

Haicube

Little Enlightenment for the Workplace

David Carter Scott

**Ten Gallon Mojo Hat Publishing
Lubbock, Texas**

*Released to the public under a
Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License, 2006.
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5>*

The reproduction of any part of this work is encouraged.

Learn more at www.creativecommons.org

Published through Lulu
Meet the author at <http://lulu.com/davidcarterscott>

Cover design by Victor deCastardt

This is a work of fiction. No resemblance to any actual
entity, situation, or event is intended.

Second Edition

Dedication:

To my Mom and Dad,
Who worked long days so that I
Would never have to.

You can never have
Too many iced cake doughnuts
Or too much caffeine.

-

Take the path of peace.
The copier is not a
Worthy foe for you.

Bills keep coming in.
Paycheck never seems to stretch
Far enough for all.

-

Day in and day out,
Still loading those sixteen tons
Hurts more than your back.

More new protocols.
Not even hypertext can
Keep up with changes.

-

Gentle rains of spring
Wash away the grime except
What's in the air vents.

Parking lot is full.
Always room for managers,
Where's *your* reserved space?

-

Toxic memes abound.
“Work harder to gain success!”
Is just more hogwash.

Budget cut again.
Department must tighten belt.
Where *do* profits go?

-

An eight-lane freeway
Is still not big enough for
Morning rush traffic?

Time moves so slowly,
Three and a half hours left.
How the day drags on!

-

Hawaiian Shirt Day
Is an opportunity
To blind the office.

Computer speed is
Slower the more critical
The situation.

-

Customer calls in,
Yells at you over nothing.
No wonder you're stressed.

Bureaucracy bloat
Is a sure-fire recipe
For high blood pressure.

-

Need social outlet?
Want to get good with the boss?
Join the softball team.

Office freedom is
Best seen by the number of
Comics on the walls.

-

Spend all of your break
As far away from your desk
As is possible.

Short-sleeved shirt with tie
Tells all the world that you're a
Junior employee.

-

How did you not see?
The bright sun has come and gone.
Damn windowless walls!

“Hang in There!” says the
Cute little kitten poster.
Just tighten your grip.

-

Large inbox backlog.
You wish it were the weekend.
It's only Monday.

It may be all free,
But the break room coffee tastes
Like old burned gym socks.

-

Ring, ring, ring, again.
The phone is a harsh master.
How it cracks that whip!

The blind lead the blind.
Conflicting work policies
Let no task get done.

-

The heat of summer
Cannot enter the building.
Neither does the sun.

Sun on the seashore,
Soft breezes and fruity drinks.
Two weeks not enough.

-

Paperless bathroom
Is much more possible than
Paperless office.

Boss just came in late
From his six-martini lunch.
Quickly look busy.

-

Donuts in break room!
But move quickly, or you will
See an empty plate.

Bad ID photo?
At least your driver's license
Hides in your pocket.

-

Rain dances on roof,
Inside it is gloomier
Than it is outside.

Workaday commute
Seems to get longer every day.
So much for progress.

-

Back from vacation!
Surprisingly, the office
Didn't fall apart.

Office noise too much?
Nothing brings more peace than an
mp3 player.

-

Elevator out.
Running up six flights of stairs.
Bad start to the day.

Too much coffee makes
Agitation. Take a break.
Waterfall brings calm.

-

Autumn's colored leaves
Are a refreshing change from
The dullness inside.

Keep cubicle toys.
Stress leaves you when you give in
To your inner child.

-

Enlightenment comes
When you know that what they pay
Is less than you're worth.

Company e-mail
Tells you important things like
Who's got free kittens.

-

This we know is true:
The higher the rank the less
Work you have to do.

Counting ceiling tiles,
Everything looks the same.
Your soul dies daily.

-

You brought your own lunch.
Someone stole it from the fridge.
Bad karma follows.

Taking up smoking
As excuse to go outside?
Never a wise move.

-

Cold, dry, sterile air
Makes your nose extra itchy.
Get the good tissues.

Insipid décor,
An air-conditioned workhouse.
Labor sickens all.

-

Company café
Serves a wide variety
Of flavored cardboard.

Thank God it's Friday!
You survived another week.
Your life slips away.

-

Herd of elephants.
That's what it sounds exactly
Like at five o'clock.

Picking up paycheck.
Soon it will be all but gone
Just breaking even.

-

Surf the Net at work.
Timewasting is addictive.
Oops! Here comes the boss!

Skiing in Aspen?
Management's vacations are
Much better than yours.

-

Free spirit are you.
You were never a Yuppie.
Don't become one now.

Company cellphone
Quickly becomes a lifeline
For unemployed friends.

-

Read *Book of Five Rings*.
Musashi's teachings will work
Well at next meeting.

Reward your labor.
Even the smallest thing can
Make you feel a king.

-

In the cold winter
You learn that smoking causes
Hypothermia.

Exercise prudence.
Wake not the sleeping dragon,
Nor the napping boss.

-

Virus scanner dings.
Better tell Mom not to send
Any more pictures.

Life is suffering.
So says Lord Buddha's wisdom.
Work is doubly so.

-

Stare at the ceiling.
No décor is more boring
Than acoustic tile.

When the day is done
A quick beer after work is
Better than fine wine.

-

Casual Fridays.
Take full advantage of them.
Jeans and a t-shirt.

Go to movie night.
You never know, you might meet
Somebody special.

-

Hard work means nothing.
Promotion will escape you
Unless you kiss up.

Cute, pithy posters.
Are they inspirational,
Or just annoying?

-

Office radio
Is either tuned to country
Or boring talk show.

No matter how fun,
Document shredder is not
For boss' picture.

