“Sometimes you gotta write the songs you need to hear,” musician, actor and author Lola Kirke says of the title track of her new album *Trailblazer.* “The culture a lot of us are living in is designed to make you feel like you’re failing. That you’re headed in the wrong direction if you’re not consuming and conforming. It’s easy for me to forget that. So I wrote a song to remind me.”

Such is the affirmation that begins Kirke’s third full length LP—a singular blend of classic country tropes and ethereal sonic landscapes: “*when you feel like a failure, baby you’re a trailblazer*.” Released on the heels of her debut book, a memoir-in-essays entitled *Wild West Village* (Simon and Schuster 2025) chronicling her dysfunctional upbringing in London and New York City, the highs and lows of her career as an actress in Hollywood and her unusual path to Nashville and country music, it’s safe to say: Kirke’s trailblazing ability isn’t so murky. In fact, it’s dazzlingly clear.

Kirke follows her instincts in all facets of her creative life, and music is no different. Getting ahead of the current “everybody’s making a Country album” trend, she released the 80s country inspired *Lady For Sale* on Jack White’s Third Man Records in 2022. Next, she brought on country star Elle King to produce her 2023 follow up *Country Curious.* “I wanted to make my version of feminist bro country,” Kirke muses on the four song offering, whose tent pole single “All My Exes Live in LA,” included gorgeous backing vocals from First Aid Kit.“Kirke masters one of the hardest things to do,” premiere Roots music journal *No Depression* said of the EP. “Getting a laugh as she’s tugging on your heartstrings.” It is perhaps this unique gift that helped Kirke sell out historic venues like New York’s Bowery Ballroom and West Hollywood’s iconic Troubadour, as well score an invitation to appear on CBS’ Saturday Morning “Saturday Sessions” and make her Stagecoach debut earlier this year. “Everyone loves Lola Kirke,” wrote Holler. “If they don’t yet, they will.”

On *Trailblazer*, Kirke pivots once again, embracing another thing altogether: her roots. It’s just that Kirke’s roots happen to be a little different. “Rebellion is in my nature,” Kirke, whose father Simon is a founding member of Free and Bad Company, half jokingly laments. “And I’m really not saying that because I think it makes me sound cool because honestly for a lot of my life I would have preferred to just be normal. But now I see the value in being who I actually am. It’s certainly a lot easier than trying to be someone else.” Teaming up with GRAMMY winning writer/producer Daniel Tashian (Kacey Musgraves, Sarah Jarosz), helped to galvanize this philosophy. “Daniel and I would write something like *Bury Me in New York City*, the last track on the record, where I sing about the city the way a lot of country songs sing about one street towns, and then I’d get all anxious it wasn’t country enough. But Daniel had the vision. He was like ‘This album is gonna be a little bit country, and a little bit rock n’ roll.’ And I was like ‘Like Donnie and Marie Osmond?’ And he was like ‘No. Like *you*!’” Throughout the process, Tashian encouraged Kirke to embrace a more authentic version of herself. “He wouldn’t let me sing in a southern accent anymore which I guess is a good thing because I don’t really have one,” she laughs. “I love the voice I discovered hiding underneath it.” With *Trailblazer*, Kirke hopes listeners feel encouraged to embrace their own uniqueness too. On the album’s second single, the Pretenders-but-if-they-were-country *Raised by Wolves*, Kirke puts this sentiment to song. “*I was raised by wolves,* she howls before appealing to the feral child in her listener, *I got a feeling you were too.”*

“I wrote a lot of this album while writing my book, while sitting in a trailer between scenes of a movie I was acting in, in which my character was covered in fake blood, which I don’t entirely recommend as it’s very sticky,” jokes Kirke. (To be specific, the “movie” she is referring to is Academy Award nominated director Ryan Coogler’s forthcoming *Sinners,* released in IMAX March 7th).The result: more personal songs like *Easy on You*, about loving someone in the throes of addiction or *2 Damn Sexy,* (co-written with the Pistol Annies’ Ashley Monroe) about loving yourself when society would have you feel otherwise. Even more subterranean yet are songs about Kirke’s family. On the introspective *Zeppelin 3*, Kirke reconciles with a strained paternal relationship (“*I guess he tried his best, and I have to believe he would have taught me how to love but all he knew was how to leave*”). In *Mississippi, My Sister, Elvis and Me*, a romp of a song that weaves like a road movie, she sings about the pain and beauty of sister dynamics, unveiling themselves on the way to Graceland. With *Marlboro Lights and Madonna,* written with Natalie Hemby and frequent collaborator Jason Nix, she makes an anthem for daughters of unconventional mothers everywhere.

While some of the songs on the album genre bend and bow in reverence for some of Kirke’s favorite artists (The Band, Gene Clark, Joni Mitchell), she still sticks a country landing with more classic tears-in-your-beers songs like *241s* and *Hungover Thinking,* (the latter of which was co-written by the legendary Liz Rose, of Taylor Swift lore). “I need something I can take back to the Opry!” Kirke declares, alluding to her 2024 debut, a banner night in which she got to wear June Carter’s dress, on loan from friend and collaborator Rosanne Cash. “It was probably the closest I’ll ever get to having a Bat Mitzvah. And by that I mean the closest I’ll ever come to meeting god.”