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Lil Zay Osama makes his case to be
Chicago's next rap star on *Trench Baby*



Chicago rapper [Lil Zay Osama](#) broke out about three years ago with the succinct and sorrowful “Changed Up,” which balances

📍 **Lil Zay Osama, *Trench Baby***
Warner
lilzayosamaofficial.com

punchy, brutal bars against heart-wrenchingly sweet Auto-Tuned singing. Osama’s rise came during the early flourishing of a new wave of drill focused on melody and indebted to scene pillar Lil Durk; “Changed Up” captures the style’s paradoxically guarded-yet-vulnerable soulfulness so perfectly that it could pass for the urtext of melodic drill. This emerging class of geographically scattered Chicago rappers has since brought forth at least one genuine superstar, north-side MC [Polo G](#), and Osama remains a contender. His new mixtape, *Trench Baby* (Warner), is flush with mournful piano, brittle trap percussion, and wounded Auto-Tuned singing. He sometimes wrangles these elements into uplifting, effervescent pop songs, most noticeably on his collaboration with Florida rapper Jackboy, “Ride 4 Me.” But *Trench Baby* is at its most penetrating when Osama transposes his scars into blunt lines and tormented delivery—the one-two punch of “SBA” and “Soul Cry” is strong enough to carry the entire album.

