"Like a muscle that sings in the dark:" Semiotics and nonsense in Dennis Lee's poetry for children

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Résumé: *A l'aide des concepts de sémiotique et de non-sens, décrits par Julia Kristeva, Marnie Parsons analyse en détail l'oeuvre poétique pour enfants de Dennis Lee. Elle redéfinit le non-sens dans cette oeuvre comme l'émergence, à travers le langage ordinaire de la communication, de pulsions pré-linguistiques, dont la musique et la cadence sont les faces les plus évidentes. Parsons décrit ensuite le fonctionnement de cette interaction dans quelques poèmes particuliers.*

Since the appearance of *Alligator pie* – one of a handful of books which might well be considered as having permanently changed Canada's literary identity – Dennis Lee has been to the general public the country's great Nonsense writer for children, despite the fact that he dismisses (maybe even bridles at) the title ("Roots and play", *CCL* 17) and in spite of his important position in the highly sensical world of adult Canadian literature. Sheila Egoff, one of Canada's highly respected critics of Children's Literature, calls much, if not all, of Lee's children's poetry "Nonsense" in her celebratory article, "Dennis Lee's poetry for children: the tradition of Nonsense and light verse." And it's hard to find any critical response to Lee's children's verse which does not, implicitly or explicitly, follow suit. Always there are references to Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll, telling comparisons between the Snark and Lee's Honkabeest. Even Lee makes such connections, or at least makes them possible, when he admits the influence of Lewis Carroll ("Roots and play" 29).

But since Lee does "want to deny as strenuously as possible" the charge of *writing* Nonsense – as opposed to reading and loving it ("Roots and Play" 47) – why do critics persist in making the charge? Perry Nodelman suggests in "Cadence and nonsense: Dennis Lee's poems for children and for adults" (*CCL* 33) that labelling Lee's children's verse "Nonsense" allows critics to link it to a tradition far more "academically respectable" than the majority of children's literature and at the same time allows them to evade considering it with any sustained critical rigour (23). Nodelman's point is humourously made, and well taken. There is something defensive, something perverse, about insisting that a writer writes what he categorically denies writing.

A good hard look at Lee's verse proves that it isn't Nonsense – that is, it does not exhibit all the qualities of Nonsense as a genre. It does however rep-

resent a notable linguistic achievement in its exploitation of "small-n" non-sense. The word "nonsense" is often colloquially used in a pejorative sense; I use it here not dismissively, but as indicating linguistic disruption; non-sense attacks the assumption that language is merely a sense-making or communicative tool.

There are indeed shadows of Carroll, traces of Lear, echoes of A.A. Milne to be found throughout Lee's children's poetry, but these can be attributed to Lee's avowed respect for such writers and to the love of language he shares with them, rather than to a generic affinity. Lee argues that the term "Non-sense"

is best reserved for work which unites precise logic and irrationality so as to make each seamless with the other, and in the process off-handedly demolishes many of our official assumptions about reason and the nature of human beings. ("Roots and play" 48)

His note here on the "off-handed" demolition of structures in Nonsense can be focussed into a discussion of the way all nonsense simultaneously reveals and challenges the structures and strictures of verbal language, that medium in which we live and by which we define ourselves. I propose here to offer some general comments on linguistic disruption in both Nonsense and nonsense. In particular, I will examine three of Lee's nonsensical poems in the light of Julia Kristeva's definition of semiotic pre-linguistic pulsions or energies, and her citing of some of these pulsions in music, and cadence. Taking what we can learn from the critics of Nonsense as a genre, and adding the insights into verbal nonsense provided by a semiotic theorist such as Julia Kristeva may provide a way out of an apparent critical impasse regarding Lee's children's poetry. All those critics who itch to proclaim "Nonsense!" when they read or hear "Alligator pie, alligator pie" can have their pie and say it too.

