My Dad and Billy Collins

Grant Berry

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Recommended Citation
Berry, Grant (2004) "My Dad and Billy Collins," Fishladder: A Student Journal of Art and Writing: Vol. 2: Iss. 1, Article 15.
Available at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/fishladder/vol2/iss1/15

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I secured a seat at a reading  
by Poet Laureate Billy Collins  
at Grand Valley State University,  
October 18, 2002.
He made me laugh with his  
witty recitation about a lanyard,  
and his poem  
about his dead parents arguing  
from the grave.
I even bought one of his books  
and had it signed.
He seems like a nice guy, really.
Somewhere during the event,  
I discovered that Mr. Collins was sixty-one—  
the same age as my father.
It made me think about my dad  
in his flannel shirt  
and thick-rimmed shop glasses  
writing a poem with gritty black grease  
beneath his fingernails.
It struck me funny  
because my dad has never written a poem.
And it made me wonder if Mr. Collins  
has ever changed the starter  
on a Chevy Impala.
And I wonder if the Poet Laureate  
ever dozes in his easy chair  
clutching a newspaper,  
his jaw slack, lips parted,  
snoring faintly.