



A List of Necessities

by Fran Duffield

I've been making a list
of the things
they don't teach you
at school:

how to believe,
when you're taught
to be unsure of yourself

how to know
an opinion is
not a burning brand
on your forehead,
a foreshadowing
of downfall and disgrace

how not to be
the same, and still survive,
how to navigate thorn thickets

of cruelties,
and still resist
revenge, and
still keep some love,
even in the tiniest
of fragile blue birds-egg shell

how to accept
with grace
the natural end of all things,
even of yourself;
how to see
that becoming a memory,
then just a name,
fading to a shadow,
and, at last,
clear air,
is the road
we all must follow