**Blood Lines** *by Gwen Williams*

he pulled through at dawn

with the waking song of blackbirds

and a soft rain soaking the earth.

A fox lifted its head from the litter bin

as if it knew from the animal cries

a boy was not so much arriving

as being rescued like a soapy calf

roped and dragged by the hooves

out of its mother.

A line of blood

marking his round cheek. A crusty eye

opening on a tender audience smiling

at the family chin the wisps

of ginger hair as time rewinds

to his brother's birth

to his mother's birth

to his father's birth

a feeling of chambered hours

reels back to other thresholds

three worn steps to a doorway

into a narrow corridor

where cots and coffins

winding sheets and shrouds

and swaddling clothes

are bundled into a loop of dusks

and dawns to be pulled through