

**Passage II**

**To My Father's Business**

Leo bends over his desk  
 Gazing at a memorandum  
 While Stuart stands beside him  
 With a smile, saying,  
 5 "Leo, the order for those desks  
 Came in today  
 From Youngstown Needle and Thread!"  
 C. Loth Inc., there you are  
 Like Balboa the conqueror  
 10 Of those who want to buy office furniture  
 Or bar fixtures  
 In nineteen forty in Cincinnati, Ohio!  
 Secretaries pound out  
 Invoices on antique typewriters —  
 15 Dactyllographs<sup>1</sup>  
 And fingernail biters.  
 I am sitting on a desk  
 Looking at my daddy  
 Who is proud of but feels unsure about  
 20 Some aspects of his little laddie.<sup>2</sup>  
 I will go on to explore  
 Deep and/or nonsensical themes  
 While my father's on the dark hardwood floor  
 Hit by a couple of Ohio sunbeams.  
 25 Kenny, he says, some day you'll work in the store.  
 But I felt "never more" or "never ever"  
 Harvard was far away  
 World War Two was distant  
 Psychoanalysis was extremely expensive  
 30 All of these saved me from you.  
 C. Loth you made my father happy  
 I saw his face shining  
 He laughed a lot, working in you  
 He said to Miss Ritter  
 35 His secretary  
 "Ritt, this is my boy, Kenny!"  
 "Hello there Kenny," she said  
 My heart in an uproar  
 I loved you but couldn't think  
 40 Of staying with you  
 I can see the virtues now  
 That could come from being in you  
 A sense of balance  
 Compromise and acceptance —

<sup>1</sup> dactyllographs (dactylographs) — fingerprints

<sup>2</sup> laddie — young boy

45 Not isolated moments of brilliance  
Like a girl without a shoe,  
But someone that you  
Care for every day —  
Need for customers and the economy

50 Don't go away.  
There were little pamphlets  
Distributed in you  
About success in business  
Each about eight to twelve pages long

55 One whole series of them  
All ended with the words  
"P.S. He got the job"  
One a story about a boy who said,  
"I swept up the street, Sir,

60 Before you got up." Or  
"There were five hundred extra catalogues  
So I took them to people in the city who have a dog" —  
P.S. He got the job.  
I didn't get the job

65 I didn't think that I could do the job  
I thought I might go crazy in the job  
Staying in you  
You whom I could love  
But not be part of

70 The secretaries clicked  
Their Smith Coronas<sup>3</sup> closed at five p.m.  
And took the streetcars to Kentucky then  
And I left too.

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<sup>3</sup> Smith Coronas — brand of typewriters

—Kenneth Koch  
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1. The interaction between Leo and Stuart (lines 1 through 7) is used to establish and illustrate a

- (1) plot
- (2) setting
- (3) point of view
- (4) stanza

2. In the poem the father brings Kenny to work because he hopes that Kenny will

- (1) get a job
- (2) follow in his footsteps
- (3) stop his rebellion
- (4) take on responsibility

3. The narrator's references of "Harvard," "World War Two," and "Psychoanalysis"(lines 27 through 29) are used to convey the fact that the narrator

- (1) is now an adult
- (2) respects education
- (3) is wealthy
- (4) likes to travel

4. Lines 41 through 50 indicate that the narrator's attitude toward his father's workplace is one of

- (1) blame
- (2) anger
- (3) joy
- (4) appreciation

5. It may be inferred from the poem that the narrator did *not* get a job in his father's workplace because he

- (1) did not want it
- (2) developed a mental disorder
- (3) had to go to war
- (4) did not have the necessary skills