**Forth Wanderers**

**s/t**

**Rel. Date: April 27th, 2018**

Forth Wanderers employ a tin-can-telephone style of composition which they use even when living in the same area code. Since first collaborating in 2013 as Montclair, New Jersey high schoolers, guitarist and songwriter Ben Guterl and vocalist Ava Trilling have passed songs back and forth like pen pals. Guterl will devise an instrumental skeleton before sending it to vocalist Ava Trilling who pens the lyrics based off the melody. The duo then gather alongside guitarist Duke Greene, bassist Noah Schifrin, and drummer Zach Lorelli to expand upon the demo. It’s a patient and practiced writing system that has carried the quintet through two EPs (2013’s *Mahogany* and 2016’s *Slop*) and one LP (2014’s *Tough Love*). *Forth Wanderers*, the group’s sophomore record and Sub Pop debut, is the groups’ most comprehensive and assured statement yet.

Now living in Ohio and New York respectively, Guterl and Trilling have evolved their separate but collaborative writing process. “The only way I can really write is by myself in my room with a notebook, listening to the song over and over again,” Trilling says. “I’ve never sat down to write a story, I write the song as it unfolds.” Since her lyrics are often embedded with intimate truths from her life, the private writing experience often leads to intense self-reflection.

On *Forth Wanderers* these introspections include meditations on relationships, discovery, and finding oneself adrift. Despite the inherent heaviness of those themes, *Forth Wanderers* feels joyous, a rock record bursting with heart. Take “Not for Me,” a romping track about “the ambivalence of love.” Trilling’s confession of “I can’t feel the earth beneath my feet/Flowers bloom but not for me” resists feeling like a dreary, pitying complaint; instead, as her bandmates bolster her melancholy with interlocking harmonic intricacies, she soars with self-actualization. Opener “Nevermine,” is a surge of confidence inspired by an ex-lover who is still captivated by her image. “I don’t think I know who you are anymore/ and I don’t think I knew I was before” she jabs with relish. On “Ages Ago” Trilling paints the image of a constantly-shifting enigmatic lover. “I wasn’t sure who they were, they changed constantly (hence the metaphor describing the “grey coat” and cutting their hair just to “stay afloat”),” she says. “I wasn’t going to wait any longer to find out.”

Recorded over five days by friend and audio engineer Cameron Konner at his Philadelphia home studio, *Forth Wanderers* amplifies the heartfelt sentiments of the band’s earlier works into massive anthems. Guterl and Greene’s guitars have never sounded so sharp, Schifrin and Lorelli’s terse rhythm section is restless, and Trilling seems more self-assured than ever. “We have embraced our roles in the collaboration process,” says Guterl. “Everyone’s gotten better at their instruments and we trust each other more because we know how the machine works.” This spirit soars through *Forth Wanderers*, resulting in exuberant, profound songs driven by tightly bound melodies and a loving attention to detail.