

## AI. Accountant

I have recently noticed a new habit. I have developed a new non-flirty smile for clients who I may be interested in or who may be interested in me but with whom I cannot pursue anything so I use my new non-flirty smile. When I was a younger man, before I met my wife, I circulated differently among men. Now I have a need for new vocabulary as the precursor to new ideas, as if words themselves generate thought and that without new words I will never have new thoughts. I muse daily about my love of new counting systems and wish to search them out, like they are foreign objects I must climb a mountain to find. I have a desire for something denser and more beautiful in the accounting profession. I must add up all of the expenses yet this task is always accompanied by my anxiety that I will fail at adding well. My numbers will emerge bungled. I must investigate possible psychosomatic factors in the odd skin condition on my fingers which feels like they are going to burst open. Does it have something to do with the keyboard? My calculator? I feel an intense lack of gay people in my circle now. None of the other accountants I meet are openly homosexual and I miss that. I still go to the bar every few weeks but everyone I meet wants to discuss tax shelters. I fear discussing the finer details and I tend to cope by avoiding such conversations, but then usually the guy gets up and leaves. I have also developed the habit of avoiding answering telephones, again as if people will beseige me with questions I do not want to answer. I just let the machine take messages but then I never listen to them, too anxious to have to call them back.

## A2. Streetcleaner

Recently I remarked on a new predisposition. I cannot stand the smell of garbage. I hold my breath to such an extent during my shift that my nails start to turn blue. Now I paint them purple so I do not have to confront this symptom. In the future I will no longer clean the streets. I will work in an amusement park, like when I was a teenager. I could see up the girls' skirts riding the ferris wheel. When people pass me on the sidewalk I generally say hello but few of them answer. They have this disgusted look on their faces. I muse daily about my interest in squirrels and whether it is overly sexual. Their tails attract me. I look at them with a dejected boredom so they will not suspect me. I have developed a new positive attitude with my boss who wants to fuck me but in whom I have no interest. When I was more naive, I slept with my superiors. Now I use sophisticated adverbs to get one over on them. They do not expect streetcleaners to be smart. I have more new thoughts than anyone. I want things to be simpler, though. Urban planners are so full of themselves. I must write down all my ideas yet the prospect of this task is always accompanied by my anxiety that I will forget them when I get home. The garbage will pile up. I must investigate the odd nervous condition in my ankles which feels like I need to kick something. Does it have something to do with all the walking? The pollution? I feel an intense lack of people in my life now. The rest of the city maintenance workers are afraid of me. I still go to the union meetings every month but just drink coffee and keep quiet. I don't want to let anyone know how intelligent I am, but also I hate that they think I'm dumb. I also stopped going swimming, because of the chlorine. I just collect rain water and bathe when I have a tubful. In my yard it is silent and I imagine all of those squirrels in the branches, looking down.

### A3. Director

Last week I noticed I am repeating myself a lot. The crew is being very polite, but I see the look on their faces when I say something for the third time. I know I'm doing it. It gives me kind of a gas to know they are too scared to question me. I don't want them to think I'm weird, though. My new haircut is really attractive. The trainees would fuck me over it, guaranteed. I'm holding out for Meg T. who is the loosest screw around. Now I have a need for new characters as the precursor to new storylines, as if characters themselves generate story and that without new characters I will never have new stories, you know? I have developed a new casual manner with actors who I may be interested in working with or who may be interested in working with me but with whom I cannot pursue anything because my budgets are too low. When I was an actor, I circulated differently on the set. I muse daily about my desire for something denser and more beautiful in my movies. But characters and stories are like foreign objects I must climb a mountain to find. When I'm having sex I'm always thinking about how to make the perfect film, but this often makes me anxious about coming. The last girls were fine about it taking a while. Does it have something to do with too much espresso? The junk food? I feel an intense lack of normal people in my circle now. I still visit my parents every weekend but they just want to hear about the famous people I'm meeting. I fear discussing the finer details and I tend to cope by avoiding such conversations. On the way back to the dailies I visit the botanical gardens and smell lilacs or whatever's in season and think of screwing Meg till she yells yes. She's really loose.

## **B-G: CAREER PATHS**

## BI. Construction Worker

On this most recent job I feel myself hating  
and loving the work in quick succession, and then /

needing to sleep. This leads to feelings of desperation  
a lot of the time and I cope by /

breathing in a deeper, more measured way to try  
to diffuse the force of it. I remind myself /

of the young mothers in our building who I  
hear in the elevator talking to each other about /

how well they are coping, or letting on that  
they are having trouble, but never really saying that /

they are desperate. Some day one of them will  
throw herself out the window. My wife cannot handle /

the mess I make in the kitchen, even when  
I just make a sandwich, and she talks in /

a wistful way about how she notices the neighbours  
aging. I myself feel so angry at my boss /

not angry but full of a kind of venomous  
spew about to erupt, like my insides are a /

drum of liquid flame. I prefer the late afternoon  
to any hour earlier because of the magical movement /

of light on the half-finished walls.

