Caring

Caring—as we use the word-- is embracing another with your good will, positive intentions, and advice. One might want to call this condition *love*, and yet that assertion would ascribe excessive fervor to caring—which surpasses love in intellection, perhaps, but yields to love in width of embrace. I don't *care* for my parents; the word is too tepid. I don't exactly *love* my friends, though that last distinction is murky. (Usage seems there to depend on the culture's relative evaluation of the generations. We are dealing with intangibles—with how highly it is appropriate to value parents or friends in this or that culture.) In all these choices among locutions, we are trying to take advantage of a culture-established distinction and usage, in order to fine tune our formulations of our reality. The point of the many fussy precisions in reference, which stock this book, is to increase our understanding of our world as language.

So back to the usage of *caring*. Suppose we take the example provided by a pet. A friend, who goes to work every day in the city, leaves with me his pet, a corgi, to be 'cared' for during the day. This job is not automatic. Roger does not like everything I feed him. Furthermore, when he arrives he tends to be grumpy, and snaps. I care for him, yes. I feed him and give him water. I take him out for a walk. I care for him, sure. I care for him, but not a hell of a lot.