

Stained glass blues

I forget how old I am, but do recall
How much I've been admired in the past.
Visitors would stand and study me
Trying to decode religious themes,
Or simply sit and wonder at my lights,
And several students came to sketch my form.

A feather duster fastened to a cane
Gently brushed my panes from time to time.
My photo was printed in the guidebook once,
And postcards of me sold for six old pence.

I've seen every stage of human life unfold
In shifting congregations through the years:
Lace-gowned babies protesting at the font,
Children sucking sweeties during psalms,
Cubs and Brownies fidgeting on parade,
Bishops laying hands on new recruits,
Chattering families waiting for the bride,
And sombre faces come to bid farewell.

But music is a greater loss than people -
The organ was a grand, majestic friend.
When he played Bach or Handel after Matins
While the sun lit up my scarlets and deep blues,
His sound, my looks, were beautiful together
And spirits soared with faith and hope and love.

The organ was dismantled piece by piece
And shipped to Eastern Europe for re-use.
Once more he will inspire those who worship
For music does not need to be translated.
I am left here in the empty church, forgotten:
The doors are locked and no-one comes to look.
This building has outlived its primal purpose
And I, too, am a casualty of time.

Laurie Spencer

