

Shepherds.

You don't set out to be a shepherd. There are no courses for it in school; it doesn't look good in guidance counselor's stats. You just kind of end up there. It's sort of a choice you make from not having made any choices. If you don't choose to be a one, two or three then congratulations, you get to be a zero.

And once you are a zero it gets harder and harder to see a way out. You don't make much so debt becomes a part of living. You can't stop working in order to go to school; you can't start over at some new trade because you can't afford a pay cut. So you go on, day after day and eventually you end up on one of two paths. You either find some silly thing to pin your shred of dignity to, like your physical strength, your child's achievements, a sports team. Or you find something that takes the pain away, thrills, drugs, meaningless relationships, lottery tickets. Knowing that nothing's going to change. Except you're getting older and as your body wears out it gets harder and harder to do the job. And in your lucid moments you can see that a day will come when you won't even be a zero anymore.

And then the skies open up and the angels start singing, not to everybody, everywhere but to you, a shepherd, a zero. How could you not tell everyone?