For singer-songwriter Nick Hakim, it all started in a house in Jamaica Plains**,** MA with collaborators Naima and Solo Woods. There,he put the finishing touches on his breakthrough EPs, *Where Will We Go, Pt. I & II*, which would later release through his Earseed Records and earn critical praise from NPR and *The New York Times*. But it was where the sessions for the two-part project ended and the ideas began to materialize for what would become his full-length debut, *Green Twins* (releasing via ATO Records in 2017),an experimental step forward with emotional heft gleaned from his experiences in the years since.

The story of *Green Twins* truly began when, armed with the masters for his EPs, Hakim moved from Boston to Brooklyn, spending his time fleshing out unfinished ideas in his bedroom. He came up with lyrics on the spot while playing the live circuit at solo shows including Palisades and NYXO, recording sketches and lyrics on voice memos and a four-track cassette recorder, and embracing the local community of musicians by performing with bands like Jesse and Forever and Onyx Collective. From there, *Green Twins* came about as a sum of its parts: Hakim took the demo recordings to studios in New York City, Philadelphia and London, and built on them with engineers including Andrew Sarlo (bass, engineering, production), keeping the original essence of the songs intact.Sarlo notes that “for other artists, a demo serves as a potential shape the song could form into. But for Nick, demos are more like creating a temple: a sanctuary that now we have to go into and somehow clean, furnish, and get ready for other people to experience the sermon in.”

“I put a lot of thought to the things I’d say, but a lot of it is what I was thinking in the moment, very specific songs,” he says of *Green Twins*, “many of them are like self-portraits”. The record draws from influences spanningRobert Wyatt, Marvin Gaye and Shuggie Otis to Portishead and My Bloody Valentine. “I also felt the need to push my creativity in a different way than I had on the EPs”, he continues. “We wanted to imagine what it would have sounded like if RZA had produced a Portishead album. We experimented with engineering techniques from Phil Spector and Al Green’s Back Up Train, drum programming from RZA and Outkast, and were listening to a lot of The Impressions, John Lennon, Wu-Tang, Madlib, and Screaming Jay Hawkins.”

“Bet She Looks Like You,” recorded mostly in his home bedroom, was one of the first songs that “started this fire for exploring this experiment through song.” Each track peels back a particular aspect of his life: on the title song, he gets deeply personal, reflecting on a recurring dream. “All these things reflect how I feel, how I write,” he says. “I sometimes have trouble articulating myself verbally. This is a place I can talk and be myself, with music, this intangible space I create.”

Hakim’s debut comes as the culmination of years chiseling his skills as a musician. Hailing from Washington, D.C., he grew up in a musical household—his older brother introduced him to bands like Bad Brains and Nirvana, and his parents exposed him to Nueva canción—while he set out on his own to discover the DC music scene. He didn’t take an interest in learning an instrument until later in high school, when he taught himself to play the keys. After graduation, he moved to Boston to continue his study of music. In the time since moving to Brooklyn and setting to work for three years on *Green Twins*, he embraced the live circuit, both as a solo musician and with his band, whom he’s brought together from within his community in Boston and New York.

With *Green Twins*, Hakim plans to tour through the beginning of the year, and hopes that folks will connect with the songs he’d written. “I think everybody feels insecure about certain things and everybody has lost people dear to them. I think I'm writing about common things that people feel,” he says. “I'm very grateful for anybody that's listening or wants to be a part of my little world that I've created through song.”