

Fools

by Fran Duffield

I have great faith
in fools: self-confidence
my friends call it,
foolishly, for I am
no more certain of myself
than any other fool

Fools are the martyrs,
the truth-tellers, who take the blows
on our behalf,
the unexpected hero in
an hour of unspeakable darkness

Fools are the brave, smiling
in the rigged courtroom,
waving goodbye
from the silence of glass
knowing we sensible ones
will stay free, and silent
of our own free will

Fools are the generous, giving
up all they might
have wanted, or done,
for someone else's
helplessness,
or without a hard word
repairing those who believed
they were clever
and fell from their great height
Tell my friends I fear
I am too late,
too hard now in my shell,
to open my heart like a bud
to the warmth of the world,
and be a true and gentle fool