

godmachine

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Lights come up slowly on MIDAS after his death. He has suffered much.

MIDAS

I was Midas

I crucified the Christ child with golden nails

in this infinite hour beyond life

I am freed of my vain prayer: what I touch does not shimmer and harden, what I touch writhes
with indifferent mockery and becomes nothing but itself
and so I,

I

am unremarkable

a greedy tyrant in Hell among my betters

I am retired and mediocre

there's something average about death

I was Midas and I

tasted the first communion

this is not a life but an unlife

a legacy punished unforgettable

praise the immutable pain

praise the agony the nightmare dialectic

punish me

I beg you

Lityerses my child

it is me, Midas, your father who murdered the holy son

LITYERSES

so a child can never live up to his father's legend

since Oedipus we've maintained this ridiculous paradigm

MIDAS

punish me

LITYERSES

you died long before him

his spikes were iron, not gold

MIDAS

no
I did it
yours were modest crimes

LITYERSES

though I reap and harvest a thousand men you think me less than you
you think your victim the most expensive

MIDAS

I cannot be punished enough
I crucified the Christ child with golden nails

LITYERSES

still in death a lesson unlearned
greed greed greed greed greed
desperate to be richer than your neighbors

MIDAS

they're better tyrants than I was

LITYERSES

Exactly but why?

MIDAS

I

LITYERSES

the measure of a man is not wealth
any grade-school moralist could explain:
a man is the sum of his violence divided by the count of his tears
I am your better now

MIDAS

What was your crime?

LITYERSES

I don't know.

MIDAS

You're not in Hell for no reason.

LITYERSES

you say that like it's a rule
I was a gambling man
like you

MIDAS

also a glutton and a bastard?

LITYERSES

one at a time
yes, a glutton
yes, a bastard (though I don't consider that my fault)

gambling man:
at home in Celenae,
I owned the widest corn-field
and I invited the passersby to work outside and reap with me
and sing to praise Demeter

MIDAS

that bitch

LITYERSES

it's my turn
look at these arms: do you think any man could reap more than I in a day?
Every man I offered a challenge
Every man I defeated
and afterward, each one I beheaded with that same scythe

MIDAS

sounds to me like you know why you're here

LITYERSES

I'm in here the same reason as you I guess
we're the souls who went before
the souls who had no chance
the doctrine of history's roulette: we were born when we were born and it is our fault we
missed His coming

MIDAS

We won't be forgiven.

LITYERSES

I know.

MIDAS

our titans have been defeated our gods have been upended and we are saddled with the guilt
of the victorious party

LITYERSES

doesn't seem fair, does it?

MIDAS

there are crimes and crimes

LITYERSES

our titans have been defeated our gods have been upended and who reigns in their places

MIDAS

yahweh, they call him, allah, "god"
the ancient panoptic carpenter who worked six days

LITYERSES

what poverty!
only one god and a six day work-week

MIDAS

and they dreamed up a god of surveillance

LITYERSES

he sees you when you're sleeping
he knows when you're awake

MIDAS

they propped up a god of surveillance
and he lives in the heavens
and he has an army of servants
redacting the documents punishing the snitches and stacking acronyms toward Babel
drunk on data

would that I had their wealth
would that I had been born in their time
you, too—you might have beheaded young able-bodied men all across the earth

LITYERSES

that's quite a god

MIDAS

yes

LITYERSES

I'd be honored
beheading young able-bodied men all across the earth

MIDAS

their god who tortured and slaughtered his only son for our salvation

LITYERSES

and outside of time God watched us raise him like a trophy
with drones and dragnets he watched us raise him like
a
trophy

MIDAS

but a force that sees all must forgive all

LITYERSES

does your many-headed Hydra
your unblinking conglomerate
does it forgive

MIDAS

I guess forgiveness is a weakness in gods

LITYERSES

good thing nobody's forgiving us

MIDAS

he tortured and slaughtered his only son for my salvation and I could not accept
now I must do the same
it is my only chance

LITYERSES

just do it quickly

MIDAS

sorry, can't

to the gods, pain's value is exponential over time
I will work six days

LITYERSES

Christ died in six hours

MIDAS

you can do better than that
I will work six days
I will work one day and on the seventh
I will work two days and on the seventh
I will work three days and on the seventh
I will work four days and on the seventh
I will work five days and on the seventh
I will work six days and on the seventh I will be forgiven

yea, we shall both be forgiven for god's face is as our own
I was He when this face was god's, when these hands were gods
though we smite ourselves longing to be what He could be

LITYERSES

and what will happen to my spirit?

MIDAS

well
sorry
I don't know

LITYERSES

what will happen to this body?

MIDAS

burn, I guess

LITYERSES

there was another man who had your idea
a son for a son, a fair exchange of blood

MIDAS

he heard the command of a panoptic father
he only sinned in stopping his own hand

LITYERSES

this god only asks for the spirit, not the body

MIDAS

it is not enough
why am I punished still? but I am not punished enough

LITYERSES

if you want to sacrifice something, give up your wealth
that's what keeps you out of heaven

MIDAS

I have no other wealth but you

LITYERSES

sad

MIDAS

very

LITYERSES

the saddest part of being in Hell
is that no matter the torture the agony
you personally believe it is not enough

MIDAS

but I do
even if I had not performed my vanity and crime
the Son died for me and that would be enough I could never repay that

LITYERSES

must you try?

MIDAS

I must try

LITYERSES

lacrimosa, lacrimosa

a knife appears; it is a wicked blade of many previous slaughters

MIDAS

there will be six hundred and sixty-six wounds
strip
pray

LITYERSES

I refuse
I'm not your son, I'm not your sacrifice

MIDAS

who fucking asked you?!
strip
pray

LITYERSES

it is a tragedy you won't overcome
you dumb fuck

MIDAS

what's that, you who are so wise?

LITYERSES

you bury yourself in wealth
then when you have what's invaluable you can't wait to throw it away

MIDAS

that's what I have to do

LITYERSES

your godmachine watches you and laughs and laughs and laughs

MIDAS

what other chance do I have?
maybe a god who laughs at me will pity me

LITYERSES

long shot

MIDAS

shut up

LITYERSES

I laugh at you but I do not pity you

I can never pity you

MIDAS

it's not **your** pity or forgiveness I need
godmachine in heaven, hallowed be technology

*lityerses strips
and prays; he does not kneel or relent but defies midas, in futility*

LITYERSES

you want to cast stones?
not he who is without sin
he who bears a million sins
and staggers like atlas

midas cuts him

MIDAS

one

he cuts again and again and counts as he goes

MIDAS

two

LITYERSES

I am almost too young to die again

MIDAS

three
four
five
six

*blackout
sounds of midas counting fade to the mechanical sounds of industry*