

Today I Learned

Lindz McLeod

TIL that Alexander the Great died of drinking too much after a conquest; his enemy's mother, Sisygambus, upon hearing of his death, starved herself until she perished.

The fridge is never empty here. Pitted fruits piled high under cupboards groaning with the weight of jars. I can never speak love enough, only spell it out in green stems; when every dish bears company, a mouthful is a banquet.

TIL Caligula never waged war on Poseidon; never ordered his army to stab the sea with their swords. Never permitted them to collect shells to bring home as spoils of war.

When asked what I would save in case of fire, I don't know how to answer. Are my loved ones safe from red-tongued danger? If so, a book my great-grandmother signed with a trembling X, a decade after she forgot how to write.

TIL that both the Greek and Latin words for spoon come from “cochlea,” a spiral-shaped snail shell.

A slug is more than just a homeless snail, I wrote; there can be so much more to life than safety nets and comfort zones. That being said, it's wise to have a base of operations, a place to nestle, nose-to-tail.

TIL that Boris Yeltsin was so drunk at a state dinner, he drummed on the Kyrgyzstan President's bald head, using spoons.

*I read that tinnitus could be cured, or at least
briefly paused, by drumming fingers on the back
of one's own skull. A hair of the dog who whines,
high-pitched and constant, can soothe the
shrillest beast.*

TIL that Ulak Tartysch is a popular Central Asian game
where two teams of horse riders compete for
possession of a headless goat carcass.

*This begs so many questions; why not the goat's
head – a spherical object more suited to sports –
and instead a body flung, soaring? When the meat
is tenderised by the stampede, do they consume
this flesh, or hang it high as a trophy?*

TIL that in Norse mythology, Thor's chariot
is pulled by two named goats; he consumes
their meat each night but leaves the bones whole,
so the goats can resurrect.

*My vertebrae do not get along; each functions
yet shuns his neighbour. The joint-wives do
their best to smooth things over but passions
rise by degrees. I swallow pills daily so that
every six months a doctor can once again
inform me that the pain all in my head.*

Lindz McLeod is a queer, working-class, Scottish writer who lives in Edinburgh and dabbles in the surreal. Her poetry has been published by *perhappened*, *Allegory Ridge*, *Hellebore*, *Grain magazine*, and many more. She is represented by Headwater Literary Management.