



The first sip of beer

The small pleasures of life from Philippe Delerm

The only one that counts. Everything that follows is bland by comparison, a tepid coating of your tongue. The harder you swallow, the more meaningless the excess. Perhaps, within the tragedy of the final sip, you can begin to recapture...

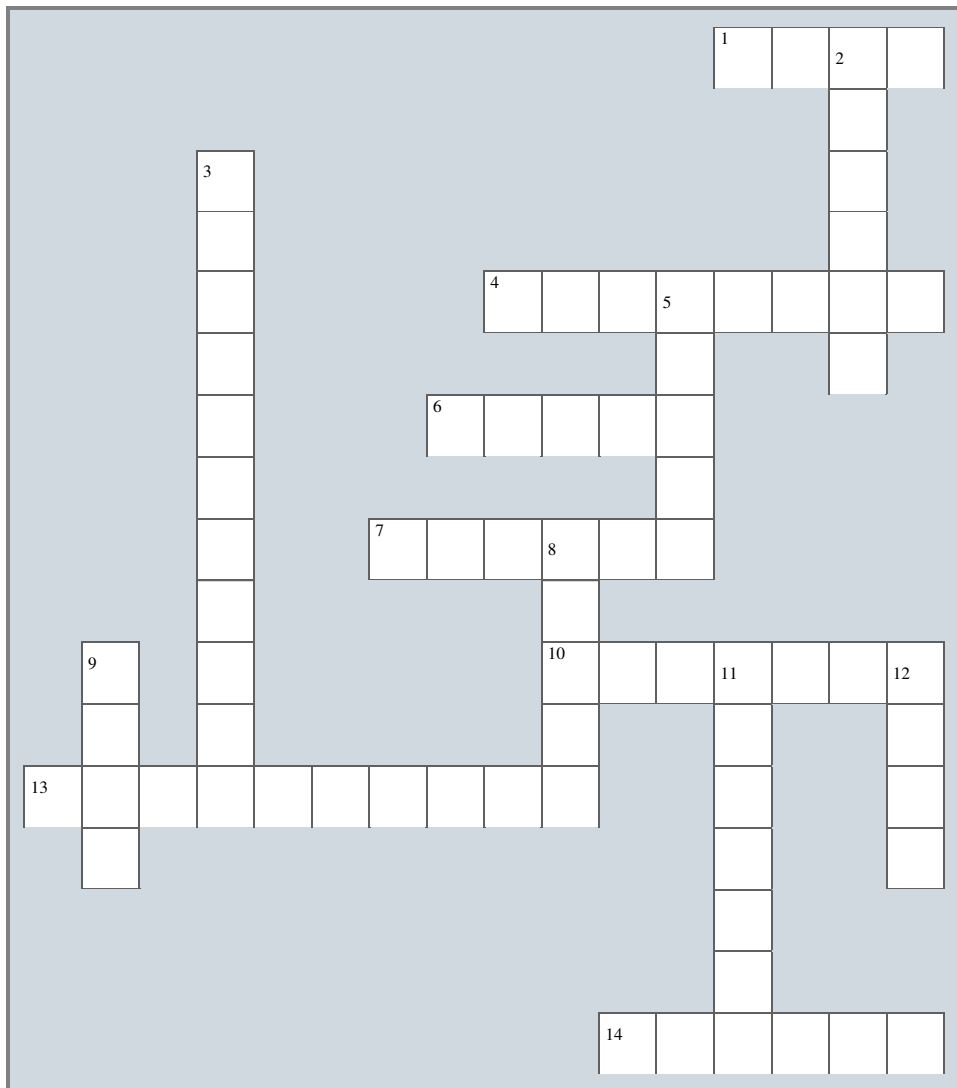
The first gulp! Its journey is already well advanced by the time it reaches your throat.

With a frothy trail of foaming gold around your lips, bitter happiness slowly permeates your palate. It seems to last a small eternity, that first sip. You drink without hesitation, gulled by your own instinct. The ritual is familiar enough: the right quantity to ensure a perfect prelude; the instant rush of well-being, punctuated by a contented sigh, a smack of the lips, or silence; the giddy sensation of pleasure teetering on the brink of infinity... And yet you know that the best is already over.

