



The Colossus of New York

By Colson Whitehead

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The Colossus of New York By Colson Whitehead

In a dazzlingly original work of nonfiction, the Pulitzer-Prize winning author of *The Underground Railroad* recreates the exuberance, the chaos, the promise, and the heartbreak of New York. Here is a literary love song that will entrance anyone who has lived in—or spent time—in the greatest of American cities.

A masterful evocation of the city that never sleeps, *The Colossus of New York* captures the city's inner and outer landscapes in a series of vignettes, meditations, and personal memories. Colson Whitehead conveys with almost uncanny immediacy the feelings and thoughts of longtime residents and of newcomers who dream of making it their home; of those who have conquered its challenges; and of those who struggle against its cruelties.

Whitehead's style is as multilayered and multifarious as New York itself: Switching from third person, to first person, to second person, he weaves individual voices into a jazzy musical composition that perfectly reflects the way we experience the city. There is a funny, knowing riff on what it feels like to arrive in New York for the first time; a lyrical meditation on how the city is transformed by an unexpected rain shower; and a wry look at the ferocious battle that is commuting. The plaintive notes of the lonely and dispossessed resound in one passage, while another captures those magical moments when the city seems to be talking directly to you, inviting you to become one with its rhythms.

The Colossus of New York is a remarkable portrait of life in the big city. Ambitious in scope, gemlike in its details, it is at once an unparalleled tribute to New York and the ideal introduction to one of the most exciting writers working today.

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The Colossus of New York By Colson Whitehead Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Whitehead (*The Intuitionist*; *John Henry Days*) lays out a wildly creative view of New York City. To out-of-towners, Gotham is about famous places, but Whitehead's New York is not. It's more about a way of seeing. For example, "No matter how long you have been here, you are a New Yorker the first time you say, That used to be Munsey's, or That used to be the Tic Toc Lounge... when what was there before is more real and solid than what is here now." Whitehead begins with the bus ride into Port Authority, complete with impossibly heavy baggage, bathrooms braved by only the desperate and the seating strategies of experienced bus riders. He cuts to city feelings: the morning's garbage truck noises; the problem of rain; coping with rush hour. When he does write of celebrated places—Central Park, Coney Island, the Brooklyn Bridge—it's for the role they play in our ritual life: when we go, how we are when we're there and how it feels to leave. Whitehead is a master of the minutiae of the mundane. He takes you to the moment of a subway train leaving without you: could you have made it if you'd left a few seconds earlier? Should you take a taxi? You check the tunnel for the next train, fusing with thoughts of time as new passengers accumulate on the platform. This 13-part lyric symphony is like E.B. White's *Here Is New York* set to the beat of Ellington or Cage. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

Lovers of adventurous literary fiction relished Whitehead's novels, *The Intuitionist* (1998) and *John Henry Days* (2001), recognizing him as an original, sardonic, yet compassionate writer. Anointed with a MacArthur "genius" grant, Whitehead now presents a ravishing cycle of imaginative and evocative prose poems in tribute to his home, New York City, the quintessential metropolis of dreams. Writing in short, emphatic sentences, Whitehead riffs poignantly and playfully on myriad strategies for urban survival as he incisively distills the kaleidoscopic frenzy of the city into startlingly vital metaphors and cartoon-crisp analogies. Intensely sensory in his details, wistful and funny in his psychological disclosures, he makes everything come to mythic life, from the fury of rush hour to the strained etiquette of subway riders to Central Park, Times Square, Coney Island, and the Brooklyn Bridge. The mad choreography a rainstorm puts into motion, the rituals of downtown nightclubs, the horrors of the 9-to-5 routine, the waxing and waning of the self against the backdrop of so many other souls are all given a sharp, metaphysical twist in Whitehead's gorgeous rendering of New York as a colossal, ever-metamorphosing phantasm. *Donna Seaman*
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Review

"A tour de force." —Luc Sante, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Pitch-perfect. . . . Utterly authentic. . . . **The Colossus of New York** is quite simply the most delicious 13 bites of the Big Apple I've taken in ages." --Grace Lichenstein, *The Washington Post*

"A love letter to New York. . . . *Colossus* illuminates innumerable little moments that define the city." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

"The cheapest, most stylish ticket to the Big Apple between two covers. . . . It's as if Whitehead's scooped his pen into the collective unconscious of everyone who's ever visited New York." —*Pittsburg Post-Gazette*

"A revelatory ode to Gotham. . . . Whitehead's engaged eyes and precise prose show us the small details we overlook and the large ones we fail to absorb." —*The Miami Herald*

“Smooth, dazzling, evocative. . . . [Whitehead] writes wonderfully, commanding a lush, poetic, mellifluous prose instrument.” —*The Nation*

“[Whitehead is] a scientist of metropolitan encounters, he surveys places where the masses collide, knitting together hundreds of observations and calculations that usually remain unspoken. . . . The musical prose thrums with urban momentum.” —*The Village Voice*

“[Whitehead’s] New York, like Walt Whitman’s or Thomas Pynchon’s or Woody Allen’s, is full of incantatory potential. Even the subway, ordinary, noisy, gruddy inevitability, becomes a ferry to the Underworld.” —*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

“[A] rhapsodic ode to Gotham.” —*Time Out*

“Jazzlike. . . . A vivid impressionistic montage of Manhattan.” —*The Seattle Times*

“Whitehead’s series of vignettes and remembrances paint a perfect visual landscape. . . . A heartfelt tribute to Whitehead’s home.” —*The Oregonian*

“Lyrical. . . . Lean and full of longing. . . . The kind of book that will be . . . passed around, dog-eared, library-tagged, resold, from reader to reader. . . . Whitehead takes a known and specific place and universalizes it, insinuating it into the meshwork of our thoughts in a manner impervious to time and trend.” —*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

“Thrums with anxious excitement and excited anxiety accommodating the noirish, the reportorial, and the epigrammatic. . . . The best passages deserve comparison with E.B. White’s *Here is New York*.” —*Entertainment Weekly*

“Whitehead [is] one of the city’s and country’s finest young writers. . . . [A] guided tour de force.” —*Chicago Tribune*

“Jazzlike. . . . A vivid impressionistic montage of Manhattan.” —*The Seattle Times*

“A revelatory ode to Gotham. . . . Whitehead’s engaged eyes and precise prose show us the small details we overlook and the large ones we fail to absorb.” —*Miami Herald*

“Profound and playful.” —*Los Angeles Times*

“Whitehead’s series of vignettes and remembrances paint a perfect visual landscape. . . . A heartfelt tribute to Whitehead’s home.” —*The Oregonian*

“Rhapsodic love letters . . . elegant, ambitious essays.” —*New York Post*

“Impressionistic . . . [an] affecting homage to E.B. White.” —*New York Magazine* (Top Fall Book Pick)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cora Gallien:

Hey guys, do you want to find a new book to see? Maybe the book with the subject The Colossus of New York suitable to you? The actual book was written by famous writer in this era. Typically the book entitled The Colossus of New York is the main one of several books which everyone reads now. This specific book was inspired lots of people in the world. When you read this publication you will enter the new dimensions that you ever know just before. The author explained their strategy in the simple way, thus all of people can easily recognise the core of this reserve. This book will give you a wide range of information about this world now. To help you to see the represented of the world in this book.

Rosalie Lloyd:

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Ronald Hopkins:

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