

On Living in New York City in 2009, After Watching a Documentary on New York City in the Late 1800s

by Cristin O'Keefe Aptowicz

God's honest truth, I wake up every morning when my clock punches out its dulcet, insistent clangs, a setting called *Ultra Zen Up & Out*. I brush my teeth with a blue dollar store toothbrush and watch one of the five morning TV shows designed to let me know the weather and traffic every ten minutes, despite the fact no one I know in NYC owns a car, or can afford one, really.

At 8:35am, I don't teleport to work, nor hovercraft, nor take a slick clean monorail. I take the subway, or rather three subways, to work. It takes me 45 minutes and I usually see one of the four following people: crazy chatty religious woman; former classmate I pretend not to see & who pretends not to see me; cute guy who always looks a bit sad, a bit drunk; and a woman I fear is compensating for her weight with enormous accessories, despite the fact that she is beautiful.

At work, I eat yogurt with granola I have to hide in my desk (office rules: mice, roaches). I sometimes use a fresh plastic spoon for the guilty thrill of it instead of the morally right re-usable metal spoon. Have you guys fixed the environment yet? God, I hope so.

Work for me isn't very dangerous. Maybe some eye strain, or repetitive motion injuries, or general fat assedness. Everything is

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inputting into or printing out of my computer. Even putting stamps on envelopes is computerized. No licking necessary. Do you guys lick anything anymore? I knew the invention of the motorized lollipop was a step in the wrong direction.

After work I guess some people go to bars, or have affairs, or snort expensive stuff. But cheap sober me, I just take my three subways home, this time with mostly tourists or dizzy students whose clothing confuses me. When home, I eat. Then there is more TV and writing, plus looking up old boyfriends on the internet or looking up writer friends and begrudging them their successes (also on the internet). I should brush my teeth before I go to bed, but rarely do. Outside my window, hundreds and hundreds of people in the Astoria beer garden hum like happy drunk hive and I fall asleep.

So that's me in 2009 for you. What about you, you who are reading this in the future? Have we cured cancer yet? Are apes sentient beings? Are we still dressing dogs in raincoats? Are people stacked on top of each other? Do cars still run on gas? Have we used up all our water? Do you still fret about using plastic spoons, still debate whether words need to be banned, still always sucking it in? Are we all still obsessed with thinking we should all be happier than we are? Are we happier?

What about me? Did I ever make it?

If I did, did it make me happier?

