

Rockford

(Inspired by Paul Simon's, "The Boxer")
Cal Morton, Jr.

I am but a nobody
and my achievements aren't well known.
I have traded in my youth
for faded ink and paper, which holds my poetry.
Everything is just a joke,
so this man resides in fantasies
and looks the other way
when he thinks he'll see something
he doesn't want to see.

When I left home for college,
I was just a stupid kid
lost among the trifles of other stupid kids
in the murmur of the cafeteria
feeling scared.
Blended in with all the rest,
keeping an eye out for the escape routes
from their idle chat
while holding out a hand
for the releases only they know how to find.

And he lies.
Hoping to receive some recognition,
I take to the streets with manuscript in hand.
But I raise no interest-
Just the miniskirts of the prostitutes on East Division.
I know it was wrong,
But there were times when I was so self-loathing
I spent money there.

And the years are taking toll
And I must pay for who I once was,
And what I did, and what I said.
The consequence of all my actions
Settling in my bones.
Rules I thought were made for breaking haunt me still to this day.
I'm reminded time and time again
Of what I was, and the mistakes I made,
And of what I could have been.

And even in light of that, I am content with who I am.

And he lies.

I thumb through old photographs,
And I long to be home
Where the Michigan fall colors are a piece of me-
A feeling in me.
I want to be home . . .

In the middle of a playground
Sits a writer and a romantic in his heart,
And he keeps a record of every person
Who has ever loved him, changed him, or hurt him so much
That he cried tears of futility and rage.
“I will change.”
“I can change.”
But yet the writer remains unchanged.

And he lies.
And I lie.
He lied.
And I lied.
We lie.

We lied.