

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Beth Copeland: “Leap of Faith”

Beth Copeland · Monday, November 1st, 2021

Beth Copeland, “Leap of Faith,” 2021 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize Finalist selected by Judge Alexis Rhone Fancher

This poem knocked me out with its beauty and pathos, taking me along with the poet on a deep dive into faith, love, girlhood, dreamland and revelation. I kept going back to it, reveling in the language and artistry of this poem. Impossible to forget, it held up over multiple readings. Exquisite.

— Alexis Rhone Fancher

Leap of Faith

A man who wants to save my soul drives up the hill
on a noisy four-wheeler, hoists himself off the seat
and knocks on my door. He knows I’m home.

My car is in the driveway and the vertical blinds
are wide open. I want to share something with you,
he says as, cross-armed, I block the threshold.

Great, I think. He’s going to bug me about church.
Instead, he tells me how beautiful the steeple is at night.
“Drive over there,” he says. “Park at the old mill and look.”

When I was a girl, I could see a white steeple from my window.
One night I dreamed I stepped off the sill and walked across
the sky as moths flew upward like snow in reverse,

a ghost in a thin cotton gown, gazing down at the black river
of the street, lights going out in houses as people went to bed.
In the dream I knew I was dreaming. I knew I wouldn’t fall.

Every door in my heart flung wide open, flooded with light.

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