

Looking for Work and Finding It!

Various Authors

2005

The Job Hunt

by Alan Franklin

He called me a peculiar, bungling misfit, and right away I knew things weren't going to work out quite as well as I'd hoped. Oh, sure, I'd filled out the form all right, even signed my name at the bottom as best I could remember it, but I could see from the disposition of his ears that expressing an appreciation of my efforts was not at the top of his to-do list.

He said I was a classic case, that I only wanted to do what I wanted to do, when I wanted to do it. "You say that like it's something bad," I replied. He told me to leave my name and phone number with the secretary on my way out, in case he changed his mind.

At the dispensary, the story was pretty much the same except for the details, which I won't bore you with right now, except to say that if that's what they call enjoying yourself they can keep my share and give it to somebody else.

Still, I didn't give up. I clipped my wings and throttled my baser instincts, and learned to touch my fetlock to my petcock only when other people weren't around. Or, at least not looking. I gave up a lifelong habit of picking my nose when cornered, and ceased extolling the superiority of the heterodox.

I acquired an English accent and a pair of tight trousers, grew my hair to unimaginable lengths, and let it be known that, where work was concerned, there was little I wouldn't do for a crust of dry bread and a cup of brackish water. Still, they saw right through me.

"But what are your qualifications?" they insisted, as if everyone knew automatically what the word meant. "What are my qualifications?!" I said, "What are anybody's qualifications?!"

How people have the nerve to claim competence in any endeavor more complicated than eat, drink, shit, piss, I have no idea. Just the thought of mastery makes me nervous, and if I'm ever lucky enough to do something well accidentally, the widespread expectation that I should be able to repeat the achievement on demand fills me with a paralyzing anxiety."

When, finally, I admitted that ineptitude seemed to be the only thing I was really good at, they told me that all the upper-level management positions were currently filled, thank you—by them—and that if I knew what was good for me, I would leave quickly and not show my face around there again.

Looking For Work

by Primitivo Solis

Fifth Estate, September 1977

Register, pound the pavement, experienced only. Well, I'm a radical, write manifestos, hate schedules, live for love, make the same foolish mistakes over and over again, have my head in the clouds, have a good rap and little else, am all talk and no action, a loser (though not born one), a dreamer, kidding myself, out of money, and I'M WILLING TO WORK. I've got no skills to speak of, am not "mechanically inclined," nor "good with figures," nor an "ambitious go-getter." But I need money. PLEASE ENSLAVE ME, MISTER, GIVE ME A JOB; GIVE IT TO ME GOOD. I'LL BE THE PERFECT ANDROID. (The only thing worse than working is looking for work.)

Having a wonderful time in Sublimation City; wish you were here. Wasn't paradise just simply a screaming bore? Give me a boring-mill operator position any time. (No chance of that, I've no "tool room" nor "precision" background, nor do I have my own "set-ups," and since only a "top man" need apply, I may as well just stay home, go into a deep depression and wither away.) I'm the incredibly shrinking man and I'm shrinking incredibly down here at the Blue Funk Bar. I'm pinching myself until I'm blue in the cheeks and I don't wake up.

PLEASE, MISTER, PLEASE, GIVE ME A FUCKING JOB. I want a job more than anything. I've got all this labor power just creaming to be alienated, all this time and energy just dying to be used up. Give a veteran a break; I couldn't make it in the movies.

Return: A New Cycle Begins

by Richard Mires

I woke up Tuesday morning, turned off the alarm, and went back to sleep. The alarm was set a solid two and a half hours before I needed to be up, so it was no big deal.

Next time I woke up, it was exactly time for me to be at work to start my shift. I was supposed to work from noon to 4pm.

So, I thought about this.

I thought about going to work, and whether or not I wanted to. It was kinda zen.

I thought about it for an hour and a half, or so. First there was the realization it was noon, and even if I didn't bathe, it would take close to 30 minutes to get there. I was clearly not in any kind of hurry, so 20 minutes to bike there, at least, instead of the usual 15.

Then, once I got there, what would the mood be like? "The answer was another question: "What was the mood like even when you've been regularly on time?"

Despite the obviously apparent solution, I couldn't make up my mind how I wanted to handle the situation. I went superstitious—as I am wont to do in cases of inexcusable indecision and spent another 30 or 45 minutes checking astrological charts and throwing I Ching.

Indeed, the entire universe seemed to agree that it was in my best interest to...oh, how did the I Ching put it?...walk away and don't look back.

So, I followed what I was feeling when I woke up at exactly noon, and decided not to go in, ever again.

I intended to drop by before the boss left to let her know I wouldn't be back, but somehow, between listening to the birds sing, watching the bees collect pollen, noticing how nicely the white puffy clouds contrasted with the blue sky and green trees, observing how prolific with blossoms the pansies and johnny-jump-ups had become since I had added some phosphorous to their water, feeling the cool spring breeze as it moved through the leaves on an absolutely gorgeous day of sunshine, and playing some guitar, well, let's just say, time kinda slipped away.

I gotta go back and drop off these work uniforms. Friday, there's a paycheck. If I wait till then, I can take care of it all at once.



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