



## Transit Talk

New York's Bus and Subway Workers Tell Their Stories

by Robert W. Snyder

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### DESCRIPTION

New York City may seem to be a place where everyone is a stranger, yet transit workers provide a human presence on a late-night bus or an empty subway platform. Few of us give any thought to these invisible workers-until something goes wrong. *Transit Talk* takes readers into the world of MTA New York City transit employees, as they describe their lives and work, from the most visible subway conductor to the seemingly invisible mechanic.

There are nearly 44,000 transit workers like those you will meet in *Transit Talk*, and every day they help five million of us travel to work, to school, to weddings, to funerals, to hospitals, to vacations. These workers labor daily on subway tracks inches from high-voltage powerlines, risking their lives for passengers they'll never know. The city can feel large and fragmented, but the transportation system and its workers create common threads in the lives of all New Yorkers, threads we take for granted.

Together, their stories create a human tableau of life and labor in the city within a city that is the MTA New York City Transit. Transit workers find satisfaction in fixing a damaged subway car, gain wisdom from mastering a dangerous workplace, nurse emotional wounds from tending to someone injured in an accident, battle frustration from difficulties with management, and express satisfaction when reflecting on a productive career. They tell of how years spent in the same shop create bonds between workers. They talk of the burden of laboring in a twenty-four-hour system with night shifts and weekend workdays that take them away from families. You'll hear painful tales of informing next-of-kin of a death on the tracks as well as joyous anecdotes of workers delivering a baby in a subway car.

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### AUTHOR/EDITOR BIOGRAPHY

Robert W. Snyder, a lifelong bus and subway rider and the grandson of a transit worker, is the author of *The Voice of the City: Vaudeville and Popular Culture* in New York and coauthor of *Metropolitan Lives: The Ashcan Artists and Their New York*. He lives with his wife and two children in Manhattan, where he is the editor of *Media Studies Journal*.

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