

# 79 AD

*by Gary Hardaway*

A pine shaped cloud  
in the August sky  
signaled them too late.  
By the 25th,  
everything was gone.

No CNN to sing obliteration,  
only Pliny the Younger  
to scratch what fell  
in a few short paragraphs  
of living Latin.

Did sailors  
home from the sea  
find an altered world  
the 26th?  
Or, worse,

the part of the world they loved  
erased for them forever  
which we pick at now  
in calm, archaeological  
detachment?

