

JEANNE LEVASSEUR

Letter to Rilke

I don't know how to tell you this,
but a child, let's say a girl of nine,
knows how to possess solitude perfectly.
She stands at the little yard's edge
as if it were a prairie, the declining
sun setting red angles of geometry
on her forehead, lashes curved and drawn
on her cheek with a compass, her whole body
mapped.

When she stands at the hutch
of pine and hay, a rabbit eats from her hand
and she is patient as stone.
Remember the small hands of children,
how, in combing your hair, they pulled
as if on reins and your head moved,
dumb and grateful as a beast's.

Sometimes the sun's flush lies
cupped on the horizon,
and she stands in the midst of her prairie,
eternity unconcernedly wide.
Her small hands braid my hair in a buzz of sunlight.
Each loop *Infinity*.
Proof, you say, we haven't lost yet,
that god is always arriving.