You put your glass down on the beer mat and push both slightly away. Time to relish the colour – ersatz honey, cold sun. If only you were patient and wise enough to grasp the miracle behind this disappearing act. You notice with satisfaction that the brewer's name on the side of the glass corresponds with the beer you ordered. But whatever the relation of the vessel, to its contents, nothing can bridge the gap between them, or conjure liquid out of thin air.

What you wouldn't give to capture and encode the secret of pure gold? Instead, you sit at your sun-splashed white table, like a frustrated alchemist intent on keeping up appearances – each mouthful is a falling away from pleasure. Happiness has a bitter taste when you have to drink in order to forget the first sip.

Crossword - The first sip of beer – Philippe Delerm, english



Across

- 1. able to make good decisions, having experience of life
- 4. just a little bit
- 6. boring and with not very much taste
- 7. shows lots of small bubbles on top of something
- 10. able to wait calmly for a long time
- 13. someone who wants to develop a particular skill but has not been able to do this
- 14. unpleasant taste of something

Down

- 2. at a slow speed
- 3. to have no purpose or importance, not worth doing
- 5. feeling silly, happy, and excited, or showing this feeling
- 8. liquid that is slightly warm, especially in a way that seems unpleasant
- 9. something not mixed with anything
- 11. happening or produced immediately
- 12. has less oxygen in it

Memory Boxes - Volkshochschule Olching, Germany – ©Celia Dierl

Crossword Key

„The first Sip of Beer“, Philippe Delerm

Across

1. **WISE**—able to make good decisions, having experience of life
4. **SLIGHTLY**—just a little bit
6. **BLAND**—boring and with not very much taste
7. **FROTHY**—shows lots of small bubbles on top of something
10. **PATIENT**—able to wait calmly for a long time
13. **FRUSTRATED**—someone who wants to develop a particular skill but has not been able to do this
14. **BITTER**—unpleasant taste of something

Down

2. **SLOWLY**—at a slow speed
3. **MEANINGLESS**—to have no purpose or importance, not worth doing
5. **GIDDY**—feeling silly, happy, and excited, or showing this feeling
8. **TEPID**—liquid that is slightly warm, especially in a way that seems unpleasant
9. **PURE**—something not mixed with anything
11. **INSTANT**—happening or produced immediately
12. **THIN**—has less oxygen in it

Cloze to

„The first sip of beer“ – Philippe Delerm

Fill in the blanks with the following words (35 words)

alchemist appearances comparison eternity excess gap gold gulp hesitation instinct journey lips mat miracle infinity palate pleasure prelude relation ritual rush satisfaction secret sensation sigh sip smack table taste throat time tongue tragedy trail vessel

The first sip of beer – The only one that counts. Everything that follows is bland by _____ a tepid coating of your _____. The harder you swallow, the more meaningless the _____. Perhaps, within the _____ of the final _____, you can begin to recapture...

The first _____ ! Its _____ is already well advanced by the _____ it reaches your _____. With a frothy _____ of foaming _____ around your _____ bitter happiness slowly permeates your _____. It seems to last a small _____ that first sip. You drink without _____, gulled by your own _____. The _____ is familiar enough: the right quantity to ensure a perfect _____; the instant _____ of well-being, punctuated by a contented _____, a _____ of the lips, or silence; the giddy _____ of _____ teetering on the brink of _____. And yet you know that the best is already over. You put your glass down on the beer _____ and push both slightly away. Time to relish the colour – ersatz honey, cold sun. If only you were patient and wise enough to grasp the _____ behind this disappearing act. You notice with _____ that the brewer's name on the side of the glass correspond with the beer you ordered. But whatever the _____ of the _____ to its contents, nothing can bridge the _____ between them, or conjure liquid out of thin air. What you wouldn't give to capture and encode the _____ of pure gold? Instead, you sit at your sun splashed white _____, like a frustrated _____ intent on keeping up _____ – each mouthful is a falling away from pleasure.

Happiness has a bitter _____ when you have to drink in order to forget the first sip.