

First place, Poetry

**The Invisible**

by Barbara Blanks

Can you see me,  
standing here with a face  
melted by burns,  
that will never look normal again  
in spite of skin grafts and surgery?  
I'm right here.  
Please look at me.

Can you see me,  
legless in my wheelchair?  
I'm sitting here, just below your line of vision,  
but you move around me  
like water around a boulder.  
It's not catching, you know,  
these missing legs.

Can you see me,  
trying to lift my walker onto the curb?  
You rushed by me so fast  
you almost knocked me down.  
Are you chasing after youth?  
You won't find it up ahead ...  
trust me on that.

Can you see me,  
or are you discomforted  
by Down's. You turn away,  
won't even try to understand  
what I'm saying. What's  
wrong with me?

Are we less than human?  
We only want to be seen.