

How to Listen

I am going to cock my head tonight like a dog
in front of McGlinchy's Tavern on Locust;
I am going to stand beside the man who works all day
combing
his thatch of gray hair corkscrewed in every direction.
I am going to pay attention to our lives
unraveling between the forks of his fine-tooth comb.
For once, we won't talk about the end of the world
or Vietnam or his exquisite paper shoes.
For once, I am going to ignore the profanity and
the dancing and the jukebox so I can hear his head
crackle
beneath the sky's stretch of faint stars.

—Major Jackson

Prep sheet:

1. What are some clarifying questions you have, or some lines you may not understand?	2. What are some probing questions that could begin to broaden your understanding of the poem?
---	--

3. What was the most meaningful/ important line in the poem to you? Why?	4. What role does listening play in your everyday life? How important is it to you to listen?
5. Has the experience of being in quarantine for the last 9 weeks affected your willingness to listen? If so how?	6. Other ideas/ questions that pop into your head while reading, or after reading this poem?