

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.