

Martin Robertson

Pietà

The Mother sat, her dead Son on her knees,
white-glowing marble wrought
to perfect intricacy of draperies,
perfection of sorrow in the flower-face.
The young man, knowing the power in his fingers,
knowing the vision in the block,
stood back from the perfected statue, thought
“Still, this is not,
not quite, the image of my dream.”

Lifetimes later,
visions half-realised littering his wake,
his sublimated loves corroding in him,
the world of his religion riven by hate,
everything sour and broken in his heart,
the old man carved by candlelight
behind a locked door, hitting
recalcitrant marble, whittling
the brute block back towards the palpable vision.

The guttering candle flared up straight. Out.
Night claimed him.
But in the whittled, bruised stone he left caught
that straight flame.