Nonsense as a genre has been given sustained and useful definition in Susan Stewart's *Nonsense: Aspects of intertextuality in folklore and fiction* as well as in Elizabeth Sewell's classic *The field of Nonsense*. Many critical texts recognize the breadth of Nonsense and its influence upon other forms of literature. Most critics of Nonsense, however, zero in on the linguistic aspect of the genre, its concern or play with words. Elizabeth Sewell says Nonsense is "a world of words" (17); Lisa S. Ede writes of it as a "self-reflexive verbal construct" (12); David Sonstroem names it "double-talk" (98), and Susan T. Viguers, in her mock-dialogue with Edmund Lear's cat, Foss, suggests that in Nonsense words are "not responsible for meaning" (142). Critical debate centres on whether Nonsense has only literal, minimal meaning, or whether it generates more meanings than it can contain, and so promotes a multiplicity of ways of meaning which challenge the possibility of stable, univocal sense. In *Philosophy through the looking glass* Jean-Jacques Lecercle, like Gilles Deleuze, Sewell, and many others, claims that ultimately Nonsense is a "meaning-preserving activity" (140). A growing number of critics, however, challenge

this conservative/conservationist view. Wim Tigges, a Dutch specialist, says that in Nonsense meaning is suggested and then taken away, that it is "communication without communicating" (73, 248); Alison Rae Rieke locates Nonsense firmly on multiple ground; and Susan Stewart attributes to Nonsense an intrinsic simultaneity and multiplicity which allows language to generate ulterior texts/meanings, and to mean variously. Highly typical of this multiplicity of meaning in Nonsense is the pun – a notable feature in Dennis Lee's verse.

Although I agree with Stewart and Rieke as to the multiplicity and simultaneity of meanings in Nonsense, I approach the linguistic disruptions of all nonsense from a different direction. I use as a point of departure the theory of poetic language postulated by Julia Kristeva in *Revolution of poetic language*. I suggest that a semiotic study of nonsense (in Kristeva's sense of the term "semiotic") provides a useful perspective for the reading of much twentieth-century avant-garde and experimental poetry. Kristeva argues that the communicative language which we use every day, and which requires the non-disparate meaning she calls "symbolic," tries unsuccessfully to repress pre-linguistic (or "semiotic") energies. She defines as "semiotic" the drives and pulsions of the pre-Oedipal desires of the subject "in process/on trial." These semiotic drives are the residual expressions of a hypothetical time, or psychic space, before loss and lack have been experienced. Like many thinkers influenced by Lacan, Kristeva ties the time of language acquisition to the Oedipal phase. Pre-lingual energies force themselves into developing language in the form of rhythmic or phonic play, repetition, morphemic displacement and condensation (all elements noticeable in Lee's verse). They accentuate the capacity of language to make more than lexical sense. Pre-lingual energies continue to assault language with a chorus of alternative "voices" and possible ways to generate meaning. "Poetic language," then, according to Kristeva, is not so much the language of poetry, but language which is more consciously meaning-full than ordinary, communicative discourse (Lechte 35).

What results is nonsensical. The incursion of the semiotic, as Kristeva notes in *About Chinese women*, encourages "the [recreation] in...speech [of] this pre-sentence-making disposition to rhythm, intonation, nonsense; makes nonsense abound within sense" (29-30). Here Kristeva identifies nonsense with the semiotic which resides in poetic language. In "The speaking subject" she refers to the portmanteau words of Lewis Carroll's Nonsense as the best English language example of condensation or morphemic displacement which characterizes the semiotic's invasion of language (218). Nonsense language at the very least has close relations with poetic language, which challenges the uniformity of sense and expression and of language itself.

Dennis Lee expresses a similar view when he writes in "Roots and play" of "the governing dream – the liberation of repressed energies" and goes on to say that writing children's verse was one of the ways he has gone about trying to

express "this liberation dream," this need to break taboos (45-46).

Something like the spirit of Ookpik, which Nodelman names "pure, instinctual energy, the energy that Lee tells us we have repressed" ("Silver Honkabeest" 31), moves through nonsense language. "Ookpik dancing" in *Nicholas Knock and other people* is a revision of the earlier "Ookpik" of *Wiggle to the laundromat* and *Alligator pie*; in it Lee does away with Ookpik's non-contradictory opposition ("An Ookpik is nothing but hair/ If you shave him, he isn't there") and focuses on Ookpik's spirited movement, his dance. But the heart of the poem is simile, itself a dance around the apparent firmness of definition. Inside framing couplets "describing" his dance are three more couplets full of what Ookpik is like, of how he can be held, only tentatively, in both the mind and the language, because he himself is (almost) immaterial. Uncontainable, indefinable: the poem does not say what Ookpik *is* but what he is *like*:

