

## Listening like a Writer

The same way that Francine Prose's book, *Reading Like a Writer* has become an indispensable craft tool for a writer, so have the [New Yorker fiction podcasts](#). In *Reading Like a Writer*, Prose says that "in the ongoing process of becoming a writer ... [she reads] analytically, conscious of style, of diction, of how the writer was constructing a plot, creating characters, employing detail and dialogue." Equally, if one listens to the New Yorker fiction podcasts analytically, conscious of style, of diction, of how the writer constructs plot, creates characters, employs detail and dialogue, one engages in the process of becoming a writer.

Students of creative writing and literature learn that a successful narrative engrosses all of a reader's senses. To this end, they strive to employ words that bring to life the pulse and contour of the universes they create. The New Yorker fiction podcasts serve this purpose. Who can fail to picture the exchange between Anders and the maddened bank robber, listening to T. Coraghessan Boyle read Tobias Wolff's *Bullet in the Brain*, or the chill in the air when apartheid South African police come to arrest the white man's colored lover as Tessa Hadley reads Nadine Gordimer's *City Lovers*?

By vocalizing literature, these podcasts underline the creative writer's primal and prime function, which is to tell a story. And herein lies another benefit of these podcasts: because the job of a writer also entails reading one's own work, it helps to hear established authors read aloud.

Even more beneficial, not only do authors featured in the *New Yorker* fiction podcasts read other writers' work, they also discuss the work they are reading, explaining why they like the stories, what elements of the narrative work, and in most cases, they even throw in tidbits of writing advice and mention invaluable writing resources.