Bourne toWrite...
creative writing workshops

Born Again

by Fran Duffield

In that little space of time, scattered with fallen petals
in that shutter's blink
beneath the japanese cherry
we seemed born again,
your arm round my waist,
our faces smiling mirrors
of each other

from birth raised on a sour spoon
of black bitterness
as my medicine, taught that
even the nicotine fingers of the priest
could not grant forgiveness
to us, stones of shame in our pockets
or to you, in your light-footed onward dance

thinking a miracle raised you from the dead
after my mother died, I believed
that bad blood could be purified
by forgiveness, by a ritual
of renaming, baptism in the deluge
of sanctified water salted with tears
until the delusion drowned me

the cherry drops its scarlet leaves now
to be born again, they must return
to the earth, dissolve from sight:
ask the black tangle bones
of bare branches,
how do you forgive what is no longer there,
or what was never there?