## B2. Celebrity Personal Assistant

All I know and adore out  
of of my me. I worried.

All biggest brat the stage its own I  
know of her drugs through in her and  
adore self-evolution that stalker was some weird out  
of in when is precisely it every of  
my shame is mail and gracious help, me.  
I worried.

All of those days when she just seems like the biggest  
brat on the planet and then the light strobes onto the  
stage and she steps into it and this love is its  
own reward. My true baby, my queen, coveted by millions. I  
know I have everything to do with the sheer ascendance of  
her but I just keep the compliments flowing, bring the drugs  
through when she wants them, tuck her into silk sheets in  
her underwear, dream of the day when she'll unfurl and  
adore me back. I have a sturdy sense of self-evolution  
that keeps me balanced, especially this year when that stalker  
was calling and even showed up backstage one night with some  
weird homemade confection decorated with pink condoms and photos torn out  
of *Movieline*. Thank god we hired private security to step in  
when the premise got messy. I saw it coming. But that is  
precisely my gift and deep down she thanks me for it  
every night and every morning. When she corkscrew-pinched the back of  
my arm last week I just adjusted my perspective. The shame  
is her mother was a classifiable witch and despite fan mail  
and excellent press she's never gotten used to gentleness and gracious  
help, thus the backlash. I have long-range vision to endorse me.  
I am never worried.

### 83. Female Rock Star

on this most recent job she just seems  
like the biggest and loving the work in  
the light strobes onto the needing to sleep.

this leads to this love is its breathing  
in a deeper, more queen, coveted by millions.  
I to diffuse the force of the sheer

ascendance of of the young mothers in compliments  
flowing, bring the drugs hear in the elevator  
talking her into silk sheets in how well

they are coping, when she'll unfurl and they  
are having trouble, but a sturdy sense of  
self-evolution they are desperate. some day this year

when that stalker throw herself out the window.  
backstage one night with some the mess I  
make in condoms and photos torn out I

just make a sandwich, private security to step  
in a wistful way about how I saw  
it coming. but that is aging. I myself

feel so she thanks me for it not  
angry but full of corkscrew-pinched the back of  
spew about to erupt, like adjusted my perspective.

the shame drum of liquid flame. I witch  
and despite fan mail to any hour earlier  
because used to gentleness and gracious of light

on the half-finished long-range vision to endorse me.  
I am never worried.

## ci. Staple Sorter

worker incoherence. // the or // my not //  
sad // seesaw you // string Hamilton //

not // Tonight Hamilton //  
my crest // string  
or // to you //  
the pills // seesaw  
incoherence. // can't sad //  
worker

not // the sky. I // can like Tonight  
Hamilton // and social anymore, // I'm take toward my  
crest // off I your // adopted blood or string  
or // downer the and // realize dole like to  
you // poke in Who // can responsibility out the  
pills // moving dose thoughts, // half-uttered soup, to seesaw  
incoherence. // I help seem // to badly that can't  
sad // about of vinyl. worker

Tonight I'm freakin' sad // about the prospects of  
my in-laws, who seem // to be declining badly  
toward illness and incoherence. // I have to help  
string together basic thoughts, // half-uttered requests for soup,  
or keep the pills // moving from one dose  
to the next. Who // can bear a responsibility  
like that, where you // poke a hole in  
the night's middle and // realize you didn't dole  
out the upper or // downer and caused the  
seesaw self of your // adopted flesh and blood  
to dip or crest // off the chart? I  
can't hack it anymore, // I'm just gonna take  
that job in Hamilton // and let the social  
worker step in. I // can be replaced, like  
vinyl. Sons-in-law are not // the stars, or sky.



## c2. Obstetrician

the father  
hand The  
corridor fetuses.  
lovingly gasp

gasp fussing lovingly  
fetuses. realize corridor  
The can hand  
father never the

the client anything never  
father white-coated to hand  
can and ribs. The  
corridor could proceed realize  
fetuses. world untrained lovingly  
fussing gasp

The saying is working the  
corridor of of their client  
could like a sticks anything  
proceed with first point. never  
realize my distance a father  
fetuses. I move from white-coated  
world labelled bag. scissors to  
untrained for alone. My hand  
lovingly visit on I can  
fussing to mother's astonishing and  
gasp my hands ribs.

The first thing that bears saying  
is yes, I do love working  
the speculum up each unique corridor  
of origins. Women are unaware of  
their powers. If determined, each client  
could crush that shiny instrument like  
a pop can. Anyone who sticks

anything up any vagina should proceed  
with caution. That is the first  
point. The second is women never  
realize how I must keep my  
distance emotionally. I feel like a  
father to all of those fetuses.  
I know how they will move  
from the inside to this white-coated  
world where blood is a labelled  
bag. I will pass the scissors  
to some other man completely untrained  
for fatherhood. Women are so alone.  
My technique involves laying a hand  
lovingly once or twice each visit  
on bellies as they ripen. I  
can feel the child readying, fussing  
to get out through the mother's  
astonishing tunnel of ridged muscle and  
gasp air, gape for breath, my  
hands like god around its ribs.