

Mummy Pendulum

David Paxman

A man's last wish
should be sacred.

I want to be wrapped
like a ball of roots
in burlap and brown twine
and left swaying
from an oak branch
on a long rope
to soak up odors,
storm dust,
and heavy drops of rain,
till the branch sags
with my weight
and I strain
for the ground I grew on.

Those who pass may
pause at this plump bulb,
may want to feel
my wet fabric.
I will leave the smell
of loam and burlap
on their fingers.

They may swing me
with their hands;
should they sense my longing,
let them set the heft
of whole bodies—
shoulder, arm, and side—
against my slow pendulum
and leave me soaring
with gravity and time.
Let them push again;
I am heavy with desire.

As I measure time
in slow circles,
I will listen
with inert eardrums
for footsteps
and storm wind,
muffled voices
and the fluttering of birds,
while memories seep
through my wrapped roots
and something in me
readies for replanting.