

# Godfrey Sue Hammit

## Collared

I spend the days intermittently  
Badgering the dog,  
Trying to be helpful,  
Asking questions that, thankfully,  
He can't understand,

Otherwise he'd wonder at the  
Logic of the world,  
Where I, somehow,  
Ended up in charge,  
Always asking,  
"Hungry? Are you hungry?"

Pointing at his bowl  
Like a two-legged idiot,  
Or "Outside? Outside?"  
Pointing, still,  
Whenever he glances at the door  
When all he wants to do is  
To sniff at the blossoming  
Pear-smell drafting  
Through the cracks.

Sometimes the question will  
Simply be "Bed?"  
Just one syllable,  
One that he--who, himself,  
Mostly speaks in single-syllables--  
Knows best, sensing  
That what I'm asking isn't,  
In so many syllables,  
"Isn't it your bedtime?"  
But "Should we go to bed?"

A sincere question some nights,  
As if one of us should be  
The responsible one and  
Remember we have to sleep.  
He'll wag his tail,

To show that the attempt on my part  
To make myself useful  
With pointless questions  
Has been appreciated, even if it is  
Completely unnecessary,

The way I'll say to him,  
"Good boy,"  
For barking at a cat,  
As if cats are a problem  
That, I agree, need solving.

I forget, sometimes, that we have  
Our own separate hungers  
That lead us to the bowl,  
Our own separate bladders  
To take care of,

And our own separate tiredness  
That comes whether someone  
Reminds us of it or not,  
And I forget that my job here  
Is mostly to open doors,  
Place food in reach,

And pat at the quilt  
Where, occasionally,  
I'll find him before me,  
Having decided "Bed" all on his own,  
Though he'll wake and his  
Tail will beat the bed in a  
*Pat-pat-pat.*

Every so often, I'll turn to him  
And ask, "What should we do?"  
Not expecting an answer,  
Though if he were to wag his tail  
And bark, I'd take his meaning,

A syllable I can understand:  
I'd open the door  
And go along with the plan,  
The leash slack between us,  
Both of us running in the same direction,  
With the same wild intent.

**Godfrey Sue Hammit** was born and raised in Utah, and lives in Utah still, in a small town outside of Salt Lake City. Hammit is the author of the novel *Nimrod, UT*, now available. Website: [godfreyhammit.com](http://godfreyhammit.com)