

During his previous visit to the DMA, poet Billy Collins was asked to write a poem in response to a work of art of his choice in the DMA's permanent collection. He wrote "Lost in Paris" inspired by Piet Mondrian's "Place de la Concorde."

LOST IN PARIS

Of all the citizens to arbitrarily trap
It was Piet Mondrian whom I chose
To ask directions to Place de la Concorde.

In the time it took to set up his board
I could have found one of those
Kiosks that sell Gauloises and maps.

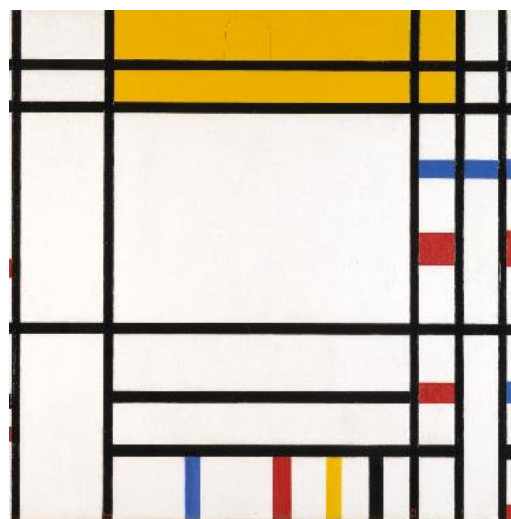
But he had already prepped
The whole canvas white
And painted the first of the rectangles blue.

Without their names, every rue
Looked like the others, and what did the bright
Red and yellow zones represent?

No matter-- once I had thanked him for
His aid and turned a sharp corner to the left,
There was no way to go wrong.

I zigzagged like a man following a song
And thanks to his geometrical gift,
Ended up, as you can see, precisely at your door.

--Billy Collins ©2004



PIET MONDRIAN
Dutch 1872-1944

Place de la Concorde
1938-1943
Oil on canvas
37 x 37¼ in. (94 x 94.6 cm)
Foundation for the Arts Collection, gift of the
James H. and Lillian Clark Foundation,
1982.22.FA