

The Sticky Cricket

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Work sucks



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A SALARYMAN MORNING **An Englishman in Osaka**

Alarm bell goes, it's six in the morn,
Salaryman lets out a mighty yawn.

He calls to his wife, to get the breakfast on,
But then remembers, she's in a different futon.

She's in another room, on the second floor,
He likes it like that, cos he can't hear her snore.

It was her idea, to have separate bedding,
Thirty years earlier, just after the wedding.

She's been up since five, filling his lunch box,
Cleaning his shirts, and darning his socks.

For breakfast it's rice and a relaxing smoke,
Wife's a non-smoker, so she starts to choke.

He doesn't mind, he's watching the telly,
Balancing the tray on his burdgeoning belly.

He leaves for the train, he won't be back for a while,
His wife waves him off, with a bloody great smile.

He stands on the train, his face pressed to the glass,
While somebody's briefcase, slides up his arse.

Someone breaks wind, it's a kind of torture,
Faces stay straight, but eyes start to water.

Next station comes, near the city centre,
One person off, but 90 enter.

Salaryman squashed, against an OL's thighs,
He thinks of his wife, to stop an embarrassing rise.

The train gently rocks, from side to side,
Salaryman starts enjoying the ride.

OL's oblivious, to his growing affection,
She's too busy thinking about the summer collection.

End station comes, but salaryman doesn't,
It'd be a right mess, he knows he mustn't.

Off to the office, arriving at nine,
Says ohayo gozaimasu, about 93 times.

Sits in his seat, and that's where he'll stay,
Till it's time to go home, late in the day.

salaryman

Etymology: Japanese sarari-man, from English salary + man

: a Japanese white-collar businessman

Definition from Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary **An Englishman in Osaka**



CARRY ON **ELINA IN CHINA 2006**

I took this picture while walking to town here in Beibei the other day, and it can give you an idea of the most common way to transport small loads of just about anything. Really, you name it, these men carry everything from furniture to building materials to livestock. The men who do this for living can often be seen hanging around street corners, waiting for jobs. And why not, it's an easy way to start your own business, all you need is a bit of bamboo and some rope!





LIFT ME UP **ELINA IN CHINA 2006**

There are all sorts of interesting occupations in China, which you would not come across very often in Europe. I have written before about ear cleaners, with their little stools and array of tools, waiting for customers in parks somewhere out there in central China.

Now I'd like to share another occupation with you, something that I see every day in our very own building: Lift attendant. Forget the people you sometimes might see in extra fancy hotels in the west, someone standing in a uniform with polished buttons, ready to take the wealthy guests to their floor. I'm talking the guardian of the one single lift in our very normal apartment building, with her little box-like miniature desk in one corner of the already small lift, and the stack of daily newspapers she sells those riding the lift for 5 mao each. This is the woman who makes sure the lift is used properly, and there is no joyriding, no sir.

And the best bit is that she is equipped with a custom-made stick for pressing the buttons, with a ball of some soft, rubbery material taped to one end, so she doesn't have to reach her arm too far to press the buttons, but she can stay put on her little chair and just use the stick.

Oh, it's brilliant.

Not to even mention the fact that the lift only goes to three floors out of 10: the 1st, 8th and 10th.

But sometimes, when she's taking a break, or maybe having a nap in the little office, with the hard bed right next to the lift on the first floor, we get to ride the lift by ourselves and PRESS

THE BUTTONS on our own. Man, do I feel like a rebel every time I manage to get away with that! **ELINA IN CHINA** October 2006



BAD NEIGHBORHOODS **Miss Carnivorous**

Our organization is planning to open a new branch in the absolute worst part of town. Right wing co-worker thinks they are going to outsource our entire department and use us to staff it.

"We will all be killed," I complained. "Do you know what they are going to call it?"

"Brancho del Muerto," he replied. **Miss Carnivorous 2008**



JOBLESS GIRL **SAHARA SARAH**

Hanging out with my twin sister in Breckenridge a couple months ago, being unemployed was not a problem. We mountain-biked, went camping, and drank beer with absurdly high alcohol content that I had not seen since my days of cross-border raids into Belgium. Job? What job? My sister's Breck friends embrace that freedom with the same vigor they tackle ski runs. Washington, DC, is quite a different story. If DC were a guy he'd constantly be talking about his work and would feel naked without a tie. I'm pretty much waiting for a little airplane to sky-write "UNEMPLOYED!" with a perfectly drawn finger in the heavens pointing down at me. That is what being a jobseeker in DC feels like. Rather than eating humble pie, it's like free-basing humble heroine. In a few short months I have gone from a bilingual, Masters-holding, respected, work-is-my-life management position overseas to swimming in a sea of overqualified professionals who have two Masters or speak three languages. I've thought what a character-building experience this is. That thought was immediately followed by another thought: "Screw that." **SAHARA SARAH** January 04, 2007



