

## Still Life

Van der Graaf Generator

(Hammill)

Citadel reverberates to a thousand voices, now  
dumb:  
What have we become?  
What have we chosen to be?  
Now, all history is reduced to the syllables of  
our name—  
nothing can ever be the same:  
now the Immortals are here.  
At the time it seemed a reasonable course  
to harness all the force  
of life without the threat of death,  
but soon we found that boredom and inertia  
are not negative, but all the law we know,  
and dead are will and words like survival.  
Arrival at immunity from all age, all fear and  
all end...  
why do I pretend?  
Our essence is distilled  
and all familiar taste is now drained,  
and though purity is maintained  
it leaves us sterile,  
living through the millions of years,  
a laugh as close as any tear;  
living, if you claim that all  
that entails is breathing, eating, defecating,  
screwing, drinking,  
spewing, sleeping, sinking ever down and down  
and ultimately passing away time  
which no longer has any meaning.  
Take away the threat of death and all you're  
left with is a round of make-believe.  
Marshal every sullen breath and though you're  
ultimately bored by endless ecstasy  
it's still the ring by which you hope to be  
engaged  
to marry the girl who will give you forever—  
it's crazy, and plainly  
that simply is not enough.  
What is the dullest and bluntest of pains,  
such that my eyes never close without feeling it  
there?  
What abject despair demands an end  
to all things of infinity?  
If we have gained, how do we now meet the  
cost?  
What have we bargained, and what have we  
lost?  
What have we relinquished, never even knowing it  
was there?  
What thoughts now of holding fast the line,  
defying death and time?  
Everything we had is gone,  
everything we laboured for and favoured more  
than earthly things reveals the hollow ring  
of false hope and false deliverance.  
But now the nuptial bed is made,

the dowry has been paid:  
the toothless, haggard features of eternity  
now welcome me between the sheets  
to couple with her withered body - my wife.  
Hers forever,  
hers forever,  
hers forever  
in still life.