

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.