

## PENDULUMS

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*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.