Billy Collins (b. 1941)

***Introduction to Poetry***

I ask them to take a poem

and hold it up to the light

like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

*5* I say drop a mouse into a poem

and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem’s room

and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to water-ski

*10* across the surface of a poem

waving at the author’s name on the shore.

But all they want to do

is tie the poem to a chair with rope

and torture a confession out of it.

*15* They begin beating it with a hose

to find out what it really means.

\*In your reader’s journal, offer a one page response to this poem.

Considering this is the first poem of the year, why would I choose it?

What literary elements are presented? What is the tone created,

and what effect does it have on your interpretation? Come to class

prepared to discuss your journal response.