

READING     **"Evasive Maneuvers"**

(Poet Billy Collins addressing the question...what does it mean to be human, to be me? )

I grew up hiding from the other children.  
I would break off from the pack  
On its patrol of the streets every Saturday

And end up alone behind a hedge  
Or down a dim hallway in a strange basement.  
No one ever came looking for me,  
Which only added to the excitement.

I used to hide from adults, too,  
Mostly behind my mother's long coat  
Or her floral dress depending on the season.

I tried to learn how to walk  
Between my father's steps while he walked  
Like the trick poodle I had seen on television.

And I hid behind books,  
Usually one of the volumes of the encyclopedia  
That was kept behind glass in a bookcase,  
The letters of the alphabet in gold.

Before I knew how to read,  
I sat in an armchair in the living room  
And turned the pages, without a clue

About the world that were pressed  
Between D and F, M and O, W and Z.

Maybe this explains why  
I looked out of the bedroom window  
First thing this morning  
At the heavy trees, low gray clouds,

And said the word *gastropod* out loud,  
And having no idea what it meant  
Went downstairs and looked it up  
Then hid in the woods from my wife and our dog.