" A decade ago, the New Orleans native Jay Electronica enchanted with a series of cryptic dispatches, then vanished in a cloud of smoke and British tabloids. This year saw the release of not only his long-lost debut—precipitated by a targeted leak—but also a replacement record, a restart of sorts, which paired him with Jay-Z. The latter, A Written Testimony, often grapples with the pressure that drove Electronica from the spotlight. But on "The Neverending Story," he raps over Alchemist's pensive Litto Nebbia loop about the wonder he still sees in the world—a motorcycle ride to the desert, the gold teeth that make his smile shine like a Frankie Beverly song. -Paul A. ThompsonListen: Jay Electronica, "The Neverending Story" Ka's Descendants of Cain paints a bleak picture of the Brownsville rapper's hood, where street justice and biblical judgement go hand in hand. The album's first 10 songs are a litany of bullets, scars, and endless striving, but the mood shifts with the closing "I Love (Mimi, Moms, Kev)," a tribute to his wife, mother, and late friend. In contrast to the album's eerily stark beats, "I Love" blossoms unexpectedly. "Now death is minor, 'cause you got me livin' life major," he tells his wife, the key change mirroring his outlook. He marvels that his mother "showed me love when all I seen was hate." His typically labyrinthine verses straighten out, as though the page itself had become unburdened. Capping an album that lingers hauntingly on his past, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as home." -Philip SherburneListen: Ka, "I Love" is a tribute to the very streets that shaped him: "Everybody called it the slums, but we know it as h (Mimi, Moms, Kev)"With the touring industry stalled in 2020, it seemed like every rapper on Earth tried to make up for the loss with their very own digital deluxe reissue, padding out recent albums with extra tracks. For the most part, though, quality lacked. Only one artist made his album better with its deluxe reissue, padding out recent albums with extra tracks. For the most part, though, quality lacked. Only one artist made his album better with its deluxe reissue, padding out recent albums with extra tracks. of great songs to My Turn. None were greater than "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg take the lead. "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg take the lead. "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg take the lead. "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg take the lead. "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg take the lead. "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg take the lead. "We Paid," his triumphant collaboration with protégé 42 Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg. Baby plays the elder statesman on the quietly menacing track, rapping more ferociously than usual while letting Dugg. The paid of the paid o flourish. -Matthew StraussListen: Lil Baby / 42 Dugg, "We Paid" Generation Now / Atlantic Lil Uzi Vert just beamed down in a pair of Balenciaga jeans that cost more than your biweekly paycheck (before taxes), and he is ready to rap. "Straight bars," he announces at the top of "POP," before making good on that promise with the kind of stream-ofconsciousness spree we haven't heard since Lil Wayne's mixtape heyday. Listening to this song is like living in a Sonic the Hedgehog speedrun—it's zany, breakneck, and features a surprising number of '90s references (congratulations My Cousin Vinny and Cindy Crawford, you are now Uzi-approved). Over an intergalactic beat that churns and gurgles like Jabba the Hutt with an upset stomach, Uzi rifles through flex after flex about everything from his gleaming fists to his minty-fresh dick to his (why not) "multi, multi, m rapping. From "A Milli" to "Uproar," Wayne has always saved his best performances for breathless, riotously funny word sprays like these, technical showcases that render language into putty, and here's he prodded on a jolting Mannie Fresh that never lets Wayne break his stride. One word to riff on and the right beat: That's how little it takes for Wayne to recapture his glory. Lil Wayne may not make hits like he used to, but he can still make these. -Evan RytlewskiListen: Lil Wayne, "Mahogany"The "Savage Remix" leak hit in April like an intravenous drip of caffeine and glitter, lifting the masses out of their doldrums, if only for four