

*Chrys Salt*

**Mountain Voices**

So used they were to broken things,  
smashed oil lamps, wine jars,  
rattled urns, the creak of houses,  
tumbling masonry,  
they just shrugged off the portents  
of a mountain's rage,  
repaired their fallen walls  
and soldiered on.

Those who could read the writing in Spring wind,  
sun's scribbled messages on ice,  
told the prospectors it was dangerous,  
warned of a snowpack in the mountain's throat,  
before it raised its mighty voice and spoke.

So when Vesuvius spewed its guts,  
and two millennia on a slice of snow  
broke loose from nature's moorings,  
smothering everything,  
too late in either case  
to call for gods, too sudden  
for the moment's fending off.

Some were found curled to foetuses,  
or fused together in a last embrace.  
Some frozen in a running shape,  
or curled like cats asleep  
heads on their forearms  
under ash or snow,  
perplexed perhaps to hear their mountain roar  
before the snow or lava outran everyone.

*'Do we learn anything from history,  
the stranded polar bear, the rising sea?'*

When writing this I found a photograph,  
an unnamed man in glasses,  
balding, elderly.  
He holds against a sky blue shirt,  
a plaster cast -  
the body of a child from Herculaneum,

hands splayed across the tiny back,  
so tenderly  
you'd think the child  
and his heart might break.

## Lockdown Celandine

I've seen you many times  
but not like this  
dressed up in shine,  
I've never stopped to say hello,  
never spoke. I know  
you come in every greening spring  
with all your folk  
seen in the swift periphery  
of passing by;  
I didn't see  
your heart shaped leaf gloss,  
specificity,  
your sunbright single petal star,  
Your radiant yellow yellowness  
fine arcing neck  
that tips your merry head agley.

Today I stopped to look at you ,  
beyond the hurly burly time,  
fur-tuft of stamens in your candid eye.

**Chrys Salt** is a poet with roots deeply planted in the theatre. She has produced four full poetry collections and four pamphlet collections and performed on BBC Radios 3 and 4, and done readings at venues and festivals across the UK and in the USA, Canada, France, Germany, Finland and India. Her work has been translated into several languages and appeared in anthologies, magazines and journals worldwide. She has been the recipient of Awards and Bursaries (various) - including A National Media Award (CRS) a New Writing Bursary (English Arts Council) a Work Development Award (Creative Scotland), a Fringe First (Edinburgh Festival). She has been a recipient of two Creative Scotland Bursaries, one to complete her collection *Dancing on a Rock* and one in 2017 for research in Yukon for her most recent collection *'Skookum Jim and The Klondike Gold Rush'* (Pub: Indigo Dreams Publishing 2020).