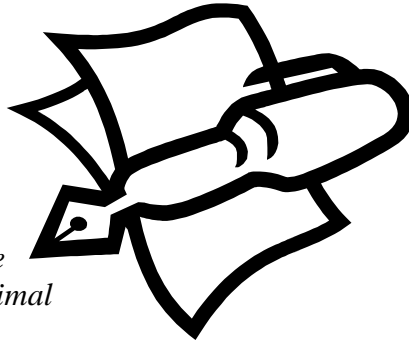


**BUDAPEST**  
by Billy Collins



*My pen moves along the page  
like the snout of a strange animal  
shaped like a human arm  
and dressed in the sleeve of a loose green sweater*

*I watch it sniffing the paper ceaselessly  
intent as any forager that has nothing on its mind  
but the grubs and insects  
that will allow it to live another day*

*It wants only to be here tomorrow  
dressed, perhaps, in the sleeve of a plaid shirt  
nose pressed against the page  
writing a few more dutiful lines*

*while I gaze out the window  
and imagine Budapest  
or some other city  
where I have never been*