

MICHAEL ROBINS

My Life as an Estimate Writ in Stone

When I want to be by myself it really means
sell everything, unplug the radio, roll me
in Tuscan red to Berlin so I can level the field,
chew a finger from the glove. Entire blocks
were left ruined in a month. I didn't want
to come but I did, denied a key to the city,
so I settle for a room above Rosa Luxemburg,
brood & grumble from the underground,
smoke a rotten tooth the mice won't touch.
Apples turn in the baskets, the flag in tatters,
a river laps the frame of a door where I ride
two wheels into the current. My estimations
may be wrong but I've never murdered:
for three days in the fourth grade I considered
two girls, swallowed the lock of a mistress
who didn't sing. Our mouths joined leather
& steel, the figure who bore my polished
features, the right eye failing while I occupied
the city with my left. Here, I'll try the poison
on the dog first, take a rubber raft, make a run
at the barbed fence. I'll come to no one's rescue.
Who she thought she was, the paper swan
on the paper lake, wasn't who she was.
If she crawled on all fours she'd have bitten.