

CLEMENCY

In a straight-backed wooden chair, hands
Bound behind my back, eyes blindfolded, I await
Final judgment. Soon I will leave this place un-
shackled, liberated from these demons and free
To tell my tale of survival in places however
Inhospitable – or condemnation will be pronounced,
A word to make prophetic all the
Derision and reprobation I have suffered.
This cold and cavernous room... those muffled
Voices, their cadences of blame... I can't quite
Make them out – too faint. Undoubtedly,
They damn me. Relentlessly they seek to
Destroy me.

Ah! The bell has rung. I take comfort,
Knowing that judgment is forthcoming,
Preferring the certainty of dread to the
Dreadfulness of uncertainty. I can now
Loosen the rope on my wrists...
And this blindfold, worn for countless days...
Here I hesitate. I've grown accustomed
To the darkness of my world, reveling in its
Anonymity. Some choose to leave their mark
On the world. I choose invisibility.

Enough indulgence! The moment of unveiling
Has arrived. I unwrap the blindfold gradually,
Allowing my eyes to acclimate to this alien light.
As I reach the final layer, my eyes protectively

**Squint shut. Naked to the light at last, with a
Hope of valor I stare directly into its source.
The brilliance pierces me with searing pain.
Immediately my knees buckle – such is the
Experience of moving from darkness into light.**

**Now my eyes have adjusted. The room is
Empty, save for the chair, the rope, the blindfold,
And myself. I am stunned. I am alone.
I am surrounded by four mirrored walls. My words
Will be the only ones heard here. I am my own
Judge and jury, jailer and executioner. May I
Find it in my heart to show mercy.**