Peter Hammill, Still Life

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
that's still the ring by which you hope to be engaged
to marry the girl who will give you forever -
that's crazy, and plainly
it 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 chance now of holding fast the line,
defying death and time
when everything we had is gone?
Everything we laboured for and favoured more
than earthly things reveals the hollow ring
of false hope and of 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.