

“Ministry by the Ear: The Art of Poetic Listening”
by Kenneth L. Gibble

1. Gibble quotes M. Craig Barnes, who says, “When we begin with our identity in Christ and the pastoral call to assist others in becoming fully alive in him, we are freed from the drudgery of being managers and service providers to pursue something much more creative—being poets of the soul.” How is poetry different from other types of writing? What does a poet see or hear that other writers do not?
2. In another place, Gibble quotes Barnes saying, “The purpose of poetry is to reveal the mystery and the miracle that lie beneath the ordinary. It doesn’t argue, buttress against doubt, or defend. It explores.” Can a pastor be a pastor if he or she doesn’t teach, argue, and defend the gospel truth? Why or why not?
3. What would you like to tell teenagers? the government? the church? If you listened to these groups, what do you think they are saying?
4. Take turns reading aloud from the poems Ken Gibble provides. What does the church say to people like the characters in the poems? What do you hear when you read these poems?