

# HoCoPoLitSo

Howard County Poetry and Literature Society  
10901 Little Patuxent Parkway • Horowitz Center 200 • Columbia, MD 21044

**Date:** December 20, 2013      **Contact:** Pam Kroll Simonson, (443) 518-4568, [hocopolitso@yahoo.com](mailto:hocopolitso@yahoo.com)

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Blackbird Poetry Festival Features Billy Collins, “The Most Popular Poet in America”**

Howard County Poetry & Literature Society (HoCoPoLitSo), in partnership with Howard Community College’s Office of Student Life, English and World Languages Division, and Arts & Humanities Division, presents the annual Blackbird Poetry Festival on Thursday, April 24, 2014, at Howard Community College. The all-day event features readings by two-term National Poet Laureate **Billy Collins**, called “the most popular poet in America” by *The New York Times*; workshops for HCC students by **Bruce George**, poet and co-founder of HBO’s Def Poetry Jam; readings by student poets from HCC; and on-campus patrols by the Poetry Police, who will award individuals carrying a poem in recognition of national Poem in Your Pocket Day. The theme of this year’s Blackbird Poetry Festival is “Poetry Unmasked,” exploring the bare truth of poetry.

“Billy Collins is famous for conversational, witty poems that welcome readers with humor,” writes The Poetry Foundation, an independent literary group, “but often slip into quirky, tender or profound observation on the everyday, reading and writing, and poetry itself.”

“His last three collections of poems have broken sales records for poetry,” writes the Winter Park Institute for intellectual engagement at Rollins College. “His readings are usually standing room only, and his audience--enhanced tremendously by his appearances on National Public Radio--includes people of all backgrounds and age groups.”

Collins will read and discuss his work at Nightbird, the Blackbird Poetry Festival’s evening event, at 7:30 p.m. at Smith Theatre, located in the Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center at HCC in Columbia. A book signing and reception will follow. Collins will give a short free reading at Smith Theater with student poets at 2:30 p.m. He will also tape an episode of *The Writing Life*, HoCoPoLitSo’s Bravo-TV Arts for Change Award-winning interview show

seen on YouTube. George will facilitate creative writing/performance poetry workshops in morning classes at HCC.

Tickets to Nightbird are \$50 for the first five rows in the center aisle and \$30 for orchestra and balcony (\$15 for students). Tickets can be purchased at [www.brownpapertickets.com/event/523094](http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/523094) or [www.hocopolitso.org](http://www.hocopolitso.org) . For more information, call HoCoPoLitSo at (443) 518-4568 or email [hocopolitso@yahoo.com](mailto:hocopolitso@yahoo.com). Seniors in Columbia can request transportation by calling the Senior Events Shuttle at (410) 715-3087. HCC is an accessible campus. Accommodation requests should be made to HoCoPoLitSo by April 17, 2014.

HoCoPoLitSo is a nonprofit organization designed to enlarge the audience for contemporary poetry and literature and celebrate culturally diverse literary heritages. Founded in 1974 by National Book Award finalist Ellen Conroy Kennedy, HoCoPoLitSo accomplishes its mission by sponsoring readings with critically acclaimed writers; literary workshops; programs for students; and *The Writing Life*, a writer-to-writer interview show seen on YouTube, HCC-TV, and other local stations. HoCoPoLitSo receives funding from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency funded by the state of Maryland and the National Endowment for the Arts; Howard County Arts Council through a grant from Howard County government; The Columbia Film Society; Community Foundation of Howard County; the Jim and Patty Rouse Charitable Foundation; and individual contributors.