

PENDULUMS

Roy Schwartzman

Another gnat-clouded Georgia afternoon
clings like a wet blanket to sweaty skin.
Silent porch-sitters, their brown tongues busy
sculpting Skoal into leafy bullets
to nestle beside jaundice-yellow teeth,
gouge rockers deeper
into warped two-by-fours,
watch flakes of sun-baked paint
scuttle across the banisters
and dive onto parched red clay.

Hours underneath tin awnings
unravel like the wicker
imprinting tautness
on unsuspecting backs and thighs.
Floorboards creak on weathered foundations,
rhythmic groans lull into contentment.
Pendulums sway on withered cinderblocks
crafted by palsied hands.
Wicker burrows into brittle bone.

Entwined from splinter-scarred toes
to Nehi-dried lips
in wicker wishes,
rockers lean without direction,
imprisoned in
betweenness.