

Introduction to Poetry

Billy Collins

**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.

**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 waterski
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.**

**They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.**