

Sea Lion

Lithium Doll

Achievement in Use of Music: Shortlist 2008
Achievement in Vidding: Shortlist 2008

The review below may contain spoilers for *Supernatural* up to early season 4.

Nicky: Many fan works have explored the circular self-sacrificial nature of the Winchester family, but I have seen few that have expressed it as elegantly as *Sea Lion*. From Mary's initial pact with the Yellow-Eyed Demon through to Dean on the verge of being pulled into hell, this vid is a painfully poignant Dean study underpinned by a deceptively gruff soundtrack, much like the character himself.

Brad: The way the vidder ties the generations and the years together through parallels is particularly brilliant, and for me the idea of the mother unable to save the son (and vice versa) was a real punch in the gut. It feels like death and tragedy and despair *is going to happen*, period, and their struggle against it is futile right from the start. Which just tears me up, even as someone who's not a *Supernatural* viewer.

Nicky: The vid moves effortlessly between the past and present. A pained Dean watches a young Mary make the pact with the YED, while in a perfect alternate future he looks at the future that Sam could have had while a much older Mary looks on. In between is everything in the reality that should never have happened: Mary running in on the YED as he drips blood on baby Sam; the aftermath of Mary's death with child Dean and child Sam trying to deal with their newly-minted warrior father; John's eventual self sacrifice for Dean's life; Dean's sacrifice for Sam's, and the incessant, disturbing notion that through all this, Sam is becoming what the YED intended all along.

Brad: That's what makes it so emotionally devastating, and yet darkly poetic. It's like a circle that has to be completed, and seeing it laid out the way it is in the vid makes it feel like it should have been obvious all along.

Nicky: The viewer stands alongside Dean as he struggles with the elevated love he has for his late mother on the one hand, and the nagging feeling that she's the one to blame from the outset.

Brad: And that feeling in itself is a something that allows non-fandom viewers to emotionally connect with the vid. Anyone who has lost a parent can relate. Though maybe not to the demon part. Still, it's part of this intricate web of maternal feelings that just capture you and toy with your emotions.

Nicky: The vid doesn't necessarily draw a conclusion on this dichotomised set of ideas, and I have the feeling that it was supposed to be this way: there are things that bear thinking about, and then there are things that don't. Here as in Dean's mind, these notions are

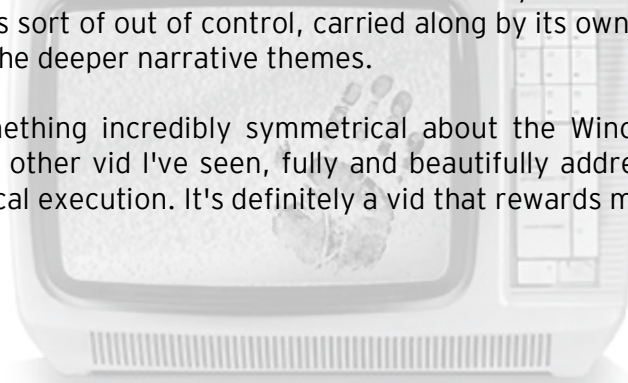
explored in broad strokes, only occasionally delving under the surface for an aching slow burn.

Brad: Agreed. And the reason these complex ideas all come home so well is because the delivery is so mesmerizing, particularly in how it uses the music. As painful as it is, that makes you want to keep rewatching it.

Nicky: I love the music use in this vid. From the clever and flowing lyric matches to the wonderful pace and musicality, the vid rewards multiple viewings both on a technical and a thematic level. I particularly love the gorgeously natural lyric match of "building a castle out of the sand, break it down and I'm gonna get into the saddle again;" the lovely metaphor of Sam and John being "the stone and the chisel" and Dean being caught between the two; the semi tongue-in-cheek use of "I'm gonna trade this cow for some magic beans;" the painful connection between a small Sam giving Dean his necklace and "building this armour with wooden arms." Musicality is extremely strong throughout the vid, and 1:22 - 1:30 in particular never ceases to amaze me with its sheer momentum and amazingly dynamic mix of motion and pace.

Brad: I'm a big fan of the way Lithium Doll uses motion throughout the vid. There are some absolutely brilliant moments of subtle and overt music-matching, like the bouncing car at 0:52 and the internal motion on the vocals at 1:25. The way that continues and builds makes you feel like the vid is sort of out of control, carried along by its own momentum, which works extremely well with the deeper narrative themes.

Nicky: There is something incredibly symmetrical about the Winchester family story. Sea Lion, more than any other vid I've seen, fully and beautifully addresses that symmetry with remarkably economical execution. It's definitely a vid that rewards many repeat viewings.



THE FOURTH WALL
