**WHAT’S IN A SOUND?**

**Tosca Lenci**

You want to hear a funny story? *[Well, maybe* you *won’t think it so; but it did provide ‘Us’ with some humorous distraction this a.m.]* It began this way….

Awakening after a good long piece of oblivion, whilst lying abed I gave aging Body a particular overall massage which has become routine. I initiated a pre-rising massage some months ago, then just on specific arthritically-worn joints (spine, elbows, knees). Over time, however, the practice progressed to deep, meditative workings over entire Body—muscles and surrounding flesh, as well as all skeletal parts, from toes to neck.

Surprisingly, during the expanded massage routine, some 15 to 20 deep, yawning intakes of breath now spontaneously occur. I recalled hearing that yawning primarily was a means of getting fresh oxygen *to brain*; but those dramatic, massage-evoked yawns piqued the following yielded research.[[1]](#footnote-2)

1. Biological chemistry produces gas/carbon dioxide in all parts of Body;
2. Exhaled air is rich in [carbon dioxide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carbon_dioxide), a waste product of biological chemistry and [cellular respiration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cellular_respiration);
3. A healthy body requires proper balance between oxygen and carbon dioxide;
4. Exchange of gases takes place at the alveoli level, an integral part of lungs;
5. Studies have shown that yawning occurs when blood receives increased amounts of carbon dioxide;
6. A yawn provides an influx of oxygen and expulsion of carbon dioxide.

It seems logically reasonable, then, (a) to assume that carbon dioxide generally is produced in cellular repair and restoration *throughout Body* during sleep; and b) to conclude that the intense, overall-massaging workout stimulates expulsion of excess carbon dioxide and intaking of restorative oxygen *throughout Body.*

*[Now.., whereas I, the Writer, feel the thorough account above is worthwhile toward general knowledge, of a potential enhancer of metabolic equilibrium, my main impetus for this writing is Body’s amusing massage denouement, this particular morning:*

*[Toward the extended routine’s end, as hands manipulated stomach and intestinal areas, Body emitted a couple of--“blasts” might be too strong a word?---gas ‘blows’ from the anus. Immediately it followed that the slang word for such bodily emissions insisted itself in Mind. Was that four-letter word, which dates all the way back to (probably beyond) Shakespeare, in the Dictionary*? *Check* Webster*!*

*As Body drew on its robe I took it to the bookshelf and drew down* Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, *while Mind (as it is wont) went ruminating rhyming words—art…cart… dart…heart… mart….*

*[Fingers first leafed to the fa’s; but, nope! Offered, instead, was:*

“flatulence or flatulency, *n:* the quality or state of being flatulent; flatulent, *adj.:* 1. (a)marked by or affected with gases generated in the intestine or stomach.”

*[More Interestingly was the definition for adjective 2 use!:*

“Prententious without real worth of substance.”

*[Imagine using the ‘polite’ word in likewise ‘polite’’ conversation:* “Well, friend, I believe that opinion of yours rather flatulent!” *Oh, c’mon, I thought; it’s gotta be, then, in the thick* Webster’s “Unabridged” Encyclopedia *(which heavy volume I forced aged Body to retrieve from the shelf). First to the fa’s; nope! And It also offered only one category*:

“flatulent (derived from L.L. *flatulentus,* from L. *flatus,* a blowing, from *fla, flatum, to blow (*as in *inflate*): Affected with gases generating or apt to generate wind in the stomach; windy. Flatulence, flatulency: *flat-u-lens, flat-u-len-si, n.* (L.L.. *flatulentia.*]. State of being flatulent, or affected with accumulation of gases in alimentary canal; flatulently, *adv.* In a flatulent manner.”

*[Ridiculous!—after all kinds of ‘new’ words have been added to our English vocabulary? Check on-Line! So I typed the ‘slang’ word/define, in Search; and, finally--at* Merriam-Webster.com *and other sites—was the four-letter word given:*

“often vulgar, informal, impolite: to expel intestinal gas from the anus.”

*[I guess -- given Humankind’s inability to address any of its intimate functions in an objective manner (sexuality a prime example)--it’s not strange* *that it took centuries to allow the four-letter word to reach some ‘dictionary’. But why has use of the four-letter description been (still is) so consistently avoided spoknen? Is it, the very sound*  *that offends?*

*[Well, at this point, “I-Domestic” wrested me away from the keyboard (got to get Body properly attired and teeth in, you know, in case some unexpected visitor rings the doorbell. Besides, there’s all that damned household clerical work needed). All I will say, It’s been a damned struggle: two personas with just one body and one pair of aged hands for all their respectively necessary tasks! I keep saying, “We need to get* away *a while—away, away—from boxes of books and research and untranscribed notes and property maintenance and paying bills and washing clothes and cooking, and, and, and.... Meanwhile, however, I leave you with the following:*

*Language, you see, for me has been an art;*

*I cannot tell you, when was the start*

*that poesy was lodged within my heart.*

*But do not conclude it has been a lark--*

*Perceiving me as something akin to a tart.*

*Simply allow me freely to remark,*

*there are times when I even*

*inadvertently\_\_ \_\_ \_\_ \_\_ !*

1. Drawn from *Wikipedia.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)