

2023 Poetry Winner

A Nightmare's Lament by Bella Festerling

Staring at the door, A wall, impenetrable when closed,
Is now open.

I glance through the portal and see a man of glass.

He's sleeping, His breaths rattle as white puffs of air escape His lips.
In the frigid room, I stand and stare at the man I can only dream about.

He's never seen me, the rising of the sun and His shut lids shield me from view.
I only exist in the night, where I can tell the stars about Him.

But do I really exist? Do I have eyes? A nose? Lips?
A heart?
The relentless questions cling to me like a disease.

I can't touch Him, can I? His glass body would break.
Then he would never open his eyes.
I need my questions answered, I need to know that I am real-- I need to see His eyes.

I imagine they are brown,
Soft like the animals I feed stiff, stale bread to every night; deep enough to hold all my
secrets.

The only thing separating us is that thin veil of flesh cascading down His eyes.
I need to touch Him, I need to be unafraid.

But,

What if His eyes are blue? What if they're sharp like daggers? And cold, like a raging ocean?

What if, He doesn't see me?

I can't do that. I can't ruin this.

He shouldn't have left the door open, He shouldn't have invited me in.

I'll be polite. I'll leave. I'll take a walk in the park, And wait for the sun to rise before I disappear.

Once again, I will simply tell the stars about this dreamer: my fragile, beautiful man of glass.