

## Croton

*The rails along the eastern side of the Hudson are flattened from the weight of enormous freight trains that for decades have delivered cargo to factories and mills throughout the region. Passenger trains must travel at slow speeds because the rails are so worn and curve as the river curves. If odometers rise, the risk of derailment increases dramatically.*

There are men who spend their lives examining the tracks like kids reaching for flattened pennies. Sometimes they have no choice but to sound the alarm--halt all trains.

“All trains go nowhere today. The passengers already on board and those on the platform must wait for a bus that will take you on your way to your destination. We estimate that you will arrive 30 to 40 minutes after the train would have pulled into your end station.

“You will be reimbursed for this inconvenience with vouchers for future rides.

“All trains go nowhere today. The rail inspector has detected a groove, a beam, a tie, a jutting rock, a penny that didn't flatten and any train that attempts to pass faces a dramatic increase in the risk of derailment. We would be democratic and hold a vote. But it is our liability, our obligation and

“there are few, including myself, who could completely understand the nature of the problem and the extenuating circumstances of braving a crossing. This is a decision made solely by the inspector, who's responsibility it is to ascertain the state of the rails.

He is the ultimate green and the ultimate yellow and the ultimate red. Today he is red. The inspector has done his job without malice and without ulterior motive. He had done his job just as he has on other days when he has been the ultimate green. He has made a purely rational, objective decision to halt all trains.

“Ladies and gentlemen, all trains go nowhere today. When the bus arrives please remain orderly and check your bags with the driver before boarding. The more orderly you are the faster you will reach your final destination. We do apologize for any inconvenience this

“may cause. We realize that you all have  
things to do  
places to be  
meetings to make

We know your time is valuable. Space is compressed time. Waiting is suffering. We are all wanting to get to the next some

“where though our reasons vary. Life I believe is about reaching those destinations. The middle is better left to card games, newspapers, sleepy time--diversions, things that fill the getting there. Means are accidents of ends. Ladies and gentlemen, we apologize for this momentary focus on the means. We are no longer, right now, getting there by

“train. All trains go nowhere today. Today we ask you to take the bus. The bus will arrive in another moment of two. In another moment or two, we will ask you to orderly de-train and to line up beside the bus. Beside the bus, please check your luggage--due to spatial limitations your luggage will not be allowed in the seating area.

“If you have no luggage please be patient. You will be seated. No one can leave until everyone can leave. That is the law of the bus. The law of the trains is different that the law of the bus. And it is the bus that will take you to your final destination today. This was not planned

“but it happened. Please do not contest the decision of the inspector. Today instead of risking the rail, we ask you to risk the highway. Our drivers are skilled, competent, well-paid drivers who have many incentives to bring you and, might I add, themselves, safely and timely to your final destination.

“Please have faith in your driver. Until the bus arrives you have a choice to ride it or to stay here in Croton. If you decide to ride, you commit your autonomy to the driver. Please have faith in your driver. Everything will work out. We have already avoided a potential tragedy; we have already played the safe hand. Now you will win the deck. You will carry on. You will make this passage, this commute, this connection between two points, two moments, two galleries of here.

“Ladies and gentlemen, the bus has arrived. The bus that you will board for the remainder of your travel this morning. Ladies and gentlemen, all trains go nowhere today. Inspector’s orders. The inspector has lit the universal red. The inspector is red. Ladies and gentlemen, please gather your belongings and carefully de-train. the bus is waiting across the platform, down the stairs, beside the station entrance in the bus only zone.

“The bus will take you to your final destination. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. We will reimburse you with vouchers for future travel on the train. If all goes well, if the railway crew can repair the rail, then tomorrow the train will once again offer you passage across the chasm of heres. We will again flatten the pennies left on the tracks by the children. Ladies and gentlemen, the bus is waiting.”

This was created and performed for Tzara, Radioactive Grassroots Bingo, for an audience of 500,000. We’d recorded the JMZ train overhead at Pitt Street and slowed it down to 1/12 the speed. At some point the show changed into a train, then stopped and Croton happened. Thanks to all the Tzara folks and to Laurence who’s generosity in buying the word “Kafkaesque” kept us fully funded. It was also the basis for a piece performed at the Unity Festival in Plattsburg a year later.