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Listening

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I stood at the door of a room
where a blind man sat
listening to his
talking book machine.

He wore headphones so snugly that
not even the smallest fragment of sound could escape.
The voice on the tape
went through the electronic circuits
through wires and diaphragms,
resonating into the ear pieces,
completed absorbed within
his singularly attentive mind.

He focused intently on the world described
by the encapsulated voice
while the tape spun softly in its niche,
narrating deeds,
telling stories,
weaving spells,
his sunken eyes closed in reverie.

I entered his room,
making a noise,
startling him
at my approach.
“Shush,” he said. “Be quiet!
You’re disturbing me.”
For I had intruded upon his world
of vivid imagery, spectral faces
and sharp details.

Later, when we met again,
he said, “I’m sorry
I didn’t mean to be so cross,
but while I was listening,
I could see again.”