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Image from Baku-San, Dream Eater

Royal Rhodes

Dream Eater

You are drowning in a sea of trees
where a dog-headed mariner
follows your wake.

Or an androgynous figure,
lacking facial features, picks
rags from a battlefield.

These are the recurrent dreams
you bring me, that caught you
in a net of sharp gems.

Some, for those who cannot
decide, invoke a clown
sprung from a jack-in-the-box.

Others picture a manicured lawn
where stillborn infants sleep
on marble pillows.

Hand over those ghostly body parts,
the bitterness on a withered tongue,
as you try and fail to awake.

No one can tell the size
of a dream, like being inside
a forest caught on fire.

I will take what you surrender,
and you will rest at last.
I am the dream eater. I am waiting.

Royal Rhodes's poems have appeared *Last Stanza*, *Lothlorien Poetry Journal*,
Ekphrastic Challenge, *The Montreal Review*, and elsewhere.