

Cultural Daily

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Billy Collins: "The Music of the Spheres"

Billy Collins · Thursday, January 12th, 2012

*Former poet laureate Billy Collins' most recent book is *Horoscopes for the Dead* (Random House, 2011). We are proud to be premiering this poem today.*

The Music of the Spheres

The woman on the radio
who was lodging the old complaint
that her husband never listens to her
reminded me of the music of the spheres,
that chord of seven notes,
one for each of the visible planets,
which has been sounding
since the beginning of the universe,
and which we can never hear,
according to Pythagoras
because we hear it all the time
so it sounds the same as silence.
But let's say the needle were lifted
from the spinning grooves
of those celestial orbs-
then people would stop
on the street and look up,
and others would stop in the fields
and hikers would stop in the woods
and look this way and that
as if they were hearing something
for the first time,
and that husband would lower
the newspaper from his face
look at his wife
who has been standing in the doorway
and ask Did you just say something, dear?

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