

PAINT THE WALLS

A First-Person Reflection on the Lyrics

I wanted to look back at what I actually meant when I wrote this - not as a critic analyzing my own song, but as me explaining the feelings and changes underneath it.

The biggest thing I hear in this song is that my definition of success has changed. I am still ambitious. I am still obsessive. I still plan everything, run numbers, work too much, and think ten steps ahead. But now there is another reason behind all of it. I do not only want somewhere to go. I want something worth coming home to.

Intro

“Yeah / Cristofaro / Future looking brighter / And brighter / Look”

I wanted the song to open simply, almost like I'm stepping into the room and pointing at what I can finally see. "Future looking brighter" is not me talking about success in some abstract way. By this point, the future feels brighter because I can picture a real life inside it. "Look" is basically me saying: this is what I mean.

Chorus

“Paint the walls / Change the whole room / New life / Same us”

This is the whole idea in miniature. So much around us could change - country, home, routines, careers, the shape of everyday life - but I don't imagine us having to become different people to make that happen. I love the idea of a completely new life that still feels unmistakably like us.

“Big plans / Coming real soon / Paint on our shirts / Laughing like we made it”

I have always been someone who thinks big, plans ahead, and gets obsessed with where I am going. What has changed is what "making it" looks like to me. I can genuinely picture feeling like I made it just because we are standing in a room we worked on together, covered in paint, laughing at ourselves.

“If the color comes out wrong / Fuck it we can change it”

I love this line because it is bigger than paint to me. I do not need the future to come out perfectly on the first try. If something is wrong, we can change it. We can adjust. We can laugh. We can keep going. That flexibility feels like part of what makes building something together exciting instead of scary.

“Warm lights / Late nights / Building what we wanted / No fake / No stress / Everything is honest”

The warm-light imagery matters to me because I spend so much of my life under bright, clinical light. Home, in my head, is the opposite feeling. Softer. Quieter. Honest. A place where neither of us has to perform or stay switched on all the time.

“Your hand / My hand / Color on the floor / Guess I can believe in fate / Now Im walking through the door”

This is where the song gets more openly romantic. I am such a planner that saying I can believe in fate almost makes me laugh, but that feeling has honestly become harder for me to ignore. The door is the future I have been picturing from a distance, and this line feels like me finally allowing myself to walk toward it instead of only imagining it.

Verse 1

“Long week done / Sixty hours / Still aint slowing down / Finally breathe / Grab some food / Take a look around”

I wanted the verse to start with real life. Long shifts, exhaustion, finally getting a second to breathe. That is important because the future I want is not some permanent vacation. I am still going to work hard. I just want there to be somewhere - and someone - that makes all that effort feel like it is leading home.

“Talking like its nothing / Then you said it casually / Paint the walls / Build it with me / Like you saw what I could see”

This is the line that really came from the feeling behind the whole song. What got me was how casually that kind of future could come up. It was not some giant speech. It was just an ordinary little picture, and suddenly I could see the whole thing. "Build it with me" matters because I do not want to hand someone a finished life. I want us to make it ours together.

“Music playing / Paint everywhere / All across our shirts / Build the table / Kinda crooked / Laugh and make it work”

This is exactly the kind of scene that gets me. Music on, paint everywhere, us trying to build something and maybe not doing it perfectly. I think the crooked table matters because I do not want a museum. I want a home with stories in it. If we built something badly and laughed every time we looked at it, I would probably love it more.

“Take a break / Start some dinner / Leave the brushes where they are / Laughing over something stupid / Thats the shit that hits my heart”

This might be one of the most honest parts of the song. The huge future dreams are beautiful, but the things that hit me hardest are usually tiny. Dinner. A half-finished project. Laughing over absolutely nothing. That is the kind of intimacy I actually want.

Pre-Chorus

“No grand speech / No perfect line / Just the way you said it / Put the future in my mind”

I write songs, so I am always thinking about wording. But some of the most meaningful things between us have not come from perfect language. Sometimes it is just how something is said. One casual sentence can carry more emotion than something rehearsed for an hour.

“One little sentence / Made the whole thing come alive / Now the smallest moment / Started looking like our life”

This is where the song shifts for me from fantasy into recognition. Suddenly the little domestic image did not feel like a random daydream. It felt like a glimpse of something that could actually belong to us.

Verse 2

“Sterile white / Blue light / Yeah we both get enough / Give me lamps / Turned down low / Dinner cooking in the warm glow”

This section is deeply personal because both of us understand sterile spaces and technical work. We both get enough white light, blue light, gloves, routines, precision, and environments where everything has to be controlled. So when I picture home, I picture warmth on purpose. Lamps low. Dinner going. A place that feels completely different from work.

