

*Silences*  
by  
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The silences are eloquent.  
The few voices eloquent, too, but pained.  
Listen to both.  
Let down the barriers between you and these needy.  
Nothing need stand in the way of our  
sharing their lives.  
Unless we fear sharing theirs.  
But listen,  
Some speak  
Some verbalize without conventional meaning  
Some say nothing and only from their eyes  
can we know  
they know us for friends.  
Some not even that.  
Listen to the sounds  
and the silences.

A man whose every articulation  
is a fierce struggle with erratic synapses  
Tells an audience of the elite  
That all people are of value  
And moves the elite to tears.  
He tells them that to understand  
they must abandon their distancing  
and know his world;  
Listen and see.  
They vow to try and hope they can.

Can you?  
Can you forget who you are  
And, undefended, let their message reach you?  
Will responsive chords in you  
make harmonies with their notes and rests?  
Or not.  
Begin by listening.