

When you've spent most of your life on the move, hopping from one country to another, tour to tour, city to city, bar to bed, bed to bus, what happens when you finally stop? It's a theme that weaves its way through *Sinking Ships*, the excellent seventh record by Alberta Cross. The band, based around lead singer and guitarist Petter Ericson Stakee, explored the idea of years spent in transit on 2020's *What Are We Frightened Of?* (key giveaway: the first song was titled *Find A Home Out There*). That record was a creative reset that saw Stakee enter into a fruitful songwriting partnership with producer Luke Potashnick and here they pick up the thread. "A lot of the songs are about what comes after settling down," says Stakee, who now lives in Frome, Somerset with his family. "It's about life catching up with you, a lot of things catching up with you and how that does a lot to your head."

In many ways, everything that is wonderful about *Sinking Ships* is wrapped up in its opening song and first single *Mercy*. It's all there: the expansive, panoramic rock atmospherics, the melancholic majesty, epic and simplistic at once, bombastic but never overblown, an indelible hook giving the song its uplifting swell. "*Mercy* deals with mental health and that feeling when you stop, getting back on your feet," says Stakee. *Sinking Ships* is made up of songs that look back in an attempt to try and plot a way forward.