> Like a fib in a sieve, like a wish
> Like a smile in a styrofoam dish
> Like an eel, like an ale, like an ark
> Like a muscle that sings in the dark
>
> Like a snail in a trance, like a flare
> Like an acrobat turning to air
> (*Nicholas Knock* 14)

Lee's indisputable semantic intent makes this poetry as opposed to Nonsense. But underlying meaning is the "otherness" of sound, the possibilities of phonic slide and shift that create another way to read this poem. Such is the case with almost all poetry; for, like Nonsense, poetry is a "world of words," a linguistic game waiting to be toyed with. Nevertheless, as this example shows, poetry usually contains an undefeatable gesture toward meaning which is not found in pure Nonsense.

If Ookpik is another version of the semiotic, the similes describing him are intriguing. They recognize the difficulty of naming the pre-linguistic or instinctual in language; they also enact the principle of shift, dance, movement, which "is" Ookpik. Each couplet crystallizes, momentarily, a process of linguistic disruption and distortion. The assonance (fib, sieve, dish, wish) and alliterative s's of the first couplet draw its component parts together more completely than their semantic value does. And the play around the vowel "a" provides an alternative unity to the third couplet quoted above. Rhythm is part of this process too.

An even closer look at just one line can demonstrate how subtly and precisely sound manufactures different axes of meaning. The line "like an eel, like an ale, like an ark" is not merely an incongruous confusion of items joined by the nearly mantric repetition of "like an," but rather a sinuous, almost serpentine slide through sound from vowel to vowel to consonant. Nor is the line just

a teasing out of assonance and off-rhyme, for isolating the initial sounds of each word reveals an alliance of (and with) sound – eel, ale, ark: e,a,(a)r – the temptation toward Saussurian anagram ("ear") is hard to resist. No, I don't think Lee intentionally encoded in this line the sensory organ most connected to Ookpik, but the fact remains that these three nouns are not materially or sensically related (although in one way or another each has to do with liquid – and Ookpik is nothing if not loquacious): they cluster round the ear, and resonate with each other as *sound* rather than as sense. But look again – the sum of the sounds *is* the eventual whole: the "new" letters added to the e – l of the original eel are a, r and k. The last word is the organic culmination of the whole line's sound play. Phonically, this line creates two vessels, one *for* sound and one *of* sound.

These sound games are not invariably played out in terms of the thematic contents of the poem. I relate them in "Ookpik dancing" to the poem's thematic centre merely because I have rather cavalierly reconfigured Ookpik's role, co-opted his spirit, in order to elaborate analogically upon Kristeva's semiotic. More important than the analogy, however, is the independent dancing of the sound itself; it energizes another, and sometimes wholly removed, way for the poem to mean, and allows the similes an ambiguous existence as at once distanced comparisons with, and active participants in, Ookpik.

For Kristeva, pure semiosis exists in the form of music (*Revolution* 24); consequently the musical capacity of language, the density and resonance of sound as distinct from the "superficiality" of sense, is evidence of semiotic forays into the symbolic (63). Here again is a potential way to bring together Nonsense and semiosis, and a justification of a nonsensical reading of Lee's verse. Emile Cammaerts argues in *The poetry of Nonsense* – with what seems a measure of overstatement – that Nonsense verse can be equated with music (52), and Egoff, in her essay about Lee's children's poetry, suggests that "[if] one of the essential tasks of the poet is to make music with words then nonsense poetry at least must rank first in its appeal to the ear"(45). Of course Nodelman rightly points out the illogic in suggesting the syllogism: "Nonsense is musical, Lee's children's verse is musical, it must therefore be Nonsense" ("Cadence and Meaning" 24). The contention is fallacious not only in its generalized attribution of the musical principle but also because it assumes, as those who present this aspect of language as a touchstone for Nonsense generally do, that both music and Nonsense lack meaning. But many critics besides Kristeva believe that although music is part of the semiotic which disrupts and disfigures symbolic language, music is itself a way of meaning.

