

Striped tie by Lisa Conolly

I'd had a bloody sauce stain on my tie.
This is Australia. It shouldn't matter.
Mate. I'm a good accountant.
Surely they would see that.
He would find out today if they had won
the contract.



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His eyes drifted back to the open page.
The same page. He started to read it again.

Inspector Malone was humbly reporting to his superior,

*...out of the corner of his eye he caught a glimpse of a book, a biography of Ronald Reagan, *The Role of a Lifetime*. It would appeal to Assistant Commissioner Zanuch, an actor through and through.*¹

What if the contract didn't come through? It could mean my job. My superiors are not actors. They are real. Real tight. Real careful. Not really mates. Oh well, I could get another job. There was supposed to be a shortage of accountants. All these African accountants coming here. Amazing. Maybe they'd give him a job. He smiled. Maybe they could be mates.

He read on....

For far too long, four years now, there had been promises that had been broken, rain that fell like a whore's kisses, then went away.

The land's dried up. The money's drying up.
The accountants are flowing underneath.
What was he worrying about. The sun streamed
through the window of the train, and flickered
over the open page.

I have a beautiful wife. I have a beautiful house.



¹ From the novel by Jon Cleary, "EndPeace", 1996, published by BCA. Quote from page 88.