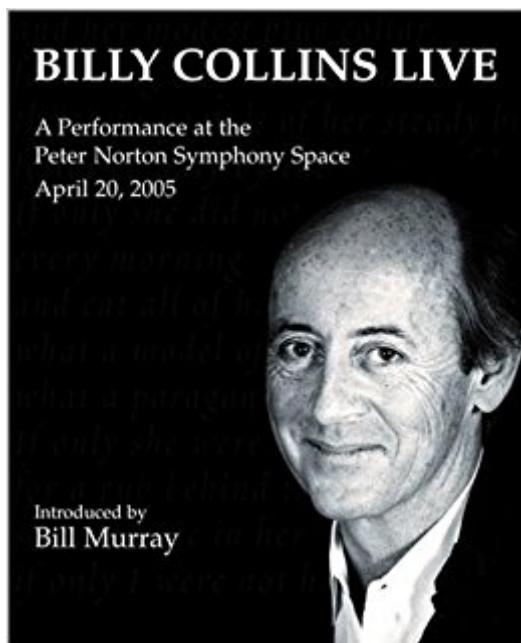


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# **Billy Collins Live: A Performance At The Peter Norton Symphony Space April 20, 2005**



## **Synopsis**

In this exclusive audio publishing event, Billy Collins, former U.S. Poet Laureate, shares an evening of his poetry in a benefit reading for WNYC, New York Public Radio. Often compared to Robert Frost, his poetry has been embraced by people of all ages and backgrounds, and his readings are most often standing room only. Performed by the author at Peter Norton Symphony Space in New York City, Billy Collins reads 24 of his poems, including "Dharma" --a spiritual yet humbling ode to man's best friend, "The Lanyard--an amusing recollection about the popular, if not pointless, summer camp pastime, and "Consolation" --a tongue-in-cheek reflection of a cancelled European trip, and the benefits of staying home instead. In addition to the poetry readings, Collins also spends some time in a brief question and answer session where he reflects on what makes good poetry, his own process of reaching his audiences as a poet, the success of his Poetry 180 programs in schools nationwide, and an amusing sidebar on his memories growing up as an only child. At times pensive and sardonic, amusing and subtly sarcastic, Billy Collins Live celebrates both the simple and the complex in a language that appeals to all.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In this exclusive audio publishing event, Billy Collins, former U.S. Poet Laureate, shares an evening of his poetry in a benefit reading for WNYC, New York Public Radio. Often compared to Robert Frost, his poetry has been embraced by people of all ages and backgrounds, and his readings are most often standing room only. Performed by the author at Peter Norton Symphony Space in New York City, Billy Collins reads 24 of his poems, including "Dharma" --a spiritual yet humbling ode to

man's best friend, "The Lanyard--an amusing recollection about the popular, if not pointless, summer camp pastime, and "Consolation" --a tongue-in-cheek reflection of a cancelled European trip, and the benefits of staying home instead. In addition to the poetry readings, Collins also spends some time in a brief question and answer session where he reflects on what makes good poetry, his own process of reaching his audiences as a poet, the success of his Poetry 180 programs in schools nationwide, and an amusing sidebar on his memories growing up as an only child. At times pensive and sardonic, amusing and subtly sarcastic, "Billy Collins Live celebrates both the simple and the complex in a language that appeals to all.

Billy Collins is the author of six collections of poetry, including *Sailing Alone Around the Room*; *Questions About Angels*; *The Art of Drowning*; and *Picnic, Lightning*. He is a Distinguished Professor of English at Lehman College of the City University of New York. Collins is the Poet Laureate of the United States. From the Hardcover edition.

I must start out by saying that I've been a huge Billy Collins fan forever. And this is the first audio performance CD I've ever purchased. I was thrilled with what I heard. His delivery is charming and has the timing of a seasoned actor/stand-up comedian. Just reading his poetry is entertaining enough, but to hear it read in his own voice adds a dimension that you wouldn't think could exist. The sound quality is excellent, too, even though it is a live performance in an auditorium -- so that's really saying something about the care that went into this CD recording. You'll find yourself laughing out loud many times, and smiling throughout, at the very least. I could gush on and on, but you poetry lovers just need to hear it for yourselves to believe me. And it might be a great way to introduce poetry to those in your life who haven't spent much time with it. You might convert some folks! Give me more, Mr. Collins!

"The Best Cigarette" is good. This is fantastic. Live reading by the author is how Collins' poems should all be heard. Bill Murray's introduction will have you in stitches. There is nothing like this and you should own this. Do not wait, order now. The only way this could be better is if it were longer and included more poems. Let's hope for more recorded performances by this modern genius poet.

Billy Collins is as satisfying as a Mozart concerto. This CD of a presentation in NYC in the spring of 2005 is a wonderful collection of his work that is at once accessible and magical. It is a gift to be able to hear him read his poems. I have had this CD in my car player for weeks now, and never tire

of hearing his poems again and again; like the Mozart concerto, I discover new innuendos at each refrain. It is therapeutic. Bill Murray's introduction was the only disappointment on the CD

If you have never heard Billy Collins read his poetry, you are in for a treat. I have been entranced with his work ever since I read the first poem in *Sailing Alone Around the Room*, the first collection I purchased. But nothing can compare with hearing his poetry rendered in his own voice. The experience is further enhanced by the audience reactions to his poems. Collins has a non-declamatory, almost deadpan style, but his timing is impeccable and the audience is quite entertained. It is also interesting to hear his commentaries on the origins of some of the poems. Bill Murray gives a brief introduction and brings down the house. Gather your family around and listen to this together. You will feel as if you are part of those who were privileged enough to be at Symphony Space that night hearing the performance live. What a delightful evening of poetry.

My wife and I were unfamiliar with Billy Collins until we recently heard him on "A Prairie Home Companion." We were delighted to find this album, which includes most of the poems he read on the air. The poems are great in print, but there's no substitute for the poet's laconic delivery, and this album has the added feature of his explaining the origin of each poem. An unexpected bonus for me, a somewhat senior citizen, was finding that my 28-year-old daughter enjoyed the album as much as I did. A word of warning, though: Do not drive or operate machinery while listening to this album. Lines that crack you up beyond control can sneak up on you! (One downside: Bill Murray's introduction is pretty lame unless you're a really big fan of his.)

I gave this to someone special, and bought another. It starts with Bill Murray's intro. Wonderful poems read by Billy Collins, funny smart and warm. It's a perfect gift for someone not exposed to poems, now if I could get a collection of Robert Frost to listen to.

Whether you are a fan of Billy Collins, as I am, or even whether poetry is a sometime thing for you, you will love this performance. He is the everyman of poetry and this CD will leave you wanting more Billy Collins.

I love Billy Collins' poems. They are contemporary and wise and reflect experiences most of us will recognize. I like his voice and delivery. He is fresh and witty. I listen to it in the car when I travel and never get tired of it.

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