In "Towards a semiotics of music," Henry Orlov contends that music means nothing more than itself, but means nevertheless, in its own self-reflexive way. In pointing to itself, despite its culturally-determined affective properties, music forces an awareness of its own composition, of the way it has been orchestrated. Its form becomes its content, its formal variations its theme. Sim-

ilarly, there is a conscious play with how language and meaning "work" in non-sense, and a simultaneous exposure and celebration of the intricacies of the linguistic system. Nonsense in this respect proves also to be highly self-reflexive. This shared self-reflexivity is not coincidental. This point of connection becomes a point of cross-over, a point at which the forms of musical "language" are translated into verbal language, or transliterated onto it, making it nonsensical. Here I depart from Kristeva, however. In her view, the semiotic is purely pre-linguistic energy; I posit that in the nonsensical language of a poet like Lee a whole complex of systems of meaning (be they musical, visceral/gestural, philosophical, or mathematical) may intrude into, or be superimposed upon, a verbal system of meaning in order to create a new "dialect" – one in which attempts to balance various systems or ways of meaning within a linguistic context are tenuously successful. This, for me, is nonsense language: a disruption that arises from attempting to contain within verbal language a "foreign" medium; an intermingling that moves in and out of various sign systems, and in doing so takes with it the residue of those systems.

In Lee's case, the musical peeks through, rustles beneath, the dominant verbal language system, but so do other "foreign" systems, such as mathematics. What results is more resonant language with access to various planes of experience and expression. This poetic language simultaneously reveals how more staid meaning usually shuts out, represses or denies entrance to otherness, in order to fabricate the illusion of univocal meaning. Nonsense then does not demolish meaning, it demolishes the myth of singleness of meaning and replaces it with multiplicity, manyness; it accommodates the other.

Thus, while the claim that Lee's poetry is musical does not make it Nonsense, it enables us to begin looking at his complex nonsensical use of language. In the context of children's verse, listening to the sounds of Lee's poetry helps us understand that the subversion of verbal language, or the introduction of any other system of meaning, can itself be a meaning to read for.

Maybe in Lee's verse this means reading at the level of cadence. Susan Vigeurs claims that Nonsense has the "cadence of meaning without the content"(139), but she is not using the term "cadence" as Lee does. His descriptions of experiencing cadence recall Kristeva's descriptions of the semiotic. He compares it to

a pulsing which has no discernible source. . . a complex, constantly fluctuating kinesthetic pulse. . . . Cadence has no identifiable "content," it is its own content, a rich symphony of torsions and flexings. ("Cadence, country, silence" 500-501)

Cadence is, in part, a "musical" awareness of *haeccitas*, the thisness of things, and of their relations with each other; an instinctual, physical understanding of presences as yet undefined by language of any sort. Lee likens it to "the medium, the raw stone" (499) that contains within itself the potential, finished sculpture. For Lee, a poem is "meant to do in words what cadence, kinesthetic

psychic space, [has] been doing all along. Not by describing it, but by living out its muscular trajectories in words" ("CCS" 501). The idea of cadence is far more metaphysically complicated than that of nonsense; yet nonsense,I think, is capable of accessing cadence in a way that many other reading strategies are not. Nonsense is willing to do away temporarily with content as the focus of reading, and turn to cadence itself as a meaning – ultimately, for Lee, in a quirkily Platonic way, cadence is *the* meaning.

It seems to me high time that Lee's verse, both for children and adults, be given a reading that follows its "muscular trajectories" rather than its admittedly important and challenging intellectual dips and curves. The only example which I know of is Stan Dragland's discussion in "On civil elegies." Lee insists, in "Polyphony: enacting a meditation," that

Of course, you can't separate the play of inflection in the final poem from the literal meaning of words. But the music does exist at that pre-signifying level. And sensing it echoes the way the spurt and shimmy and hover and lunge first came at you – which was, they came tumbling through you long before there were stable words to flesh them out. (90)

I propose now to effect, temporarily, that impossible separation between inflection and meaning and to look at the pre-signifying level in three of Lee's children's poems, to hear how that level (their "otherly-" or "alternately-" signifying level) challenges normative language. I want to listen again, ear to the ground-level beat of cadence, to follow the music of his verse as it "pounds *and* loops *and* shimmies *and* tumbles" (89) beneath an admittedly child-like and often zany content.

