my wall is glass
made up of all that's ever hurt me
I made sure it's glass because I want it to seem that we can be close
I can see you
you can see me
you'd never guess it was there

until you hit up against it
until a glint from the sun reflects on it
until its coldness repels you

I want my glass wall to hurt you as you walk into it
so I'll know you're near
I'm watching you, you see
every movement, every gesture, every twitch, every hesitation
nothing passes me by
finally tuned senses from early on
had to be

it makes me laugh, you struggling to ignore my glass wall
we talk as if there's nothing between us
we smile and joke
we dance, we embrace
can you feel it
can you feel the smooth resilience of its surface
of course you can
but let's pretend you can't
people, eager to see in, bring a rag to my glass wall and give it a good clean

people, desperate to communicate, bring a nail file to my glass wall and scratch out a message

people, intent on melting, bring a blow-torch to my glass wall and heat my freezing extremities

people, in anger and hate, bring a hammer to my glass wall and shatter my composure

you
bring an elegant glass-cutter to my wall and we discuss dimensions
and blade size
and necessary pressure

while you keep me talking, you cut small holes
I feel the draught but dismiss it

by the time you've cut the bigger holes
I'm out of control
can't move fast enough to cover my vulnerability

and then you're in
through my glass wall
and I'm begging you to go
can't bear for you to see me hurting
in such a state

but it's too late, you came in
and I always wanted you
really

LEAH THORN (Britain) is a performance poet based in London, who presents her work at national and international venues and leads performance poetry workshops for adults and young people.