

IN WILLOWWOOD

(after a panel by Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh)

Ann K. Schwader

In Willowwood the rain falls lifetimes long:
a meditation in the key of gray
too cold for mourning, too obscure for song.

Here there is neither darkness nor true day,
but only twilight's soft indifference
which thickens at its borders to betray

some line of demarcation. Revenants
still cast in flesh, the silhouettes within
trail grief & bitter longing like a scent

behind them through these streaming groves. *Begin
again, rain-voices whisper. Would that we
could turn refusal sweet, reverse the sin*

of shattered hope, let fettered souls fly free . . .
then there is only silence, & the green
thick moss grown over stones. What dared not be

lies quiet in its shrouded grave, unseen
among pale willow roots—pale willow faces
dissolving seamlessly into the sheen

of yet another downpour which erases
a memory of roses once, & places
where sunlight fell on tentative embraces.