

# Country Poetry Corner

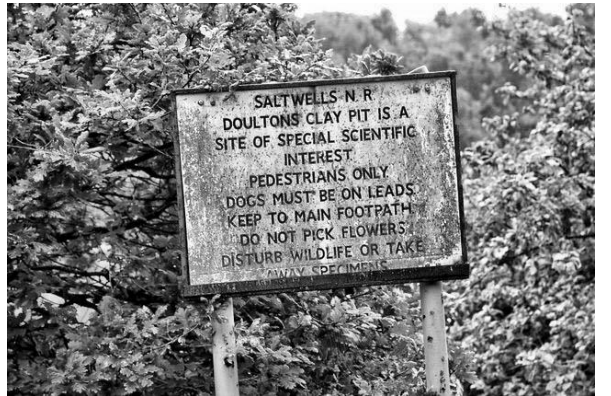
## Doulton's Claypit by Elinor Cole

And so men beat their swords into ploughshares,  
laid down their pickaxes, and left you in peace.  
Was it Flanders they saw in your ravaged earth,  
or did your gaunt face of stone,  
    your exposed arteries of coal,  
remind them of some fellow they once knew  
wasted by war to sinew and bone?



Grasses grew to conceal your wounds.  
Water filled the hollows between your ribs.  
    And the oaks and the beeches  
    grew taller than headframes, roots like stitches  
    drawing the gaping pits to a close.

So while men at the wharf cast their medals  
to the Cut, and the nailers and chainmakers  
fed theirs to the furnace,  
    your men - the hewers, the shifters -  
    buried their ribbons beneath your soil  
    and bid orchids, not poppies, to grow there  
    come spring.



Elinor Cole