minutes. Megan Thee Stallion had only grown as a beacon of that-bitch-ism since 2019, but joined by one of the 21st century's greatest entertainers, she became bolder. In their verses on the remix, Meg and Bey owned their sex appeal, their sex appeal their sex appe on an elaborate dystopian stage in the desert, to making a heart-wrenching political statement with it at 30 Rock. After Megan had been shot, mocked, and gaslit, the "Savage Remix" evolved from a confident anthem to an assertion of her complex, endangered humanity. -Mankaprr ContehListen: Megan Thee Stallion, "Savage Remix" [ft. Beyoncé]On "Muwop," Mulatto sounds as confident as ever, flipping the script on Gucci Mane's "Freaky Gurl." Unbothered, she rolls off a catalog of unmatchable flexes: million-dollar label meetings, iced-out watches, and an inbox filled with message requests. "This boy think I love him, bitch, I'm Big Latto not Susie," she scoffs. What makes "Muwop" so great isn't Big Latto throwing a fresh coat of paint on one of Gucci's biggest hits—it's watching a legend warmly embrace an all-new generation of Atlanta rappers that grew up listening to him. -Brandon CallenderListen: Mulatto, "Muwop" If. Gucci Manel At the apex of this summer's racial-justice uprising. Noname released the I. Cole diss track "Song 33." He had launched the first volley with "Snow on tha Bluff," a grating whinge about being out-woked by a woman widely presumed to be Noname. She swats him away handily, the diss track equivalent of receiving a long text and dismissing it with a "K." Its opening line, delivered in her characteristic hush, reflects decades of Black radical feminist critique: "I see a demon on my shoulder, it's looking like patriarchy." After coolly ethering Cole—over a cascading Madlib beat, no less—Noname busies herself with more important things: eulogizing murdered activist Toyin Salau, highlighting the crisis of violence against trans women, name-checking George Floyd, and calling for a break up of Amazon, And it only takes her a minute, -Rawiya Kameir Listen: Noname, "Song 33" The year 2019 left Open Mike Eagle on the outs—out of a band, out of a band kindred spirit in Into the Spider-Verse's alt-universe Peter Parker, depressed and alone, staring down middle age and guestioning his life choices. With deceptively complex percussion that buoys a lethargic piano melody, producer Caleb Stone helps Eagle strike a delicate balance between "moving on" and "why do I bother," tempering selfdeprecation with a reminder of the joys still left to experience. To that end, the hook serves as a mantra: "Tattoos, haircuts, gold chains, anime," he chants, a declaration of the few things of which he remains certain. -Matthew Ismael RuizListen: Open Mike Eagle, "Sweatpants Spiderman" "Block Boy" is the mission statement that leads British-Gambian rapper Pa Salieu's debut project Send Them to Coventry. Danceable and intimidating, "Block Boy" captures Salieu's moods and complexities, a party song about overcoming pain. "COD shit, you can never know," Salieu taunts. You can't go to where he's come from, know what he's seen. You wouldn't want to. -Matthew StraussListen: Pa Salieu, "Block Boy" Mississippi rapper Que Hitta didn't exactly declare a class war on 2020's excellently titled At War With the Rich. But on "Brothers," he found subtler ways to speak to the same conditions. Over a bluesy guitar riff, he raps, "Same struggle, we all got different hustles/Say I'm sliding 'bout my brother, yes, I'm dying 'bout my brother." It's an anthem of solidarity, weary and full of resolve. -Ben Dandridge-LemcoListen: Que Hitta, "Brothers"The first single off of Rico Nasty's raucous album Nightmare Vacation considers the peaks and valleys of romantic love as analogous to our unhealthy relationships with our phones. Peppered with references to early aughts technological obsessions ("He on my hip like a Tamagotchi/Leave a heart on my wall so I can know you like me"), the track offers nostalgia wrapped up in the saccharine chimes and futurist hyperpop of 100 gecs mastermind Dylan Brady's production. In the track's most tender moments, the maxed-out vocal effects are toned down to center Rico's melodic pleas for affection, capturing the unique angst of chasing love behind a screen. -Jessica KariisaListen: Rico Nasty, "IPHONE" If the Flint duo Rio Da Yung OG and Louie Ray weren't so magnetic, their mean-spirited punchlines would probably be unsettling. Rio