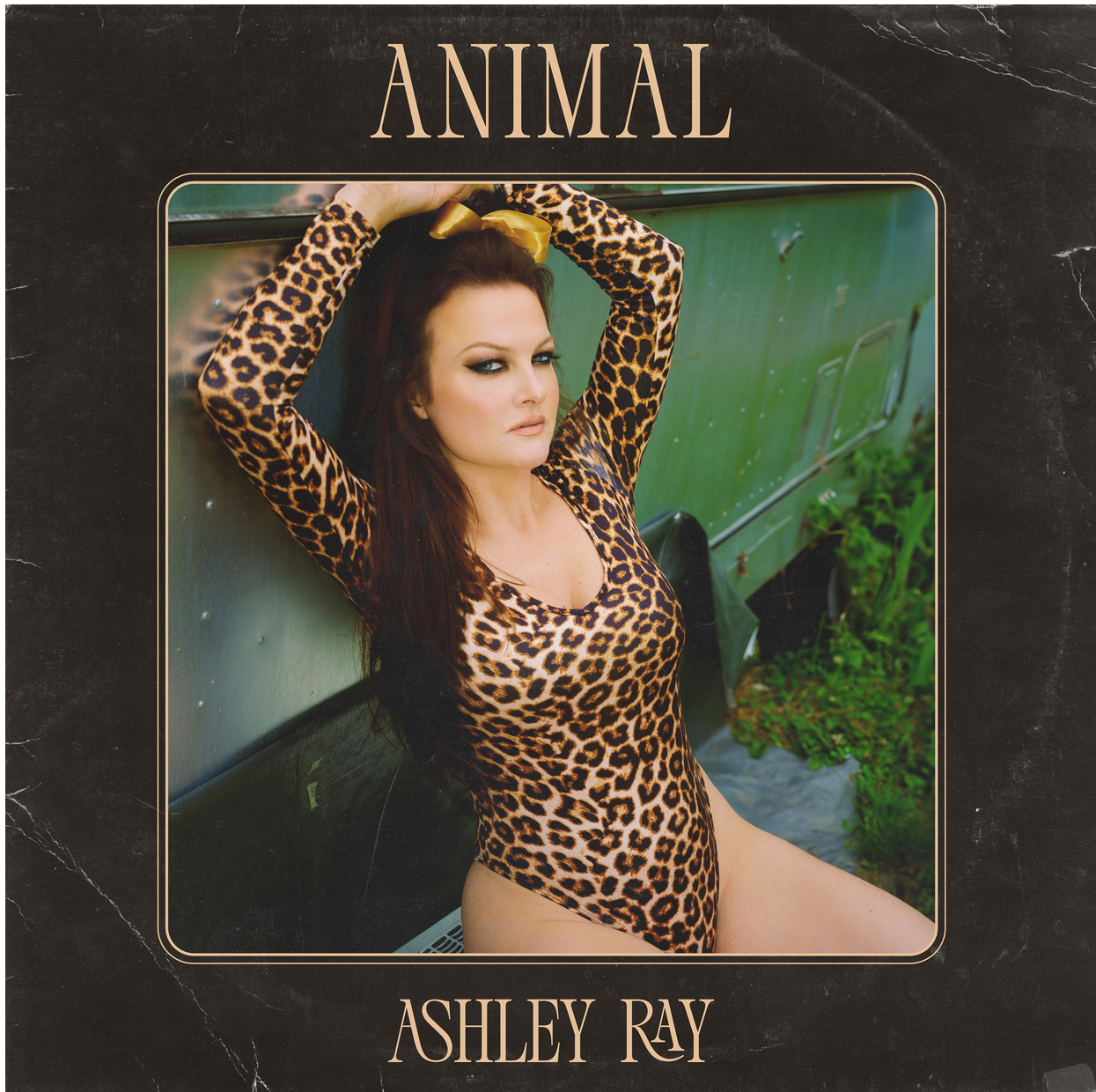




Ashley Ray Unleashes *Animal* LP, Nov. 17

Ray follows top-ranked Pauline with eight-track album:

*“This record is about living and not simply surviving.
It was the shift that began the return to myself.”*



NASHVILLE, Tenn. (Oct. 10, 2023) — GRAMMY-nominated singer-songwriter **Ashley Ray** follows her critically acclaimed album *Pauline* — named one of 2020’s Top 10 Country albums by *Stereogum* and the *Boston Globe*, and #26 on NPR’s all-genre Top 50 Albums of the Year — with *Animal*, an eight-track record due out Friday, Nov. 17.

