

Henry, Henry Aldrich! I cry at dawn.
Are you calling I, my companion says

under her breath. In a good radio show,
everyone's always in the right, and love,

like talent, seems to run in families.

THE HUNGARIAN TELEPHONOGRAPH

It was the first of its kind anywhere.
And no one seemed to know who invented it.
Great grampa signed up for one and the day
it came the whole neighborhood came over
to see it installed above the couch, for
"reclining listening," the ad suggested.

You didn't talk into it. What was the point
of that? great gramma said. All you did was
lie back and listen to things coming across
the precious wire from the central station.

Days there'd be news, stock reports, lectures
the government selected. Great grampa was glad
of that, he couldn't read and arranged to stay
home from the factory so he could learn everything.
Nights, workers hauled the huge sender to the opera
or the People's Theater, and no one minded grampa
falling asleep snoring by the second curtain.

Once, when they tuned it to the big earthquake
out east, sisters rapped on each other's doors,
Praised Be Thy Most Holy Sacrament! they yelled
back and forth across the clotheslines. The terrified
inventor shot himself in the leg at the asylum.