

The Sleepwalkers

Van der Graaf Generator

At night, this mindless army,
ranks unbroken by dissent,
is moved into action
and their pace does not relent.
In step, with great precision,
these dancers of the night
advance against the darkness -
how implacable their might!
Eyes undulled by moon,
their arms and legs akimbo,
they walk and live,
hoping soon to surface from this limbo.
Their minds, anticipating the dawn of the day,
shall never know what's waiting mere insight away
- too far, too soon.

Senses dimmed in semi-sentience,
only wheeling
through this plane,
only seeing fragmented images prematurely
curtailed by the brain,
but breathing, living,
knowing in some measure at least
the soul which roots the matter
of both Beauty and the Beast.
From what tooth or claw does murder spring,
from what flesh and blood does passion?
Both cut through the air with the pendulum's swing
in deadly but delicate fashion.
And every range of feeling is there in the dream
and every logic's reeling in the force of the scream
the senses sting.
And though I may be dreaming and reality stalls
I only know the meaning of sight and that's all
and that's nothing.

The columns of the night advance,
infectiously, their cryptic dance
gathers converts to the fold -
in time the whole raw world will pace
these same steps
on into the same bitter end.

Somnolent muster now the dancing dead
forsake the shelter of their secure beds,
awaken to a slumber whose depths they dread,
as if the ground they tread would give way
beneath the solemn weight of their conception.
I'd search the hidden corners of all this world,
make reason of the sensory whorl
if I only had time,
but soon the dream is ended.

Tonight, before you lay down
to the sweetness of your sleep
do you question your surrender
to the drop from Lover's Leap

or does the anaesthetic darkness
take hold on its very own?
Does your body rise in service
with not one dissenting groan?
These waking dreams of life and death
in the mirror are twisted and buckled,
lashes flicker, a catch of breath,
skin whitening at the knuckles.
The army of sleepwalkers shake their limbs
and are loose
and though I am a talker, I can phrase no excuse
not to rise again.
In the chorus of the night-time I belong
and I, like you, must dance to that moonlight song
and in the end I too must pay the cost
of this life.
If all is lost none is known
and how could we lose what we've never owned?
Oh, I'd search out every knowledge
that I could find,
unravel all the mysteries of mind,
if I only had time,
if I only had time,
but soon my time is ended.