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Hearing is a Talent That Must Be Honed

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HEARING IS A TALENT THAT MUST BE HONED

We've always been
listeners, our ears pricked
like dogs' at a high-
pitched whistle
or the word treat,
but we lower our eyes
in public to avoid
being called eavesdroppers—
though we are,
of course. We are
indiscriminate listeners.
Our ears have been trained
to filter conflicting sounds—
the conversations
in a crowded room,
the cacophony downtown—
and reassemble them
logically, contiguously.
In this way, we become,
perhaps, multiple—
some might say many-eared.
To do this, we practice:
one will whisper
into a windstorm,
and the other will discern
the language from the squall,
translating both.
Our next challenge:
to understand a foreign
language simply
by listening hard enough.
We imagine this

will be difficult,
but eventually meaning
will emerge
like the blurred
figure of a man—
a man slowly broadening
into a group of men—
from the haze of desert
horizon, suddenly
coming into focus.