is a living double standard—he cheats but doesn't want his girlfriend to, and uses his own insecurities to manipulate her into not even pressing like on another guy's Instagram picture. Louie is so paranoid that he sits without the lights on in his own home. The pulsing, sinister beat by Pablo616 is the perfect backdrop for their unhinged storytime. -Alphonse PierreListen: Rio Da Yung OG / Louie Ray, "Movie"There's something infinitely charming about the first 15 seconds of Roddy Rich's chart-topper "The Box," before the song's hi-hats, reverse 808s, and run of inescapable melodies even get going. At the beginning, it's just Roddy, screeching "eeech urh" into the mic, like a toddler exploring vowel sounds for the first time. It's ludicrous. But it works, locking listeners into one of the most curiously infectious hits of the year. -Jonah BromwichListen: Roddy Ricch, "The Box"Rome Streetz hails from Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, but his sound owes more to other New York rap hotbeds, from Nas and Mobb Deep's Queensbridge stories to the ready-rock raps of Hempstead, Long Island's Roc Marciano. "Higher Self," from his latest Noise Kandy tape, is a boom-bap meditation with a '70s blaxploitation flute melody and a familiar Bobby Digital sample that sets the scene for Streetz and Tragic Allies soldier Estee Nack's street philosophies. Fueled by psychedelic dreams and a mission to "spread the culture and acquire wealth," "Higher Self" is a soulful New York tone poem, a rapper's attempt to transcend trauma and find enlightenment in the gutter, -Matthew Ismael RuizListen; Rome Streetz, "Higher Self" [ft. Estee Nack|Like any superhero team-up or buddy comedy, the formula for an RTI song is carved in stone by now; Killer Mike the swaggering priest and El-P sardonic philosopher, threatening R-rated violence and revolutionary action over sounds rescued from hip-hop's golden era and retrofitted for pre-pandemic festival stages. As with all must-see serialized dramas, the guest stars are just as impressive as the main cast. Enter Pharrell, reciting a mantra about the circular clutches of modern capitalism in the laconic tone he once used to brag about his Gandalf hat; enter Zack de la Rocha, erstwhile Rage Against the Machine frontman, incendiary and conspiratorial about wanting to rip those systems apart. El-P's production reins in his usual glitchy energy of a in favor of near-military restraint as he memorializes Eric Garner, and Killer Mike casually advocates for the murder of our corporate overlords. Take direction at your own risk, but nobody can doubt their commitment. -Jeremy GordonListen: Run the Jewels, "JU\$T" [ft. Pharrell Williams and Zach De La Rocha]Saweetie builds contemporary hits out of '00s hip-hop anthems, consistently inverting their masculine attitudes to make them her own. "Tap In" twists West Coast legend Too \$hort's "Blow the Whistle" into a mnemonic device for bagging a man with big money, and her tone is matter-of-fact, like she's the smartest student of the game in your study group. After the California rapper caught flack for her overt materialism this year, she clarified that she demands riches of men more symbolically than literally. So even if you'll never meet a dude earning eight figures, "Tap In" is an energizing lesson in assessing your worth and asserting your standards. -Mankaprr ContehListen: Saweetie, "Tap In" Oakland duo Su'Lan's "B.T.H.N.," which stands for "Break That Hoe Nose," is an extension of that energy, backed by distinctly Bay Area percussion sounds like a kick that sounds like people stomping on bleachers in a high school gym. Amid all the aggression, rappers Saunsu and Emahalani maintain their composure, trading understated verses that give off the energy of the peak of the party just before the fight breaks out. -Ben Dandridge-LemcoListen: SU'Lan, "B.T.H.N." Veeze talks more shit than an 11-year-old playing Warzone. The casualness in his voice makes everything sting—even when he talks about your girl listening to his music, it sounds like he's shrugging his shoulders. "I don't give a fuck if we going to the pearly gates, I'm taking a mag," he raps with a sneer over a spedup, furtive flip of the classic TV series theme. In a year where Michigan rappers shared the spotlight with some of the genre's biggest stars, Veeze reminds us they shine brightest by themselves. -Brandon CallenderListen: Veeze, "Law N Order"

