

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## Leaving

by Fran Duffield

*I became what I am today at the age of twelve,  
on a frigid overcast day in the winter of 1975.*

Grasping with blue fingers  
the shrunken suitcase of childhood,  
its yellowed snakeskin  
having shed the last sun,  
I walk slowly down the short path,  
on frost-ringing stones  
where my small rosy hands  
had crawled, laughing  
in frozen black and white, as grey now  
as this day

A day of motionless cold,  
nothing moving but us,  
creeping shamefaced away  
from all known warmth,  
having failed to keep the fire  
alive, carrying the ashes  
to an unknown resting place

As the iron afternoon dies, unforgiving  
we switch off the lights  
one by one, and our little house  
dwindles away eternally  
into the winter dark