

**KEVIN DUCEY**  
**Mrs. McCormack's Children**

—after Thorstein Veblen

Again pointing  
to the fact  
of our degenerate  
character, we printers  
changing jobs  
and masters  
from city to city—  
rootless ones.

*He would pour out some wine for me and some for himself—  
wine which tasted of the sun and of the soil upon which this  
city was built. At other times we would stretch ourselves out  
on the floor of the garret, and sweet sleep would enfold me.  
Then I would wake and drink in the light of the sun.*

Simone Weil wakes again in the attic  
with Christ  
by her side, drinking in  
the light of the sun,  
thinking of her ex, Richard II,  
who told her  
she was born a serf  
and a serf she would remain  
and in this romantic comedy  
of one doomed king or another  
Simone thrilled to hear this.

Let us trace the evolution,  
Jesus, back through Bunyan  
to the Interregnum pamphlets  
of Levellers and Diggers  
ultimately to  
Puritan sermons  
and Marprelate:

*Robert Waldegrave dares not shew his face for the bloodthirsty desire you have for his life, only for printing of books which touch the bishop's mitres. You know that Waldegrave's printing press and letters were taken away. His press, being timber, was sawn and hewed in pieces, the ironwork battered and made unserviceable, his letters melted, with cases and other tools defaced (by John Woolfe, Beadle of the Stationers, and most tormenting executioner of Waldegrave's goods), and he himself utterly deprived for ever printing again, having a wife and five small children. Will this monstrous cruelty never be revenged, think you? When Waldegrave's goods was to be spoiled and defaced there were some printers that rather than all the goods should be spoiled offered money for it, towards the relief of the man's wife and children, but this could not be obtained.*



First the plague  
and after the workmen

began to move from place  
to place ready to take

advantage of any  
variation in the

demand for labor  
in the demand

Of all the linotype workers—  
two-finger typists all—

none remain. The bare  
bulb hangs above the

machine switched off and  
our position gone dark.

Listen, Jesus, Tarquinius Superbus,  
that old playboy, cribbed the Sybelline  
books and buried the rest  
for Jos. Smith. Marprelate

would have bought all nine books  
from the oracle and put them out

in foolscap for Rump Parliaments.

Where we once walked along the river  
a night sky  
moving past.

Gerrard Winstanley (Digger) and Marprelate  
your digging does maintain, and persons all defame  
Stand up now, stand up now.

Your houses they pull down, stand up now.  
Stand up.



And then afterward:

I have gone out into a future  
that is mine without you.

To make your return easier I've had  
the mountains relocated to the north.

It's not that I'm afraid of time,  
it is, after all, the country

of my birth, now good  
Your Grace, it is now  
I know it as a relentless  
place of loss.

There was some excitement here  
the other day; you may want to hear  
of it when you return.

My love,  
I remember your hair as you lay  
your head upon my chest  
dunsticall and absurd.

This country seems so much  
smaller now our position gone dark and

the kindness you showed me then  
left a burr under my tongue

The November light  
gray across the attic ceiling

when you poured out some wine for

the architectural details  
you liked so much and which I intend  
to proclaim in next decree

All lovers lie  
in impossibility  
of avoiding  
or prettifying in

November together  
when we'd forgotten all day to rise

the absolute  
practical expression of

Witness, My Grace, the greater prevalence of dissipation  
among printers than among the average

workmen—attributable  
to the greater ease in movement

and the more transient character  
of acquaintance and human contact  
in this trade.

Skill acquired in any printing house  
or any city

is easily turned to account  
in almost any other house or city; that is to say

the inertia due to special training  
is slight. Also, this occupation  
requires  
more than the average of intelligence  
and general information, and the men

employed in it are therefore ordinarily  
more ready than many others  
to take advantage  
of any slight variation in the demand  
for labor from one place to another.

The inertia due to the home feeling  
is consequently slight.



The Young Irelanders took their inspiration  
from the revolution in France (1848)  
and chased a group of policemen into the  
Widow McCormack's farmhouse.

Wm. O'Brien,  
the leader, went up to the window to negotiate  
and the policemen shot him.

A general  
fusillade ensuing, the widow demanding  
of the wounded O'Brien:  
"What will happen to my five children—



hostages of the policemen?"

“Absolutely  
nothing, madam, the rebels being terrible  
shots, though this being the second year of  
famine, shooting them might be for the best.”

And now good Your Grace,  
the serfs are massing at Foxconn  
and the King rides out to them:  
“Serf you were born. . . .”

[This poem written on Foxconn  
tablet and read thereon my lord this year. . . .]

The peasants demand  
the right to move to take advantage  
following instanter on the slight changes  
in labor market

and Wat  
Tyler nudges George Herbert  
who is palmed in a pamphlet to  
Simone Weil in the ruined  
cathedral of European humanism.



Marx writes to the executive:  
He's excited  
(in one of his moods)

a little nervous, yes,  
but the uprising in Paris  
is going well  
and word has it

Johnny Marr will soon appear  
with the Young  
Irelanders to play

those chiming guitar bits. Karl,  
disappointed with the  
singing of the Mountain:

“the chest notes were missing,”  
as the Occupy protesters  
made their way along  
the Boulevard calling for change and  
the party of Order met them  
with chasseurs and dragoons  
in an altogether unparliamentary way,  
driving the kerls before them.  
The streets—  
every street vacant and cleared.  
News agents assaulted and (stand up now)  
the students kettled  
for the length of the day. Shops  
shuttered, and the wind blown  
through me.  
But Karl,  
for his part, has found a young Frenchwoman  
living in exile in London and all  
she will talk about  
is walking. The labor of taking  
one step forward  
and he wants to get  
her on the printer’s committee  
just one time.

*By walking Men’s reversed Feet  
I chanc’d another World to meet;*

*Another face presents below,  
Where People’s feet against Ours go.*

And there they caught Marprelate's printer  
in transit at the airport and had him  
eviscerated, with the king's foot upon  
rebellion's neck and even so poor  
a son of Wat Tyler as Martin Marprelate  
demanding:

*When Adam delv'd and Eve span—*

The sunrise over the Paris roofline  
and the foot on the neck in 1848,  
and again in 1870:

*who was then the gentleman?*



He would pour out some  
wine for me and some  
for himself.

Then I would awake  
and drink in the light

of the neon sign—no Chinese  
walls to slow

the penetration of the market  
to stop our intercourse.



Material Conditions drunk-texting Marx:  
lascivious notions of  
use value—completely nude



*and the Legion of High Finance on June 13 raided  
the print shops of Boulé and Roux, demolished the presses,  
arrested editors, compositors, printers, shipping clerks,  
and errand boys, the hacker who downloaded the emails  
was traced and given the longest sentence of the lot—  
handed down by the good grace of Milord's Star Chamber.*

When we find ourselves  
like Mrs. McCormack's five  
young boys—survivors

in an emigrant prairie—  
land of absence with the speculators'  
mansions rising up, dark

watchtowers around us—  
another place where I am you  
cannot be. Not a place

but a variation in demand  
carved up by speculators; mostly  
Yankee transplants from the East—  
toilets cleaned and kitchens staffed  
by the Irish and German.

And in all love I'm thinking:  
my people.