David McCooey

An Apology to Dogs

for Olly, Hollywood, Sophie, Emma and Floss

Because you lead with your nose,
because you wish to stand up and waltz with me,
because your breath is not like lavender,
because you mistake my hands for rabbits to chase,
because you raise your voice without permission,
because you wish to share your mouth with the rest of the world,
because I, or anyone, could be your godling,
I cannot accept your idolatry, and will only
let you join the pack of my selfhood with shameless reluctance.
I apologise. It is not because you can run,
it is not because you will sit quietly against the ageless night,
it is not because you want to work,
regardless of the box of sky that you have been given,
it is not because you have a sense of humor,
it is not because your coat is a rippling of color,
it is not because you make me laugh in the street.
I do not know if it is because you look at me with such eloquence.

David McCooey's first book of poems, Blister Pack (Salt), was awarded the 2006 Mary Gilmore Award, and was short-listed for four other major national literary awards. He is senior lecturer in literary studies at Deakin University (in Victoria).