

Invisible Children

By Mariana Llanos

Invisible children fall
through the cracks of the system
like Alice in the rabbit hole.
But these children won't find
an eat-me cake or a drink-me bottle.
They won't wake up on the lap
of a loving sister.
They'll open their eyes on the hand
of a monster called Negligence
who'll poke them with its sharp teeth
and bait them with its heartless laughter,
like a wild thing in a wild rumpus.
But the children won't awake
to the smell of a warm supper,
nor will they find a purple crayon
to draw an escape door or a window.
Instead they'll make a mirror
of a murky puddle on the city street
which won't tell them they're beautiful
but it'll show their scars, as invisible to others
as these children are.

Source: *Poetry* (March 2021)