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To Laura

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To Laura

Perhaps you are the soft,
Sharp instrument of retribution.
More sophisticated than the ball-vise,
More refined than eye-gouging,
Life's return jest at one
Who has disdained her
As a poorly told, pointless joke.

Perhaps no one but you
Will know that I now bear
The final, constant, erg of pain,
And in shallow selfishness
Wonder if I can ever again
Translate spring's dawn breeze,
Or chuckle at the brilliant,
Morbid, irony from pulpits.

Perhaps I will wait, suspended,
Behind my quick and clever banter,
For interminable days' dulling process
To still my weakling whimper.
Then one day, when you return,
Head high, from your inquisition,
I, too, will have survived mine.

CLIFTON SCHELHAUS