



UNITED STATES POET LAUREATE 2001-2003:
BILLY COLLINS
READS FROM HIS WORK AT THE SNOW COLLEGE
TANNER LECTURE

FEBRUARY 10TH, THURSDAY
7:00 PM
SNOW COLLEGE
ECCLES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
EPHRAIM

Billy Collins

United States Poet Laureate 2001-2003

Billy Collins is an American phenomenon. No poet since Robert Frost has managed to combine high critical acclaim with such broad popular appeal. His work has appeared in a variety of periodicals including *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, and *The American Scholar*; he is a Guggenheim fellow and a New York Public Library "Literary Lion." His last three collections of poems have broken sales records for poetry. His readings are usually standing room only, and his audience – enhanced tremendously by his appearances on National Public Radio – includes people of all backgrounds and age groups. The poems themselves best explain this phenomenon. The typical Collins poem opens on a clear and hospitable note but soon takes an unexpected turn; poems that begin in irony may end in a moment of lyric surprise. No wonder Collins sees his poetry as "a form of travel writing" and considers humor "a door into the serious." It is a door that many thousands of readers have opened with amazement and delight.

Billy Collins has published nine collections of poetry, including *Questions About Angels*, *The Art of Drowning*, *Picnic*, *Lightning*, *Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes*, *Sailing Alone Around the Room: New & Selected Poems*, *Nine Horses*, *The Trouble With Poetry and Other Poems*, and *Ballistics*. A collection of his haiku, titled *She Was Just Seventeen*, was published by Modern Haiku Press in fall 2006. He also edited two anthologies of contemporary poetry: *Poetry 180: A Turning Back to Poetry* and *180 More: Extraordinary Poems for Everyday*, was the guest editor of *The Best American Poetry 2006*, and edited *Bright Wings: An Illustrated Anthology of Poems about Birds*, with paintings by David Allen Sibley. His newest book, a collection of poems entitled *Horoscopes for the Dead*, will be published in spring 2011.

Included among the honors Billy Collins has received are fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Guggenheim Foundation. He has also been awarded the Oscar Blumenthal Prize, the Bess Hokin Prize, the Frederick Bock Prize, and the Levinson Prize — all awarded by *Poetry* magazine. In October 2004, Collins was selected as the inaugural recipient of the Poetry Foundation's Mark Twain Award for Humor in Poetry.

In June 2001, Billy Collins was appointed United States Poet Laureate 2001-2003. In January 2004, he was named New York State Poet Laureate 2004-06. Billy Collins is a Distinguished Professor of English at Lehman College of the City University of New York, as well as a Senior Distinguished Fellow of the Winter Park Institute at Rollins College.

"Luring his readers into the poem with humor, Mr. Collins leads them unwittingly into deeper, more serious places, a kind of journey from the familiar to quirky to unexpected territory, sometimes tender, often profound."

— *The New York Times*