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A MEDIATION ON PROPHYLACTICS, ABOVE GROUND POOLS, AND THE ANTIQUE WORLD

Glenage DeRyan

I've always been fascinated by condoms. Not by sex. Everyone is fascinated by sex. Boring. No, I'm fascinated by condoms. It is such an ingenious invention, a penile glove. Yet I have no idea who could have thought of it. Most people now credit Proflactico Condimius, a Roman senator and alleged pervert. To be fair though, most Romans were probably perverts in our modern eyes. After all, they worshipped a being that once transformed into a swan to have sex with a lady in a pond, which is the Roman equivalent of an above ground pool.

On another antique note, isn't it strange the most popular brand of condoms are named after the people who lost the Trojan War? I've heard some people say it's named after the Trojan Horse (i.e. the city is a metaphor for the desired orifice, The Horse is the condom, and the people inside the horse are the penis). But that doesn't make any sense. The people inside the horse were Greek damnit. Read the fucking Iliad.

Back in my youth, nothing was more embarrassing than buying condoms. I'm still scared of it today. It's not about people knowing I'm having sex. Well it's a little bit of that. I love sex. I love my partner (when I have one), but I'm half Catholic and all repression.

What freaks me out the most about buying condoms is the confidence. I wish I had it. I wish I could be the person who walks down the aisle at Target holding a pack of magnums, yelling to the world either, "I've got a great big old dick," or "I'm banging someone with a great big old dick." When I buy condoms, I always pay in cash, at the self-register when possible. I can handle robots judging me, less so people.

Condoms are a rather utilitarian invention when you think about it. There was a problem, and the condom was the simplest solution. How do we stop things from touching? Put some plastic wrap in the middle. If it works on a fucking tuna casserole, it can work on a penis.

But despite the ease of condoms, it seems like none of my friends use them. Sure, if you're in a committed relationship, or on good birth control, or STD free, why not? But there are so many other factors involved and I personally like the peace of mind.

I think the reason people don't use condoms is threefold. 1) It definitely feels worse, and that should be

good enough reason for most people. 2) In the media everyone's always having some great, unprotected, raw-dogged fucking. 3) They're not sexy.

I think three is the main reason for their lack of use, and honestly the reason I wrote this essay in the first place. Condoms, despite being the most used tool for sex, are not sexy. No one sees a condom and gets super turned on, except of course for their inventor Proflactico Condimius, who died of dehydration soon afterward, for obvious reasons.

No, condoms aren't sexy, but they are sex. Condoms are the awkward fumbling, the long pauses, the strange noises, and the unusual smells. They're the awkward, sweaty reality.

It's easy to feel, when you first start out, that you're drowning. That you have no idea what you're doing and that everything is strange, not the way you imagined it, not the way you saw in a thousand pornographic films. And you are drowning, sinking under a sea of uncertainty and shame, but you're drowning in an above ground pool, so it's a pretty easy escape.

When my friends talk about their sex lives, it's usually either about romance or about hard-core, sexy time—nothing in between. It's also almost always universally good. That's bullshit.

Sex is awkward and strange. People don't tell those stories. They tell the ones about candlelight or nonstop orgasms, about lasting all night and undying love, and there's a place for that, but there's also a place for the awkward, unsexy, but still fun, enjoyable, even beautiful sex.

There's a place for condoms.

