Quand Camille Perrotin retrouva sa mère ce soir-là, son sourire ne s’était pas encore effacé.

Depuis peu, elle vivait seule dans un meublé près des Beaux-Arts, mais elle aimait rentrer le week-end chez ses parents. Ils vivaient dans un pavillon de la banlieue lyonnaise. À vrai dire, pendant toute son adolescence, Camille avait surtout vécu avec sa mère. Son père était représentant en assurances, et disparaissait régulièrement quatre ou cinq jours d’affilée. Entre Isabelle et sa fille, c’était l’interrogation quotidienne : « Il est où, papa ? » Aucune ne savait répondre. Dijon, Limoges, Toulouse, est-ce que cela importait finalement ? Il n’était pas là, c’était ce qui comptait. La mère de Camille était infirmière au centre hospitalier Saint-Joseph Saint-Luc ; son quotidien n’était qu’un réservoir à complaintes. Elle rentrait lessivée le soir, et admettait qu’elle n’avait pas toujours eu beaucoup d’énergie à consacrer à sa fille. Quand elle vit le visage heureux de Camille ce soir-là, elle en fut bouleversée.

When Camille Perrotin met up with/went back to her mother (again) that evening, there was still a smile on her face. /her smile had still not disappeared/vanished/faded away yet. /there was a lingering smile on her face.

Since recently/For a little while now, she had been living on her own in a furnished flat/apartment near the art school/Beaux-Arts/art school/the college of fine arts, but she liked going back to her parents’ at/on/for the weekend(s). They lived in a (detached) house in the suburbs of Lyon. In fact, throughout her teenage years/adolescence, Camille had mostly/mainly/essentially/principally lived with her mother. Her father was/worked as an insurance rep(resentative)/salesman, and regularly disappeared/would disappear/go missing regularly for four or five days in a row/at a time/running. For/Between Isabelle and her daughter, the daily question was/the question they asked themselves everyday was: “Where is Dad/Daddy?” Neither (of them) knew the answer/could answer. Dijon, Limoges, Toulouse, was it that important (after all)?/What did it matter, really? He was not there/around, that was what mattered. Camille’s mother was/worked as a nurse at the Saint Joseph Saint Luc Hospital (centre); and her everyday life was nothing but/more than an endless flow/a litany of complaints/grievances. She would come home/came home in the evening worn out/washed out/drained and admitted that she hadn’t always had/didn’t always have a lot of energy to devote to/devote to/dedicate to her daughter. When she saw/On seeing/At the sight of Camille’s happy face that evening, she was (deeply) moved/(deeple) affected/overwhelmed (by it).

David Foekinos, *Vers la beauté*, 2018