Kazmir Malevic JOBLESS GIRL



ON THE JOYS OF MEETINGS **LIGHT IN THE
HEART OF DARKNESS KATE**

In my job, which I rarely allude to here, I spend a reasonable amount of time collaborating with government partners. Contrary to what you may think, I have found many of them to be intelligent, eager to work together and generally committed to working for their country. That being said, I still find government meetings to be a challenge. For example, my team and I were recently invited to a day-long workshop where findings of recent research would be presented. A programme of the day's events looked something like this:

- 8:00 Arrival of participants
- 8:20 Arrival of the Assistant to the Office of the Minister
- 8:40 Arrival of the Representative of the Minister
- 9:00 Arrival of the Deputy to the Minister
- 10:00 Arrival of the Minister
- 10:15 Speech by the Assistant to the Office of the Minister
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:30 Speech by the Representative to the Minister
- 12:00 Speech by the Deputy to the Minister
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Speech by the Minister
- 15:00 Presentation of findings
- 16:00 Closing speech by the Deputy to the Minister
- 17:00 Cocktail Hour

LIGHT IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS KATE December 14, 2006



JUNG PEOPLE FROM AFRICA **Carolina Pennyles**

The first time I entered Graylands Hospital, I had a horrible feeling about that place: it is a commercial hospital kitchen, that looks like a huge production machine. There were two jung black people, a man and a woman, dresses in huge thick plastic aprons, wearing plastic boots and the longest plastic gloves I ever saw. You have to dress like that if you don't want to get completely wet when you have to wash a hundred hospital pots. The first thing I thought was "Poor black people, look what kind of jobs they agree to do to stay in a different country". I was stupid and wrong. All the jung black people I met at that place are students. They come here to study especially accounting. The plan is get the degree and than go back to Africa. You think they are poor desperate people? Not at all. They come from the best families of Kenya, Rwanda, Botswana, families that can afford sending them to study in Australia and that have a house maid. To help a little, they will work during study. Sometimes the black girls are very fussy and behave like if they were a princess; at times they look like very spoiled girls. But not all of them. Laurette finished her study, is working as accounting and kept her evening job in the kitchen of Graylands hospital. Why do you still work here Laurette, your jobs sounds good enough! She has to pay off a mortgage. Not here, back home. She's paying her house and then will go back. "Every time I land in Perth I'm sad. Ah, Australia. I will go back. I belong to Africa". **Carolina Pennyles** 26 agosto 2007

CAROLINE AT THE LUNATIC ASYLUM **Carolina Pennyles**

I've never been in a hospital before. After three weeks of jobbing here and there, I realized that the agency I work for must be specialized in hospitaes and lodges for old people, or crazy people, or crazy and old people at the same time.

These are the best ones: one of them always wants to give me a banana. At the beginning I wasn't taking the banana, I wasn't even sure I was allowed. But then I thought: Well, who cares, I'll take it. Then another one got my banana and threw it towards me. Didn't even miss me. I got upset and, despite the fact that he is crazy and I am normal, I gave him a shout and he runned away. You don't think you can do all you want just becasue you're crazy, do you?

One of my favourites jobs is working in the laundry of these hospitals. My supervisor asked me: Can you iron? Now you have to know that my mum teached me how to iron, but I did it maybe five times in my life. Since I am a honest girl, I said: A little bit... And what happens?

The supervisor is completely happy with my ironing and tells everyone that I am a very good worker. Well thanks mum , you teached me ironing very well.

Another intresting job is working in the kitchen - the biggest kitchen I ever saw. Some departments have everything made in plastic: plastic plates, plastic trolleys to deliver the food. Because those people are criminals and dangerous and you don't have to give them potential weapons (sounds a bit like in the movies, eh?). The good thing of that job is that, after we filled up all the plates, we can eat the lefts over. So one day I had fish and three types of meat - groan I eat too much when they send me there. So yes, this is what I'm doing at the moment. Feels almost like doing social work. **Carolina Pennyless** 2 Aprile 2007

FRUIT & VEGIE MARKET **Carolina Pennyless**

To be unemployed and look for work is a hard condition: it makes me feel a little depressed, the days go one after the other and nothing happens. So I need a treatment. Of course can't be a very expensive treatment (since I don't have any incomes). But there is a fantastic solution here in Perth, right 400 metres from my apartment: the fruit & vegie market! There are some bargains that I haven't seen since the old times of living in Italy. I love cheap Fruit & Vegie! Makes me feel good, makes me feel even home. And so every second day I come home with a kilo of capsicums for 1,50 dollars and I cook gorgeus peperonata. I haven't done it for years. Now we both a mixer so I can start buying cheap semi-rotten fruit and make shakes! Ah, eating well: the only luxury that poor people can afford... **Carolina Pennyless** Marzo 2007

MONEY- BUT WHAT FOR? **Carolina Pennyless**

I don't uderstand why people want money and money. No one talk about being happy, it seems happyness doesn't appeal anymore. They just wish money. Everybody complains about little money and wants more. But what for? They can't tell. They don't have ideas, or plans, or projects. They just want the money itself. And for the money they will leave on side everything else, because the more money they make, the more they have to work for that. Doesn't make sense to me: beeing rich and don't have time. Or maybe then they just buy things with the money.

