

Van Der Graaf Generator "The Emperor In His War-room"

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i. THE EMPEROR

Standing in the space that holds the silent lace of night
away from you

You think that you can hold the searing, molten gold
between

your fingers ...

But it slips through, tearing tendons as it goes,
exposing the white of a knuckle ...

flesh-and-metal forming letters in the mould.

Cradling you gun, after choosing the ones you think
should die-

Lying on the hill ... crawling over the windowsill into
your

living-room

They stare out, glass-eyed aimless heads,
bodies torn by vultures ..

you are the man whose hands are rank with the smell
of death.

Saviour of the Fallen, Protector of the Weak,

Friend of the Tall Ones, Keeper of the Peace ...

Ah, but it is the only way you know

Looking out to sea, a flattened plane of weeds which
bear no living

You crush life in your fist as your heart is kissed by the
lips

of death

Ghosts betray you, ghosts betray you, in the night they
steal your eye

from its socket ...

and the ball hangs fallen on your cheek.

Complaining tongues are stilled; a thousand mouths
are filled

with rusting metal.

Your face a shade of green; somehow you try to speak
through all the

garbage in your mouth

But it won't come out, and you cannot frame the words
as your stepson

throws your fame into the flames and you are burned.

Saviour of the Fallen, Protector of the Weak,

Friend of the Tall Ones, Keeper of the Peace.

Ah, but it is the only way you know

ii. THE ROOM

Live by sword and you shall die so,
All your power shall come to nought,
every life you take is part of your own,
death, not power, is what you've bought.
Cringing in your room as the outriders of doom step
on your threshold;
Begging for your life as the impartial knife sinks in your
screaming flesh ...
without malice, merely taking murder's toll,
you must pay the price of hate, and that price is
your soul
Live in peace or die forever in your war-room.

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