

# ATWOOD MAGAZINE

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I've heard the word "saudade" thrown around in many different contexts over the years. At first, I associated it with the feeling of sublimity at realizing every passing person on the street contained the same infinite complexity that I did, that sinking feeling of my own insignificance or perhaps the boundless possibilities of humanity. That sense of awe persists in the Portuguese term's true definition, loosely translated as "a deep emotional state of nostalgic or profound melancholic longing." It's isolation from one's own experience, the sense of looking up at a passing plane and wondering what possibilities exist for you elsewhere, or in another possible reality altogether.

That Juni Ata named his debut album *Saudade* is perhaps the most fitting thesis for this collection of heartstring-tugging Americana. He's packed all eleven tracks with a bounty of "ifs," meditations on what could have been with a little foresight, or maybe a little less melancholia. Lead single "**Philadelphia**" perhaps embodies this most. In it, Ata confronts the specter of lost love, how the scar it left still burns, but that he wouldn't trade it for anything.

*If you had told me back then  
I would lose her in the end  
It would have made no difference  
It wouldn't change a goddamn thing*

Sweeping vocal harmonies and weeping strings accentuate that sense of reverie. Happiness exists just out of reach no matter how much he grasps back at it. The only solution then is to move on to something new and promising, but ultimately terrifying. Philadelphia represents that next chapter, but ultimately holds a "saudade" of its own. We look back at what we knew because it is familiar, but it keeps us rooted in a state of longing. Ata knows this.