Re-teaming with longtime friend, collaborator and *Pauline* producer Sean McConnell, *Animal* plumbs the depths of Ray's darkest real-life struggles, determination and reawakening, sonically blurring the lines between alternative rock, Americana, and country, while staying true to her "fierce," "gutbucket country" (*Boston Globe*) roots.

"I was afraid to write this record, to open up the floodgates, but it has turned out to be a beautiful chapter in my life that I never expected, a compass, and a reaffirmation of all my dreams and the life I set out to live," says Ray. "I hope *Animal* will encourage women who are going through these things alone — who've been taught to distrust their instincts, their internal knowing — that your gut is God."

The record's debut single "Married" (4.14), co-written with McConnell and Karen Fairchild — the towering trio behind Little Big Town's GRAMMY-nominated 2019 hit "The Daughters" — revealed the excruciating heartbreak and loneliness of her first marriage, with Ray's "gorgeous" (Robin Hilton, *All Songs Considered*) voice matched by McConnell's echoing, atmospheric production. Following the album's second single, "Break My Heart" featuring Ruston Kelly (6.16), author and music critic Marissa R. Moss praised Ray's "exquisite" songwriting, adding, "Ashley Ray could sing me anything and I'd love it — there's this broken grit to her voice, pure restless emotion."

Animal's title track, written at 1:00 AM with McConnell and Fairchild after a long day of creating, delves into the world of primal passion and unabashed desire. Embodying your inner animal, being a woman who can say, "Get out of my heart and get into my bed." "I had blown up my current life to open space for the life I knew I wanted, needed, and deserved," Ray says. "This record is about living and not simply surviving. It was the shift that began my return to myself."

On the album's closer, "Mothership" (Ray, Fairchild, McConnell), Ray asserts women in music — should they so desire — can be artists *and* mothers, and do it well. Indeed, she began touring with Little Big Town and Bob Schneider this spring, when her daughter was mere months old.

With *Animal*, Ray pushes back against being the ideal and exalts the real, emerging as a rock 'n' roll force to be reckoned with while staying true to her legacy of honest storytelling that "spills with detail, candor, and confession" (*Stereogum*).

Animal track listing:

1. Animal
2. Married
3. My Own Place
4. Dirty Angel
5. Bathtub Madonna
6. Stripper Glitter
7. Break My Heart featuring Ruston Kelly
8. Mothership

Pre-save/add *Animal* HERE: <https://cmdshft.ffmpeg.to/animal>

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About Ashley Ray:

Raised on a farm in Lawrence, Kansas, Ashley Ray has established herself as one of Nashville's most nuanced voices, chasing down critical acclaim not only as a solo artist, but also as an in-demand songwriter for Little Big Town, Lori McKenna, Sean McConnell, Ruston Kelly, Caroline

Spence, Wade Bowen, Charles Kelly (Lady A), Brittney Spencer, and Blues prodigy Christone “Kingfish” Ingram. Alongside friends and fellow artists Sean McConnell and LBT's own Karen Fairchild, the trio penned Little Big Town's GRAMMY-nominated Top 40 hit "The Daughters." Meanwhile, Ray's albums have earned her shows with Eric Church, Miranda Lambert, and other country trailblazers who, like Ray, create a modern sound without chasing after modern trends.

Ray's most recent solo release, *Pauline*, translates like a memoir: she writes about her home, family, the people she's lost, decisions, and dreams with the kind of grace that only comes with embracing who you are — then summoning the courage to share it. Her highly anticipated new album, *Animal*, arrives Nov. 17.

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For a downloadable copy of *Animal* for review purposes, contact jackie@marushkamedia.com.

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