-

Corporate ladder
Always seems taller when you
Are the bottom rung.

Meetings are so dull.
Same things over and over.
At least we are paid.

-

O salaryman!
You are more than just your job.
Neglect not your heart.

Form is Emptiness.
The cup needs the void to hold
Your morning coffee.

-

Emptiness is Form.
Your stomach will point this out
An hour before lunch.

Vacations balance.
You get twice as much done when
The boss has left town.

-

Gas prices go up,
Carpool has smelly people,
Two wheels bring fresh air.

Winter went to spring,
But you were in the office.
You never felt it.

-

Online workplace chat
Supposedly for business,
Really just gossip.

Forty-hour week.
To think it once was longer.
How lucky you are!

-

The office party
Is not an occasion to
Seduce coworkers.

Drab grey cubicles.
No personalization
Allowed, just plain walls.

-

Managers rule all,
Workers are still exploited,
Union has no teeth.

Inspirational!
That's what they claim awards are.
Bootlickers get them.

-

Borrow not nor lend
Self-purchased office supplies.
That's *your* red stapler.

Office is a zoo.
Your coworkers would even
Try Buddha's patience.

-

Unisex bathroom?
Workplace equality is
Always a good thing.

Cube farm like tunnel:
When a fool goes into it,
No sage will come out.

-

Training drags along.
You already know all this,
Why learn it again?

Broken swivel chair.
No good way to sit on it.
Very uncomfy.

-

The Blue Screen of Death
Is an almost daily thing.
Curses to Redmond!

Misinformation.
Or as they like to call it,
“Official story.”

-

Toeing the line is
Harder when you don't know where
The line even is.

IT Department
Is full of great wisdom that
No one understands.

-

Maybe someday you
Will get a desk whose drawers
Actually work.

Always say “thank you”
To the custodial staff.
They have hard jobs, too.

-

Another potluck?
Your stomach is still reeling
From the one before.

The policy that
Can be spoken of is not
The true policy.

-

Time for annual
Performance review. Maybe
A raise is in store?

White collar or blue,
We are alike in one way:
Our jobs drive us nuts.

-

Pictures of loved ones
Remind us why we are here.
We do it for them.

Trust the rumors not.
Office gossip is the worst.
Lies outrun the truth.

-

Evolution proof!
Big problems develop from
Ape-like customers.

Working after lunch.
Someone's trip to Taco Hut
Quickly clears the cube.

-

Yellow sticky-notes
Littering cube are sign of
Forgetful person.

Pictures on cellphones
Can be anywhere in no
Time. Behave yourself.

-

Grab your mad money,
Cookie order form is here!
Chocolate mints rule.

Reams of white paper
Are wasted printing e-mails
And not recycled.

-

Inkjet cartridges
Would probably be cheaper
With solid gold ink.

Sometimes seventeen
Syllables are not enough
To vent frustration.

-

Stupid paperclip
Wants to know if it can help
Write two-weeks' notice.

Creative Commons
Lets you do what you like with
Each of these poems.

Afterword: a Note on Creative Commons

Walk into just about any place where people work and you'll find personal touches. Potted plants, family portraits, clever sayings, *Dilbert* and *User Friendly* comics, they're all over the place.

I'd been posting these silly little poems on my cube walls for some time now, having worked in the cubicle environment for a number of years. I'd jot them down on a notepad, then type them up and print several at a time. After a while the cube was looking a bit ragged and a coworker suggested jokingly that I should collect them in a book, as at least they wouldn't be all over the place.

These days self-publishing is easy, the bulk of the work I did for this book was typesetting and layout, the publisher handled the rest. However, one decision did loom in my mind the closer I got to a finished product: copyright license.

I knew I wanted to offer the book as a free download, *à la* Doctorow, so the copyright had to be lenient enough to let people distribute it widely. I also knew that there might be a few people who would like to print out the poems and stick them up in their cubes just as I had done, and I wanted to make sure that there would be no questions regarding legality.

Enter the Creative Commons, a series of flexible copyright licenses that anybody can use to bring their work to the public and encourage that same public to use, distribute, and expand upon their creation freely, while at the same time protecting the rights of the creator and his work.

If you've not been to the Creative Commons website, take a trip to www.creativecommons.org. It's about songs that musicians can remix freely without fear of lawsuit. It's about novels that can be given away for free and yet still boost sales of the paper versions. It's about books of poetry – like this one – that encourage readers to take the poems out of the book and plaster them all over everything.

Go ahead. The license for this book is the **Attribution-ShareAlike License** (version 2.5). That means you, the reader, have permission to:

- copy, distribute, display, and perform the work
- make derivative works
- make commercial use of the work

All I ask is that you give me credit for writing the poems in the first place (just put my name on it somewhere, I'm not picky) and share your creative transformation with others in the same way I'm sharing this book with you. Thanks to Creative Commons, you don't have to hunt me down or write a long request in legalese to ask to use my work; the license lets me give you permission in advance.

The brain's a-churning now, isn't it? There's all kinds of things you could do: hang them on your cube walls, make a needlepoint sampler, put them on your office sports team's jerseys, recite them to music, stick them on a coffee mug, add a couple to your podcast, you name it. You can even sell your work and you won't owe me a dime in royalties.

The world is better when we share with each other. So many conflicts arise simply from the perceived borders of "mine" and "yours", and traditional copyright only muddies the waters even more. There's this mentality that before a work is released it must be wholly owned by something, and that ownership must be set out clearly under force of law, with no variations to account for personal preference. Creative Commons puts the freedom to share back where it belongs, in the hands of authors, artists and their audiences.

Thank you for letting me share my little trifle with you.

David Carter Scott, October 2006