

GUARDIAN GHOST of 103rd STREET STATION



A choral soliloquy

**photograph by Ocean Morisett*

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A glimpse at the many worlds within our world.

A subway commute featuring the inhabitants of a metropolitan city.

MAN IN SUIT	The guardian of the station, observant and gentle.
NURSE	A young nurse, empathetic and concerned about the world around
DOCTOR	An older professional, weathered by years of work
YOUNG MAN	A grocery clerk, beaten down by his daily grind
STRANGERS	Dancers dressed in black, shadows of us all

SETTING

A subway station / car

TIME

Now

LIGHTS FADE.

An empty stage, save for two poles, spaced some 10' apart. Soft yellow lights pass overhead of the poles.

MAN in SUIT enters, strolling. He walks over and holds the pole at stage left. He scans the scene.

NURSE enters - a young, beautiful, hard-eyed black woman. Her hair is pulled up, she wears she wears dark purple scrubs, sterile nitrile gloves, a tight mask over her mouth, and sunglasses to cover her eyes. She steps into the light and grabs the pole stage right.

NURSE

(rhythmic)

Breathe. Sweat beads. Breaks scream. 6 AM - subway speeds.

The sound of subway tunnels and subway station echo around.

NURSE

Powdered sterile nitrile gloves, cut-off scrubs, discolored tees.

Two high-school aged kids with masks around their chins enter, carrying raggedy old folding chairs. They set up their chairs in between the poles ala a subway car. An older Woman with a grocery cart gets on sits next to the high school boys.

MAN IN SUIT

Ghost of 103rd street station, 6-train never appeared so vacant.

NURSE

Safer journey - less populated. Few disregard masks mandated.

STRANGERS, most wearing masks enter carrying their own chairs and set up, distanced from others. They stare uneasily at Nurse.

They move to the other end of the “car” to avoid being near Nurse.

NURSE

Passengers hold hesitation, anxieties, anticipations, stare in near -credulation, judging, praising my vocation - segregated, ingratiated, overworked, decompensated, cornered, voice ignored, placated sociologically unappreciated - two weeks since last vacation.

The sounds of subway cars begins to slowly crescendo. A YOUNG MAN wearing a mask and a grocery apron enters from stage left, and takes a place at the pole next to MAN in SUIT. As YOUNG MAN speaks, more people clammer onto the train - most carrying their own chair.

YOUNG MAN

Ceased hazard incantation

NURSE

Millions choose rent or starvation

YOUNG MAN

Work out of sheer desperation

NURSE

While at home it's isolation from family, friends, all blood relation -

YOUNG MAN

Pretend its only simulation, Until cure or vaccination:

YOUNG MAN & NURSE

This is who I'll be.

The 'subway car' is rather crowded now. Distancing is impossible. People sit almost on top of one another. The crowd sways in rhythm with the movement of the train.

YOUNG MAN

Countless others just like me, clung to this pole so anxiously. Was their commute from A to B, purely of necessity? Some crucial task or utmost need or merely leisured luxury? A quest fulfilling dire deed, medicine or grocery, some whiskey or a bag of weed, a pint of beer or all of these? To see their sister's-neighbor's-niece, to learn a lesson or to teach?

And were they allowed a seat or do they choose to stand like me?

(beat)

Could they truly choose?

The sound of the door bells as an elder gentleman, a DOCTOR, stethoscope draped round his neck, mask on, a colorful necktie tucked into his dress shirt, steps into the train and grabs the pole next to Nurse.

The sounds of the train begin to blend into the sounds of a hospital.

DOCTOR

Normal means coffee sells, freshest pastries, cafe smells, mocha latte, soft chewy caramels, modern day 'wish you well'. Ere I long to sit a spell, watch a pair of ne'er do wells, but duty calls and time will tell - so once more, friends, into this hell.

NURSE

Slamming doors, Alarming bells Exposure risks Cries for help

DOCTOR

Heartbreak

YOUNG MAN

Loss of families felt

DOCTOR

Goodbyes said only on their cell.

NURSE

Cursing conclusions

YOUNG MAN

Cultural questions answers cannot quell

DOCTOR & NURSE

Nor endured to pose.

The swaying of the crowd stops. They hurriedly exit, leaving wrappers, discarded masks, most take their chairs but a few are left.

Only the Nurse, Doctor, Young Man and Man in Suit remain. Doctor crosses center and sits in one of the rustier, more worn chairs.

NURSE

Fleeting glances, pleading, fear...

DOCTOR

Personal protective gear

YOUNG MAN

How, why and where is here?

DOCTOR

Could this go on for several years?

YOUNG MAN

Glasses cover forming tears

NURSE

PA Echoes in my ears -

P.A SYSTEM

Bowling Green - Doors Closing, Stand Clear.

The lights dim as hospital sounds overtake any remnant of the subway. Man in Suit walks slowly towards Doctor. Young Man & Nurse exit.

MAN IN SUIT

(softly)

Ghost of 103rd Street Station - 6 -train guardian, disappears.

The Doctor slumps in his seat with a sigh. MAN IN SUIT stands above him for a moment as the hospital sounds crescendo.

P.A SYSTEM

Code Blue room 103. Code blue room 103.

The lights fade as the tone of a flatline sounds over the system.

LIGHTS FADE.