With just one breath, **COLD MOON** redefined everything about themselves.

By mid-2018, the Northern California-based quartet—vocalist/guitarist Jack Sullivan, bassist Will Levy, guitarist Kevin Ambrose and drummer Mike Ambrose—were deep into the writing of their debut EP, ***Rising***: a collection of instrumental indie-rock songs that culled influences from legendary emo acts including American Football and icons like Wilco, as well as more analytical post-rock impulses.

Musically, the songs Cold Moon wrote were miles removed from where the band came from (Levy plays guitar in pop-punk stalwarts The Story So Far, while Mike Ambrose was a longtime member of the hardcore-tinged Set Your Goals), but they still carried the same intrinsic urgency and emotional resonance that colored their other projects.

After demoing *Rising* and preparing to hit the studio to track the final versions, the childhood friends soon stumbled upon the power of Sullivan’s voice, as well as the influence singing could have on their songwriting. It immediately changed everything for the band, who began using vocal parts not to *define* their music, but rather drive it—adding yet more melodic textures to their songs.

“I don’t know if it was the *right* approach to songwriting,” Sullivan says with a laugh, “but it felt good. It was like a nice coat of finish on a completed piece of art.”

As such, *Rising* (released **May 10** via **Pure Noise Records**) is the sound of band painstakingly placing every instrument and note, both played and sung, alongside one another to build intricate, at-times dense and mathy soundscapes. This attention to detail gives *Rising*’s six songs—from the hypnotic, ominous riffs of “Stevie” to the acoustic-based pitter-patter of “Green Eyes” and cascading guitar movements on the set-closing “Lessons”—a cinematic quality, while the tracked-to-tape nature of the EP imbues the songs with breaths of authenticity and humanity a digital process would have sorely lacked.

Throughout its songs, *Rising* tackles themes of change and vulnerability, looking out into the vast expanse of the unknown and mustering up the courage to face it head-on. In many ways, it mirrors the approach the band took while writing it: Life’s big moments—and, perhaps more often, the small ones, too—disrupt our comfortable state of equilibrium and force us to examine who we are and what we really want.

Ultimately, it’s only by fearlessly following them that we’re able to arrive at our final form. Chasing that inspiration is what brought Cold Moon together, and it’s what changed the band’s direction forever during the making of *Rising*. It’s steeled them both personally and professionally, and they’ll carry this forward-thinking mindset with them throughout the course of their career.

“We didn’t know what was going to happen when we got in a room together, but it was a real safe, comfortable space,” Sullivan says. “It was a positive atmosphere for all of us, where we weren’t worried about making mistakes. We just let the music happen.” **XX**