**Museum number 1984,1002.1** *by Estelle Price*

*(i.m Lindow Pete c.100AD)*

It’s fulfilled with a hand to the back, a shove into the bog,

twisted sinew tight about my neck. Breath, unforgettable

breath, blocked in my throat, barred from taking

its wild journey into eager lungs. I am like a water-course

its mouth jammed with twigs, leaves, mush, that must transfigure

into stagnant pool, must learn to look away

from the world’s froth. I sink through mire, find a home

for millennia. Black waters baptise into death

stroke me with silken, amniotic fingers as if I have been

born fish. Liquid pacifies, croons in my cavities

like a mother’s first song. A shroud of virid sphagna

sponges bones, tans skin to leather. Even death

does not stay fixed. Each year the moss heaps blankets

on its willing child. Trailing stems of cranberry tickle

sockets where eyes flickered. Silence blooms thick -

I am absorbed by peat. Into this space come red beetles

brushing their shimmering wing-cases against my wrists.

Some die leaving fragments of elytra, toughened

like acorns, like regret. Weevils creep in my skull

search for thought to sup on. Larvae burrow peace between

my ribs. Such intimacy I have never known. Some call it

resting in peace. After discovery, after they cut me

from my bed to prod and poke, I am sealed in a glass box,

untouchable except by stale, indifferent air. I cannot breathe.

*Note*

*Lindow Man is on display at G50/dc26 in the British Museum*