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Hearing is a Talent That Must Be Honed

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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.