

Bat-Beer

I'm sitting on the cold sterile stainless steel table in a doctor's office. The walls are ghost white. The smell of ammonia and bleach makes me want to throw up. The petite nurse is using a needle to extract a clear fluid from a small jar. She turns to me with white latex gloves on and presses my neck to find a vein. She flicks the vein with her middle finger. She jams the needle in and with a push of the plunger immediate pain follows.

The sun set over the mountains five hours before we arrived. A cool breeze hits the cave making a wooshing sound. It was dank and dark inside. It was an after show party and all the bands that performed that night were there. The only light was coming from the fire where some of them were playing punk-rock on their acoustic guitars. Others were scattered about the cave, talking, laughing, and singing.

I was leaning on the silver keg near the entrance of the cave and counted anywhere between fifteen and twenty of us. I was eighteen. I was the big-bad with a green mohawk that stood a foot tall and wore a leather jacket covered with spikes and studs. I towered at six-and-a-half feet, the lead singer of a band.

We drank frothy beer out of red solo cups. We smoked Marlboro Reds or Lucky Strikes without the filters. We smoked pot. We were punk-rockers. We didn't give a fuck about anything. It was 1997 and Y2K was just around the corner.

I accidentally kicked a dead bat with my black steel-toe Dr. Martins, the ones with the yellow stitching. I picked it up, stroked it's leather limbs and fuzzy little body, then tossed it in my beer.

A girl walked up to me. I put the cup to my lips, taking the bat into my mouth, knowing it was hitching a ride. I opened my mouth to the girl. The head of the bat stared out at her, it's black beady eyes bulging. She screamed. I laughed. She ran away. It was the funniest thing in the world. I spit the bat back into my cup then gave it to my bandmate, Jerry who shook his head in disappointment.

When I swallowed the bat-beer something settled into my stomach. Over the next few weeks it started to grow. I unknowingly kept feeding it McDonalds and mac-and-cheese. It's tentacle's wedged into my organs, my veins, my blood stream, anything it could get it's sticky suction cups on. It was swimming in me. Eating me from the inside out.

I felt sick, I had a cold. The octopus began to slime it's way to my back, slowly creeping up my spine. My body hurt. It was getting bigger. I couldn't move. It was taking over. The skin on my back stretched. It stirred like lava, raising, bubbling, consuming everything in it's path. My body got hot.

I was completely bed-ridden, didn't show up for band practice, didn't even call. The next thing I knew Jerry was punching my face. I opened my eyes and he was holding me by the neck of my t-shirt with his fist pulled back ready to hit again.

He saw me. He saw me see him. He stopped. He spoke. *Whaa-Whaa-*

Whaa, was all Jerry said like the adult voices from Charlie Brown. He tossed me over his shoulder, carried me to his car, and dropped me in. He threw my black chucks at my feet and told me to put them on. I passed out instead.

When I came to I was sitting on a cold sterile stainless steel table in a doctor's office. The walls were ghost white. The smell of ammonia and bleach made me want to throw up. The petite nurse was using a needle to extract a clear fluid from a small jar. She turned to me with white latex gloves on and pressed a vein in my neck. She flicked the vein with her middle finger. She jammed the needle in and the with a push the plunger immediate pain followed.

She looked to my right. I saw her eyes, they looked bored. Green like my mohawk but darker. Her pupils were black. There were red veins pulsating in the whites of her eyeballs. I was getting dizzy. She said something to Jerry and I couldn't make it out all the way. *Whaa-Whaa-Whaa-Whaa-Whaa-Observation.*