“Leave the stress / At the doorway / Let the whole week dissolve / These dreams / Making headway / Now I know whos involved”

The doorway became a boundary in my head. Work can matter to me without being allowed to take over everything. And "now I know who's involved" is me realizing that my future does not feel like a solo project anymore. I can still have my ambitions, but now I know who I want beside me while I chase them.

“Still ambitious / Still obsessed / Still got numbers in my head / Still gon make sure / Were ahead”

I did not want the song to sound like love somehow cured me of being me. I am still going to obsess. I am still going to run numbers, make plans, research too much, and think ten steps ahead. The difference is that now the word in my head is "we." I am not only thinking about getting myself ahead anymore.

“Success used to mean leaving / Always chasing something more / Now Im grinding just as hard / For the life behind that door”

This is probably the most important thing I wrote in the whole song. For a long time, success in my head looked like movement - getting out, getting farther, getting to the next thing. I still want to achieve just as much. But now I can picture working that hard because I want to build a life worth coming home to. That is a massive change in how I understand success.

“Used to draw / Escape routes / Now Im drawing floor plans”

This is one of my favorite lines because it says a lot about where my head used to be versus where it is now. I used to think about how to get out of whatever situation I was in. Now I catch myself thinking about where the kitchen would be, how many bedrooms we would want, what kind of place could feel like home. I am not imagining escape anymore. I am imagining staying.

“Used to keep / Everything spotless / Now theres color on my hands”

There is a lot of me in this line too. Between surgery, my personality, and the way I have lived, I am used to control, precision, and keeping things in order. Color on my hands is almost the opposite of that. It means I participated. I made a mess. I built something. I was there.

Bridge

“Maybe one wall / Comes out awful / Maybe leave it / For a week / Maybe every time / We see it / We just laugh / And let it be”

I wanted the bridge to make room for imperfection instead of pretending this imagined life is flawless. Maybe we paint something badly. Maybe we do not immediately fix it. Maybe it becomes funny and we keep it because now it has a memory attached to it. That feels much more real to me than everything always coming out perfect.

“Maybe furniture / Gets scratched up / Maybe coffee / Leaves a stain”

This is the same idea getting older and more lived in. A home should collect evidence that people actually lived there. Scratches, stains, marks - those things can be annoying in the moment, but they also mean life happened there.

“Maybe perfect / Wasnt ever / What we wanted / Anyway”

This is really where I realized what the song was saying to me. I do not actually want perfect. Perfect can feel sterile. I want honest, warm, lived in, funny, imperfect, and ours.

Break

“Give me something lived in / Give me something ours”

These two lines became the simplest version of what I am trying to say. I want something that has history in it. Something we shaped together. Something that looks like us because we actually lived there.

Final Chorus

“If the color comes out wrong / Baby we can change it”

By the final chorus, I wanted the same idea to feel softer. We already went through the bridge and accepted that things will not always be perfect. So now "we can change it" feels less like fixing a mistake and more like trusting that we can keep adapting together.

Outro

“Warm lights / Paint stained shirts / Something cooking / Something crooked / That we built ourselves”

The outro is basically the whole future reduced to snapshots. Warmth. Mess. Food. Something imperfect that we made ourselves. None of it is glamorous, and that is exactly why I love it.

“Leave it / Its ours / Cristofaro”

I love ending on "It's ours" because that is the destination of the song. Not a perfect room. Not a perfect house. Not some flawless version of life. Just something we built together, with enough marks on it that nobody else could mistake it for theirs.

What the Song Means to Me

When I step back from the individual lines, I think “Paint the Walls” is really about me learning that building a life can be just as ambitious as escaping one. I do not feel less driven than I used to. If anything, I feel more driven because the things I want have become more meaningful.

The sterile white, blue light, spotless surfaces, and escape routes all belong to a version of me that knows how to survive through control, work, movement, and constant forward motion. The warm lamps, paint stains, crooked furniture, dinner, floor plans, and color on my hands belong to a version of me that is finally imagining what it would feel like to stay.

That is probably why “Success used to mean leaving / Always chasing something more / Now I’m grinding just as hard / For the life behind that door” feels so important to me. I have not stopped wanting more out of life. I have just started understanding that “more” can also mean a home, a family, ordinary evenings, shared projects, and someone I deeply love waiting on the other side of the door.

And I think the bridge says something I needed to learn too: I do not want perfection as badly as I thought I did. I want something lived in. Something that gets scratched, stained, painted, changed, laughed about, repaired, and remembered. Something that belongs to us because we were actually there.

So when I hear the song now, I do not really hear a song about painting walls. I hear myself realizing that I am no longer drawing escape routes.

I am drawing floor plans.