Consider "There was An Old Lady" from *Jelly Belly* (14-15). It seems simple enough – eight quatrains, each with an ABCB rhyme scheme. The rhythm is regular, and the allusion to the poem's Mother Goose precursor easily identifiable. But the poem turns on a type of echoic distortion which moves beyond rhyme. In stanzas two to seven, the fourth line is always a phonic displacement of the stanza's second line; in "Re-realizing Mother Goose," an interview conducted by Catherine Ross and Cory Bieman Davies, Lee admitted the difficulty of "trying to make line four essentially a rearrangement of the syllables of line two." The result of these migrating syllables is a transgression at once sonal and semantic. The dutiful, if relatively useless, cat brings back what his clouded ears have heard, unless, of course, his deafness is selective, indicating an idiosyncratic rebellion. I can't help but wonder if that cat would bring back a potato chip if sent for catnip. The elision of sound leading to miscommunication (which is always a pitfall of language) demonstrates the instability of sense in a world where sound becomes a constituent of meaning. A little shift and the whole structure of sense and normalcy crumbles. No one can have a basket of bees or a galloping goose for dinner – well, perhaps the goose if one runs fast enough. But an Indian chief? A hockey team? A bride and confetti?

When the Old Lady finally gives up on the cat, she ends up with a hot dog. This food is not part of the rhyme scheme, is, in fact, sandwiched between the lines reserved for her sensical requests and the cat's absurd responses. The words, too, are sandwiched between a restrained communicative language gone wild; Lee's poem shows that at its most interesting language can't be trusted to communicate as we might like it to. So, a hot dog. There's a hint here, I think, at the absurdity in these seemingly grounded words – its doubleness and potential to mislead; even with sound on a leash, these words can mean in a couple of ways, especially when the poem is read against its literary backdrop: Old Mother Hubbard finds her cupboard bare and so her poor dog has none; this old lady finds her cupboard bare and so she has a dog.

"Quintin and Griffin," from *Garbage Delight*, shows Lee challenging language in a far more musical way.

> Quintin's sittin' hittin' Griffin
> Griffin's hittin' Quintin too.
> If Quintin's quittin' hittin' Griffin,
> What will Griffin sit'n'do? (11)

The ABAB quatrain is a tongue twister, and much more effective than Lee's earlier "The Sitter and the Butter and the Better Batter Fritter." The rhyme has interchangeable parts; Quintin and Griffin can trade places without destroying the verse's rhyme and rhythm. Since these are the names of two children Lee really knows, it's hard to credit him with creating the rhyme. However, his use of the names to animate linguistically the kafuffle of sibling rivalry is wonderful. Almost everything gets embroiled in the momentum of argument and anarchy: other words are truncated to fit the musical pattering – "hitting" become "hittin'," "and" become "n'." These abbreviations and changes are common enough, but in this context it is neither elocutionary laziness nor fast talkin' which has effected the changes, but rather a need to conform to the musical principles which govern the poem.

If the poem has a predominant sound it is "nnnnnnn" – one that captures perfectly the buzz of annoyance between siblings and almost succeeds in drowning out the "ttttt" raised by the thickets of doubled consonants also common to the poem. Fourteen words (if you count "sit'n") rhyme with the A rhyme sound "in"; that this level of rhyme can only be achieved by sliding two words into one indicates that not even morphemic unity is safe from the swell of sound. In fact, one could even consider "sit'n'do" as one word, rather than three, and challenging the identity of words at a lexical as well as a morphemic level. Of the other words, "if" rhymes with "Griffin" in a divergent though significant way and so can be considered tangential. The B rhyme of the verse claims two of the remaining words – "too" and "do". These stand out not only because they represent an alternative end rhyme, but also because their vowel sound marks a radical sound departure for the poem. And, of course, what is the subject of

the poem if not a too-do.

The only words which don't rhyme in any way are "what will," the first two words of the last line. They suggest a break in several ways. They introduce new sounds and so jar the movement of the poem while prefiguring its end, they also, along with the earlier and only partially rhyming "if," signal the presence of a question as opposed to the poem's initial assertion. The sureness of language on a roll is interrupted, and the linguistic anarchy of rhyme lifted, giving the reader, at least for the moment, a peaceful place to dwell. Of course, even this peace is deceptive – "what will" is, after all, alliterative: inherent in the pause is yet another phonic disruption which, if heightened, could once more undermine the "sense" of the language.

Finally, "On Tuesdays I Polish my uncle," from *Alligator pie* catches attention by the sheer silliness of its title. A quick reading reveals that the poem has everything from beans to burps, but absolutely no polish. The title, then, quite clearly establishes the poem as semantic quicksand. Of all the ways language may be used, it does not work in this poem in a reliably sturdy, referential, "this means that," sort of way. The title of the poem reveals nothing about its content, though much about its manner.

