

Kiss Each Other Clean a Welcome Pop Album

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Friday, 18 February 2011 16:24

The album creates an odd atmosphere that is reminiscent of 70's pop, but somehow stranger, without the mindless feel-good elements. There is a deeper ambition that was detected on previous albums, but was never explored so deeply.

From the first song (and the album's first single) "Walking Far from Home", it is apparent that Sam Beam is trying something new with this album, expanding rather than betraying his past sound. People so often condemn artists for morphing their sound into a more radio-friendly sound. With the case of Iron & Wine, it seems to be a natural progression from 2007's *The Shepherd's Dog*.

Lyricaly, the album is beautiful and has the atypical depth that fans have come to expect. With biblical references and darker elements, this album may actually surprise those who care to read the linear notes. Like the album's artwork, featuring beautiful colors that make up a burning building and several peacocks, the album is aesthetic on the outside, but brooding, bittersweet, and almost morbid on second viewing.

Sam Beam has established himself as a competent, talented, and unique artist among the almost tired genre of folk music. *Kiss Each Other Clean* represents an expansion and maturing of Iron & Wine's already established sound.