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the fountain of youth

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the sewer backed up and the street filled with glowing green water and it all began when a neighborhood juvenile delinquent who was not very neighborly who robbed from friend and foe alike like he just didn't care lifted the manhole cover to show us the sights and we gathered round to watch in awe brown walls of waterbugs writhing like times square on new year's eve a few leapt up into daylight armor plated waterbugs the winged panzers of the cockroach army that mere sneakers could not demolish and we jumped back squealing and laughing then but not later and he liked the attention so he threw seven milk crates perfectly suitable for sitting down the shaft just to impress us but no one would sit there that night because the sewer backed up when the crew came to repair it and we watched the strange sight of something actually getting fixed and the street filled with glowing green water which the maintenance crews left like they just didn't care so for a week no one played outside and the shoppers and the commuters walked next to the buildings to avoid the chartreuse stench which took so long to recede the evergreen symbol of what the city thought of us like they just didn't care and of how we could not play on our own street which we would never forget though someday we might get lucky and hit the number or write a hit tune and move someplace where glowing green water would never happen like fifth avenue or sutton place without losing the ripened dignity of the poverty of youth