The gap between title and poem is filled with a sound play which expands as each verse increases incrementally. The first stanza is a quatrain, but each stanza lengthens until the sixth and final one has ten lines. The first two and last lines of all the stanzas rhyme, the only exceptions being the last line of stanzas three and six, which are themselves quite significantly placed to suggest a newly emerging pattern. But it is really the third line of the first stanza, with its internal rhyme, which spawns the growth of the poem. For every other line in the poem, other than the eighth (and what *should* have been the penultimate line of the sixth stanza, if Lee's initial pattern of expansion had not been broken) contains the internal rhyme which is responsible for so much of the poem's zaniness.

Sound gets carried away with itself. The first example of internal rhyme is the single instance of "But when I got back I had ants in my pants". The next verse, however, introduces the soon established pattern of repetition with slight variation, and of two different internal rhymes in each new line – "And when I got back I had ants in my pants,/And dirt in my shirt, and glue in my shoe." In fact, as the end of the poem nears, the first lines of stanzas – though they initially included only end rhyme – contain internal rhyme too, and a multiplying rhyme at that: "I started the ark in the dark./My father was parking the shark." And eventually: "So my dad he got snarky and barked at the shark/Who was parking the ark on the mark in the dark." These lines are more musically dense, more rhythmically urgent than their earlier counterparts. The spiralling of rhymes adds speed, perhaps even danger to the play.

These rhymes use sound to justify the pairing of often quite improbable companions: beer and ears, stains and brains, sharks and parks and marks and

arks. The words are used here not so much for their literal meaning – though of course that's part of the fun – but for their sound, and their ability to generate *more* sound. This is not the same as "Quintin and Griffin," where sound becomes almost homogeneous; here the rhymes and phonic play are not uniform. What is important is the tendency of rhyme to open the field for more and different rhymes and so more, and increasingly absurd, possible pairings.

Sound becomes a principle of anarchy, incongruity and ultimately exhaustion; the sixth stanza breaks several of Lee's patterns. It has two new lines rather than the one that the others have had, and it also has lines which don't rhyme. The eighth line, which, rightly or wrongly, I habitually think of as the 'extra' line – "A small polka-dot burp with headache tablets" –prefigures the end of the reign of internal rhyme, and suggests a phonic exhaustion, as if sound has spread itself just a little bit too thin. It is, of course, intensely silly, and very much in the spirit of a child who, in pushing language to its limits, reaches for the *most* absurd idea she can find and in doing so somehow breaks her own rules. Line nine shows sound seeming to get its own back; it begins with an equally ridiculous coupling – "and a ship on the lip...". But this is followed by the more mundane "and a horse, of course," – which includes an ellipsis of sorts, in the exclusion of a preposition. The horse is not paired with another amusingly rhymed object; instead a mild interjection simultaneously interrupts the rhyming combinations while preserving the rhyme. In the last and longest line of the poem – "So we all took a bath in the same tub and went to bed early" – words pour out in a rush, a gasp almost. It is significant that the last word, "early," has the same central letters as so many of the earlier rhymes – "dark," "park," "shark" – but equally significant is the alteration of the a,r to e,a,r, – not another "secretly-encoded" ear, but rather a diphthong that entirely changes the sound value of the a,r. That signals far more powerfully aurally than visually the decline of one way of sounding, the potential rise of another. Many other important sound events can be found in this poem – alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhythm. Sound functions at almost every conceivable level, making the way the words play off each other a level of meaning more reliable than the semantic meaning which is done away with from the very start.

There's more going on in all of these poems than meets the eye; in fact, I'd suggest that what is *really* going on in them is what meets the ear. If that is so, then reading Lee's verses non-sensically, letting his music register as a language within verbal language, can only fine-tune our listening. Reading them beyond their content may well facilitate a deeper appreciation for their craft. Nonsense, then, is not a genre into which Lee's children's verse can be easily dismissed. Rather it is an unnameable, almost "primal" manifestation within discourse, a pulsion, a surge or torsion which musicalizes language. It is like Ookpik, "like a muscle that sings in the dark" of the many ways in which language can mean.

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