Riding on the number 17 bus
Holgate-Downton, Monday morning route
44 seats and 50 restless riders
24 cell phones, 13 pairs of boots
All along the route the huge brakes squeal, the driver tells the bus to kneel
And springs the doors to pick more people up
Students on their way to school, a builder with a box of tools
And office workers nursing coffee cups

Good morning America, how are you?
Don’t you know me, I’m your heart and guts
I’m the bus they call the number 17 bus
I’ll be down to once an hour with the budget cuts

A father with a toddler’s playing I Spy
And counting trucks to make the minutes pass
A woman in the far back seat is dozing
Her cheek pressed up against the window glass
And in her dreams the buses go like thundering herds of buffalo
The seats are soft and tickets all are free
As swift and sure as any trains, they speed along in their own lanes
And a busdriver is what kids want to be

Good morning... once a day...

Nighttime on the number 17 bus
Here’s our stop, we’ll transfer to the 10
Halfway home and we’ll be there by dinner
Unless the next bus is delayed again
And as the driver stops the bus she nods a brief good night to us
And the radio is playing more bad news
The sun has dipped out of the sky, the brakes wheeze one more weary sigh
This bus has the disappearing transit blues

Good night... once a week... once a year...

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If you miss the bus I’m on, you will know that I am gone,
You can hear the brakes compress a hundred blocks
100 blocks, 100 blocks, 100 blocks, 100 blocks
You can hear the brakes compress 100 blocks

I’m sitting in a Metro station
Got a transfer for my destination, ooo