

Pygmalion

Peter J. King

In summer he was curtained off,
protected from the prying eyes of trippers
staying at the Hotel Seraphim.
He, alcoved and forgotten, never moved,
and through the months of sun
his cheeks were parched and lustreless.

*

Autumn saw his face; his robes repainted,
brought out from his hiding place, he
stood apart from all the bustle of the season.
Whether crops were rich or meagre,
whether that year's harvest filled the barns
or not, he never moved.
His eyes were dull and still.

*

The mountains sent down wolves in winter;
some years saw a child consumed.
In the passes drifts of snow collected; and
his features distant, no-one thought to
dust his still and silent surfaces. He never
moved, and on his tinted face a draught.

*

As spring devoured the ice from rivers,
called to seeds and roots and buds to
burst the bonds of winter's arms,
they gathered round his upright form,
stared in noisy wonder at the strange and yet
familiar tears that rolled in inexplicable
despair upon his painted cheeks.