Channeling the speed of youth and the heaviness of a fleshy, *lived* life in equal proportion, Upchuck’s second LP, *Bite the Hand That Feeds,* is a Trojan Horse par excellence, craftily smuggling in waves of sentimental emotion and clever pop songwriting under a veil of pulsing rhythms and scorching riffs. What binds Upchuck together is a purity of intention, an organic loyalty to a thick knot of uncalculated friendships, struggles, and desires. These are songs about the joy of continuing to live, songs that find each other in the rush of a crushing reality, propelling the listener onward towards a collective release, however brief it may last. Themes of surviving through the night, youth-blinded love, cheap champagne soaked back-alley parties, and chaotic street protests are subsumed under a single unifying thread: the needs we have for one another, our shared hunger for connection. In a world saturated with arbitrary rules and paper-thin moralism, Upchuck offer freedom through sensation, a type of unserious transcendence found through the swirl of bodies melting into one another in the passion of dance. With *Bite the Hand That Feeds,* Upchuck isn’t trying to tell anyone how to live. Rather, they are simply trying to find a way to make life more worth living for both themselves and their friends—if the music compels you to move, you might as well consider yourself their friend too.

Shortly after the release of their debut album *Sense Yourself*, Upchuck absconded to Southern California to record *Bite the Hand That Feeds*, enlisting the production talents of Ty Segall and the airy reprieve of his secluded Topanga Canyon home studio. Upchuck credits Segall, who recorded the entire record live to tape over the span of five days, with helping to elevate the arrangements of their second record to bold new heights—fans of Segall’s extensive catalog will undoubtedly recognize the shadow of his creative touch in *Bite the Hand That Feeds*’ commanding, layered drum polyrhythms, tasteful use of oddball effects, and fuzzed out, every-guitar-pushed-into-the-red ethos.

All the same, final credit for Upchuck’s evolution from *Sense Yourself* to *Bite the Hand That Feeds* must be paid to the band itself. Following the release of their debut LP, Upchuck embarked upon a break-neck string of live shows, touring alongside the likes of Segall’s Fuzz, Amyl and the Sniffers, Negative Approach, OFF!, and Subhumans. The razor tight focus of *Bite the Hand That Feeds* was forged in the fire of these live shows, speaking directly to the power of their in-person presence—these are songs meant to be heard pressed up against a barricade, blasted through dimed guitar amps placed so close to your ears that you can practically reach out and touch them.

In its totality, *Bite the Hand That Feeds* offers a sonic portrait of what it feels like to be young and caught up in the thrill of it all, coursing between ripping dance grooves and thundering dirges, anti-self-serious crowd anthems and charming pop hooks.