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# My Life as an Estimate Writ in Stone

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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.