



Day Job: A Workplace Reader for the Restless Age

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Jonathan Baird

Jonathan Baird Additional readings by Carol M. Allen

(October 1998)

Unknown \$24.95 (160pp)

978-0-9660805-2-0

With sarcastic verve, Jonathan Baird takes the reader inside the life of a disillusioned college-grad trapped inside corporate America.

Baird's alter ego, Mark, is a customer service rep, and his microscopic observations and antics manage to traverse the invisibly fine line between sophomoric pranks and youth's profound mental wanderings. Mark possesses both the intelligence and swagger to maintain his identity amidst the offensive manipulations of TQM (total quality management) and the numbing surroundings of gray, sterile cubicles.

Mark's salvation is his journal, which provides the author with an apt tool to drag the reader inside capitalism's dysfunctional but strangely hilarious extended family. Each entry includes the time of day, and some are bolstered by lists or doodles or quotes from such disparate personalities as Richard Nelson Bolles (What Color is Your Parachute) and Walt Whitman. One list — "Workplace Rebellion!?" gives examples of identifying marks of a corporate rebel: "Nose-ear pierce w/ chain, Regulation necktie worn as belt, Heavy-metal tee under standard-issue 50/50 oxford."

The cutting-edge design and production of the book are exceptional. Many ideas are communicated on a single page, though the layout makes each idea accessible to the reader. The creative design also makes for a book that can be read in short sessions — advantageous since time is required between readings just to unravel the many relationships between characters and between the action and the sidebar information. Day Job has all the characteristics its subject — corporate culture — lacks; namely originality, realism and youthful brilliance.

MARDI LINK (July / August 1998)

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