

WHAT'S IN A SOUND?

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:

When Body awoke after a good long piece of oblivion, *Domestic-I* gave it the particular overall massage that's now a daily routine, initiated some months ago only on certain arthritically-painful joints (*i.e.* spine, elbows, and knees). Over time it progressed to deep rubbing and working of all joints, muscles, and flesh. During the full routine, Body emitted some 15 to 20 deep yawning intakes of breath.

We knew the common belief that yawning indicated Brain's need for oxygen, but we were given to reason further. Since Body works toward healing during sleep, and biological chemistry produces gas, the massaging workout appeared to cause expulsion of gases from, and replacement of needed oxygen *throughout* Body. Then recently another effect 'emerged': toward end of the

routine, Body would emit a couple of (*blasts* is too strong a word) small blows of intestinal gas.

It was only this morning that the 'slang' word for such involuntary bodily event insisted itself upon Writer-I. *Was the four-letter word for the event in the Dictionary?* she wondered. Taking off on one of her *larks*, mind began ruminating other potential rhyming words-- *art, cart, dart, heart, mart, part....*

I arose and, drawing on my robe, we were forced to our Webster's *Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*. First we found "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." An adjective 2 given definition was, "prententious without real worth of substance." (*Interesting!--imagine using it in 'polite' conversation: -"Well, friend, I believe that opinion of yours rather flatulent."*)

There being no reference there to the slang term, we immediately rechecked the *fa's* for the four-letter word that goes all the way back (*probably beyond*) to Shakespeare; but, nope!

Oh, c'mon, Writer-I thought; *it's gotta be in our thick Webster's Unabridged Encyclopedic* version. That heavy volume body in its aged weakness was forced in

to retrieve from a lower shelf; but 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*.]. The state of being flatulent, or affected with an accumulation of gases in the alimentary canal; flatulently, *adv.* In a flatulent manner.”

Back over the fa's!

Nope!

This is ridiculous, Writer-I thought, when all kinds of ‘new’ words have been added to our English vocabulary! Check on-Line....

So we typed all four letters/define, in Search, to find at Merriam-Webster.com and other sites: “often vulgar, informal, impolite: to expel intestinal gas from the anus.”

I guess not strange, Writer-I concluded, that it took centuries to allow the four-letter word to reach some ‘dictionary’, given Humankind’s inability to address any of its intimate functions in an objective manner. But why has the four-letter definition been (still is) so consistently avoided? Was it the very sound that offended?

Well, at this point, Domestic-I (wresting Writer-I from laptop) managed to get properly attired with teeth in, just in case some unexpected visitor rang the doorbell. Besides, there was all that damned household clerical work awaiting....

What a struggle it's grown to be for both Personae, to force aged hands to our respective tasks! Writer-I keeps saying, "When all this current stuff's done we're going **away** awhile.... Away.., away...from shelves and boxes of books and research and untranscribed notes and paying bills and washing clothes and cooking and, and, and...."

Language, you see, for us has been an art;

We cannot tell you, when was the start

that poesy was lodged within our heart.

But do not conclude it has been a lark--

perceived as something akin to a tart.

Simply allow us freely to remark:

*there are times when even **we***

inadvertently must ____.