

*Jugend ist Trunkenheit ohne Wein*  
by Julian-Jakob Kneer at BIKINI  
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Last night, stepping over empty lotion bottles and syrup stains, spray-painted leather insides sprawled across the carpet floor, bent down to peel a shred of dignity from the sole of your foot, clawing at your keds with bitten fingernails, fingertips really, the *thing* popped. Audibly, inevitably, had it coming, you lazy sod. Absolute irony, the place was a dream, the house almost a home, musty and sweet-smelling like yesterday's fingerbang and face-rubs on the furniture, your favorite song across everyone's arm hair, your picture in all the wallets, soft grunts from your violent family like animal lullabies, and clouds of vape bouncing off the closed windows. Then, like opening a soda can, a single wrong step, didn't even hurt, suddenly pus and toxins and god-knows-what leaking from your gut, and the *thing* agape dangling from your leg, as if it didn't know you. And everyone saw, of course they saw, and salt fell dry from the circles beneath your eyes, ex-tears, and here you are now, stupid and contagious, and all your friends are dead. Could life right now get any worse? Thinking about it, those spores must have been inside you all along, must have inhaled them at birth, because pretty sure you could feel it pulsing whenever someone stuck their tongue down your throat, watching, waiting, commiserating. Bad seeds growing big from deep inside, reaching up and out, twisted visions, sick diction, until the real world runs from the ceiling all wet and sticky, and time is a piece of wax, falling on a termite, and you're choking on the splinters. Problem is, you're a consumer, an eater, a sucker, no way you could have starved the *thing*. Now down by the playground they bang their moulds together and run their mouths, the rotten little punks. Think they're clever with their minds on each others crotches, plainsinging and muttering about their practice, all head wounds and phone charms, so academia, so sure of themselves, when everyone knows it only counts if you saw a nipple. Nothing better to do and better not to care, but still, why are bitches ever born? Then of course, you're hopelessly in love with them, practically swooning. So you roll up in that uncanny valley, that sweet space of revulsion, your body hustling to produce antibodies against a viral sadness spreading, afraid of whom you might meet in the upright, afraid to stumble over your own material conditions. You think about it all the time now, you think about it very matter of fact, and yet it never happens, and what to do then but learn to love the leak. The *thing* keeps oozing, hasn't stopped really, the *thing* will greet you every morning, and maybe all that degeneration begins to smell good and true and morally right. Truth is, you never fit in. Truth is, you only care about people as long as they're there. Imagine, next summer, you'll snap right back, no braces on your fangs this time, rising from the ashes like a phoenix, an all-star, an eye-sore, a total fucking loser, leaking, dripping, until end times, a liferuin. And maybe, just maybe, you'll make theirs a living hell.

*Trunken müssen wir alle sein!*  
*Jugend ist Trunkenheit ohne Wein;*  
*Trinkt sich das Alter wieder zu Jugend,*  
*So ist es wundervolle Tugend.*  
*Für Sorgen sorgt das liebe Leben,*  
*Und Sorgenbrecher sind die Reben.*  
–JWG