

Childlike Faith in Childhood's End

Van der Graaf Generator

Existence is a stage on which we pass
a sleepwalk trick for mind and heart:
it's hopeless, I know,
but onward I must go
and try to make a start
at seeing something more than day to day
survival, chased by final death
if I believed this the sum
of the life to which we've come,
I wouldn't waste my breath
Somehow, there must be more. There was a time
when more was felt than known
but now, entrenched inside my sett,
in light more mundane,
thought rattles round my brain:
we live, we die...and yet? In the beginning there was order and destiny
but now that path has reached the border,
and on our knees
is no way to face the future, whatever it be.
Though the forces which hold us in place
last through eons in unruffled grace
we, too, wear the face of creation. As anti-matter sucks and pulses periodically
the bud unfolds, the bloom is dead,
all space is living history.
It seems as though time must betray us,
yet we're alive
and though I see no God to save us,
yet we survive
through the centuries of progress
which don't get us very far.
All illusion! All is bogus -
we don't yet know what we are...
Laughing, hoping, praying, joking, Son of Man!
with lowered eyes but lifting hearts,
we're grains of sand
and though, in time, the sea
may claim us for its own
we are the rocks which root the future -
on us it grows! We might not be there to share it

if eternity's a jest
but I think that I can bear it
if the next life is the best.
Even if there is a heaven when we die,
endless bliss would be as meaningless as the lie
that always comes as answer to the question,
"Why do we see through the eyes of creation?" Adrift without a course,
it's very lonely here,
our only conjecture
what lies behind the dark.
Still, I find I can cling to a lifeline,
think of a lifetime which means more
than my own one -
dreams of a grander thing than we are.
Time and Space hang heavy on my shoulders:
when all life is over who can say
no mutated force shall remain?
Though the towers of the city are denied
to we men of clay
still we know we shall scale
the heights some day.
Frightened in the silence -
frightened, but thinking very hard,
let us make computations of the stars. Older, wiser, sadder, blinder, watch us run:
faster, longer, harder, stronger, now it comes:
colour blisters, image splinters gravitate
towards the centre, in final splendour disintegrate,
The universe now beckons
and Man, too, must take His place...
just a few last fleeting seconds
to wander in the waste,
and the children who were ourselves move on,
reincarnation stills its now perfected song,
and at last we are free of the bonds of creation. All the jokers and gaolers, all the junkies
and slavers too,
all the throng who have danced a merry tune -
human we can all be,
but Humanity we must rise above,
in the name of all faith and hope and love.
There's a time for all pilgrims,
and a time for the fakers too,
there's a time when we all will stand alone
and nude,
naked to the galaxies -
naked, but clothed in the overview...

as we reach Childhood's End we must start anew. And though dark is the highway,
and the peak's distance breaks my heart,
for I never shall see it, still I play my part,
believing that what waits for us
is the cosmos compared to the dust of the past...
In the death of mere humans life shall start

Songwriters

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