

# Lessons in prayer, from a dog

by [Rodney Clapp](#) in the [February 12, 2008](#) issue

He assumes his still posture  
two feet from the table.  
He is not grabby,  
his tongue is not hanging out,  
he is quiet.

He wants to leap,  
he wants to snap up  
meat and blood.  
You can tell.  
But what he does is sit  
as the gods  
his masters and mistresses  
fork steak and potatoes  
into their mouths.

He is expectant  
but not presumptuous.  
He can wait.  
He can live with disappointment.  
He can abide frustration  
and suffer suspense.

He watches  
for signals,  
he listens for calls  
of his name from above.

At hints that  
he may be gifted  
with a morsel,

he intensifies his  
already rapt concentration,  
he looks his god  
in the eye,  
but humbly,  
sure of his innocence  
in his need,  
if his need only.

On the (often rare) occasions  
when gifts are laid on his tongue,  
he takes them whole,  
then instantly resumes  
the posture of attention,  
beseeching, listening, alert,  
the posture of hard-won faith  
that will take no for an answer,  
yet ever and again hopefully  
return to the questioning.