

Sophy Feldman
Arch 243
Professor Eugene Han

Fabric: New York City
Locations: 2 Fifth Ave, Washington Sq Park, W 4th Street Subway
Agent 2: Homeless Woman

6:00am: I am awakened by the infiltrating working class. The sharp heels of their upper class shoes hitting the cold pavement that I call my bed act as my never ending alarm. Clink, clank, clink, clank. At this point I can count the amount of steps by the amount of clinks, and clanks I hear. It is when I hear that sound that I know the first wave of judgement will begin to roll through.

7:00am: While I still lay here, on my favorite bench, I watch as the seven am crew begins to roll in. The seven am crew is my favorite because that's when I get to see Annie. Annie is a student at NYU who religiously takes the subway everyday at the same time. At first I thought Annie was scared of me, as everytime she would walk past she would look down. After weeks of us both having the same routine she introduced herself. I think a lot of people have a stereotypical notion about all homeless people. They think, oh they must be a druggie, or they must be an alcoholic, so you shouldn't give them any money because all they will spend it on is a quick high. Well in my situation that is not the case. When covid-19 struck New York City I lost my job, and was quickly evicted afterwards. While I wasn't well off before the pandemic I was able to survive, keep a roof over my head, and put food on the table every night. Being homeless isn't always a choice. Anyways, enough of the boring side talk, back to Annie. After introducing myself she proceeded to give me a warm black coffee and croissant from Le Pain Quotidien. This became our daily routine. I watched as she got onto the train heading north bound and went about my day. It was usually after this cycle of people that I started to wake up. I get up, fold up my blankets, and pack up my bag with all of my belongings.

8:00am: After wandering around the subway platform for a little, observing and digesting, I trekked up the cement stairs to see the light of day. I go straight and pass the kids playing early morning basketball before school. Then I go right and see the married couple enjoying their breakfast at the Washington Square Park diner as usual. Then I go left and watch the professors and students, just like Annie, walk into their respected NYU buildings. Then I turn right and see the park.

9:00am: As I enter the park it is still early so I know I will get a good spot for the day. The key is to wake up semi early before everyone else. I follow the sound of the water to reach the fountain at the center of the park. While there are still very few people there I take the time to clean up a little bit with the free running water. I wash my body with my extra rags I keep in my bag, and the soup I got from a nearby Hilton. You would be surprised with how willing hotels are with handing out free

soap. After I put it all back in my bag and threw it over my shoulder to head over to my favorite outdoor bench. I like to pick the more low key benches that are among the trees in the park. From there I can see the fountain and the popular benches radiating around it and the grass where people bring their own seating for themselves.

10:00am: At ten in the morning it is still slow in the park but there are still some commuters that like to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the streets and step into the park to enjoy a cup of coffee before a long day in the office. But after that everyone starts to leave and the park becomes quiet again.

11:00am: At this time the influx of food vendors starts to move closer and closer to the park. There are obviously your classic hot dog trucks, but at the same time a lot of food trucks come in too. These vendors know that with the mix of students and white collar workers there is always a larger lunch crowd that they can count on.

12:00pm: Twelve signifies lunch time for most. From north, south, east, and west everyone infiltrates the park to grab a bite to eat. The air smells like a mixture of sweet caramelized nuts, salty boiled hotdogs, greasy yet delicious halal, and even spicy mexican street tacos. I notice from watching that a lot of the men gravitate towards the hotdogs, and the females gravitate towards the taco truck. Not many people want to chat with each other during lunch. Mostly everyone separates, finds a spot to eat, and keeps to themselves.

1:00pm: At this time a lot of people have to go back to their nine to five jobs as they only have one hour off to relax.

2:00pm: The park remains pretty dull.

3:00pm: Around three o'clock is when a lot of students get out of class. This is when I like to secure a good seat in the park to be able to capture it all. The park is flooded with students trying to secure afternoon hangout locations. First we have the alternative students who most likely will get covered head to toe in tie dye and grateful dead t-shirts. They typically find a quiet corner in the grass to sit as they will most likely be smoking an illegal substance.

“Set out runnin' but I take my time
A friend of the Devil is a friend of mine
If I get home before daylight
I just might get some sleep tonight”

They always play good music, which is something I look forward to. That song in particular is one of my favorites. Then next comes the studious kids. They like to congregate around the fountain on the

bench. The first thing they do when they sit down is sip their iced caramel macchiatos from starbucks and crack open a book. When the simultaneous action of opening the books occurs I can almost get a whiff of the new book smell amongst the nuts for sale and garbage. I see Annie in the distance and she gives me a little head nod because she's with her friends but she sees me too. Finally the art students begin to roll in. They prefer the grass too. They set up a big blanket and all gathered round. They usually put on a performance whether it be singing or dancing, but it always helps light up my bed. Seeing the young kids help me remind me of the fun that I had in college and brings back the best memories. I try not to get sad and be lonely but it's moments like these that I still feel connected to the community.

4:00pm: At this time I am still situated in the park. I notice an influx of people that are much older than the NYU students. These people are typically from the luxury apartment buildings north of the park. I never actually walk north of the park, because I typically have no reason to but I can see the buildings towering over. I sometimes can see the residents overlooking the park from their balcony. These people don't usually stay long. They come in, walk a couple laps, and walk out. This happens in a couple rounds.

5:00pm: Now that it starts to approach the evening, the park begins to die down. Students walk back to their dorms, the old married couples go off to dinner, and I get a moment of silence.

6:00pm: At this point I start to get hungry. And to answer your question, yes homeless people eat. I usually head over to my favorite hotdog cart on the corner of sixth street and west fourth street. He knows me there so never gives me a hard time about unwanted solicitation. I grab a one dollar hotdog with extra mustard and head on my way.

7:00pm: By seven pm it is time to go back to the subway. When the sun sets, that's my cue that I switch over to my night time routine. I try to head back underground on the earlier side to claim my favorite bench, but usually I don't have an issue.

8:00pm: As time passes the crowd of people begins to change. There are no longer white collar commuters filling the subway platform rather there are people like me that call this underground cement box our home. I found comfort in the subway station. After countless hours, days, weeks, and months of living the same day over and over again it became familiar to me. It is with this familiarity that comes comfort. And with the comfort, came my new sense of home.

9:00pm: And by nine o'clock at night, my lights go out so that at six in the morning I can wake up and do the same day all over again, like the ones before.