

Title: Semblances of Lyric

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This paper traces the laying bare of lyric - its apotheoses, semblances, shadowings, in prose.

Taking Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* as its point of departure, my analysis will follow the different linguistic, rhythmic, and musical registers employed by this very rich text. Apart from the truly polyphonic play these registers engender, they also raise the question of a profoundly modern poetics. What emerges is the intermingling of citations of "real" poetry (from Schiller in Zhukovsky's translation to the biblical psalm that conjures remembering) to semblances of lyric - drinking songs like the one Ivan hears on his final visit to Smerdiakov. The latter, especially, are placed in contexts that render them every bit as haunting as poetry itself. Ivan, for instance, remembers the drunken man's "akh poekhal Van'ka v Piter" at a poignant juncture in his exchange with Smerdiakov, so poignant indeed that it quite literally takes away his language, "iazuk." Smerdiakov's murderous interpretation of Ivan's writings thus in Ivan's awareness that leaves no doubt of its final outcome creates a deadly resonance within the song's simple rhythm, indeed in its very triviality. This is the stuff Waste Lands of modernity are made of (T.S. Eliot's use of the nursery rhyme "London Bridge is falling down...").

The prose context the novel provides takes the quality of the poetic out of any confinement to a poem as clearly delineated object. In this sense, haunting lyric with its own semblances and shadows, prose carries on poetry beyond the dissolution of its textual and formal boundaries.