

GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES

Robert T. McLaughlin, Ph.D.*
Chair and Professor, Division of Education, Rivier College

“God helps those who help themselves”
Eli intones

Gray mares bowed their heads
Mares and colts faced the western storm
In a line pointing east

“Love your neighbor as yourself”
Eli bows,
Muttering

While the oldest mare nuzzled her colt into line
Mare and colt hooves stomped
Listlessly in deep wet snow

“If the man, he hit you,
You turn your cheek, right?”
Eli prays

The youngest colt died first
While her mama stared stolidly
Into impenetrable whiteness

“You’ve got to have patience
The meek won’t, I say,
They won’t be inheriting the earth
Overnight, will they?”

Eli, on old wobbly knees,
Casts a prayerful eyes to cries
Of “that’s right!” and “yes, God!”

In Harlem
that smoldering night
a twelve year old boy
overdosed on crack

when they found him
they read in the scratching and crawling and puking
he'd made in the project's hallway
that he must have been convulsing
for a long time

it must have taken him a long time to die

Eli, he prays

and horses hope for Spring

***ROBERT T. McLAUGHLIN**, Ph.D., chairs Rivier College's education division, directs its seven educational leadership programs, is father to three children who, he enjoys telling them, are usually cute and adorable, and, with his wife, provides a home for four border collies, who all are cute and adorable (except, like his children, when they bite or bark). He has founded and chaired the International Society for Technology in Education's interest groups on innovative learning technologies and digital equity, serves on the national commission on technology and the future of teacher education, and is senior fellow for the Stokes Institute for Opportunity in STEM Education.