

What is it like to "hear" a hand?

You have to be deaf to understand

What is it like to have to depend
Upon one who can hear to phone a friend;
Or place a call to a business firm
And be forced to share what's personal, and,
Then find that your message wasn't made clear?
You have to be deaf to understand.



What is it like on the road of life
To meet with a stranger who opens his mouth --
And speaks out a line at a rapid pace;
And you can't understand the look in his face
Because it is new and you're lost in the race?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to comprehend
Some nimble fingers that paint the scene,
And make you smile and feel serene,
With the "spoken word" of the moving hand
That makes you part of the word at large?
You have to be deaf to understand.

What is it like to "hear" a hand?
Yes, you have to be deaf to understand.

*Written in 1971 by Willard J. Madsen,
professor of journalism at Gallaudet University.*