I don't need things. I want time. With my little money I buy time. Time to afford not to work, time to spend enjoying life - in other words, time to travel. Or, to be more precise, time to tramp. A new tramping season is about to start, we leave Chch, we go hiding in the bush for three months! See you! 19 Settembre 2006 **Carolina Pennyless**

GREEN FINGERS **Carolina Pennyless**

Amazing but true, this week I've been working every day, what a luxury. Between all jobs I tried, I have to confess I never thought about this one: work in a nursery. And I have to say, it's the best job of all the crappy ones I ever did. It's very hard: the first day my back said "crack" and I was affraid, it was going to be out of order for a while. But no, the day after my back came back to life and I was able to keep my green fingers job.

It is nice because you see plants all time. And flowers. Lot of colours, makes me happy. And all plants all together in huge ammounts look so pretty, but then if you look better at every single one, they are not so perfect anymore. Tricky!

And people are so nice. In all jobs I've done, in all factories and warehouses I explored in six weeks time here in Christchurch I never met unfriendly people: no matter how shitty the job is, people are nice all time. Diavolerie neozelandesi. **Carolina Pennyless** Settembre 2006

IF EVERYONE WAS LIKE ME **Carolina Pennyless**

If everyone was like me, she says modestly, the world would be very different.

No one would buy a house, no one would have the same job for more than three months, no one would pay superannuation and the society will crash; everyone would pay tax, but get part of them back. People would be all time on the move, of course they would know where they come from, but they wouldn't be able to say where they live. People would spend the money only on food, beer & wine, internet cafe, public transport and outdoor gear. Nothig else would be necessary. Except cigarettes, of course. The world would be very simple and no one would have money.

Meanwhile, I keep exploring more warehouses and factories here in Chch. Give some more time and I will know them all ! They all are terrible jobs, but at least they send me to different

places so that I can't really get bored. Lately I've been folding socks (!) and packing junkmail. The good thing about packing junkmail is that you keep reading the addresses of places and your mind is busy in remembering how nice was in Te Anau or Manapouri, how sad looking was Invercargill, or - watch out - some junk mail will travel down to Halfmoon Bay as well... I've been there! **Carolina Pennyless** Settembre 2006



CRIMINAL TREATMENT OF EMPLOYEES **SEABEE**

August 02, 2007

Another example of the appalling way far too many employers treat their employees.

On Monday a fire in a residential building in Al Rolla Road, Bur Dubai resulted in the death of one young woman. Several others were rescued.

A neighbour reported at the time that he had to kick the door down to try to rescue residents from the burning apartment. Witnesses said that they could all have been rescued had the door not been locked.

Today Gulf News reports that police are investigating whether the door was locked, imprisoning the people living there.

A big area of abuse seems to be emerging here, brought to public attention as a result of the fire.

I didn't realise that there are, apparently, more than 150 Asian dance clubs in Dubai where hundreds of girls perform every night.

"They normally keep the girls, who perform in dance clubs, locked in their flats during the day for 'safety' reasons," said a dancer, who works at another club.

"It is quite common and the management of many Indian and Pakistani night-clubs follows the same practice.

We are taken to clubs around 8pm and brought back to flats after 3am when the clubs close. We are not allowed to go anywhere. We are given food in the flat and we live like prisoners," she said.

Several girls and employees of other clubs also confirmed this.

When contacted, the management of the club refused to comment."

Locking people up in this way is, apart from any humanitarian issue, a criminal offence. Confirming that, Dubai police said that legal action can be taken against the offenders.

I sincerely hope that the full weight of the law will be brought down on anyone found guilty of this crime. In the case of Sana'a Malek (aka Aaina), the girl who died, I hope that nothing less than manslaughter is charged.

Another aspect of the story is that the dancers are brought in on visit visas but work for three months. If the customers like them their visit visas are renewed, if not they're sent back.

Working while on a visit visa? Isn't that illegal too?

While investigating this individual tragedy I hope that Dubai police extend the investigation into the whole sordid, illegal activity and bring to justice any and all employers who are responsible. **SEABEE**

End