



# Traveling Light: On the Road with America's Poor

*Kath Weston*

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## **Traveling Light: On the Road with America's Poor** Kath Weston

How far can you get on two tacos, one Dr. Pepper, and a little bit of conversation? What happens when you're broke and you need to get to a new job, an ailing parent, a powwow, college, or a funeral on the other side of the country? And after decades of globalization, what kind of America will you glimpse through the window on your way? For five years, Kath Weston rode the bus to find out.

Weston's route takes her through northeastern cities buried under layoffs, an immigration raid in the Southwest, an antiwar rally in the capitol, and the path traced by Hurricane Katrina. Like any road story, this one has characters that linger in the imagination: the trucker who has to give up his rig to have an operation; the teenager who can turn any Hollywood movie into a rap song; the homeless veteran who dreams of running his own shrimp boat; the sketch artist who breathes life into African American history; the single mother scrambling for loose change. But *Traveling Light* is not just another book about people stuck in poverty. Rather, it's a book about how people move through poverty and their insights into the sweeping economic changes that affect us all.

The bus is a place where unexpected generosity coexists with pickup lines and scams, where civic debates thrive and injustice finds some of its most acute analysts. Hard-working people rub shoulders with others who rap, sketch, and story new worlds into being. Folded into these poignant narratives are headlines, studies, and statistics that track the intensification of poverty and inequality as the United States enters the twenty-first-century. If sharp-eyed observations and down-to-earth critique-of the health care system, imperialism, the state of the environment, or corporate downsizing-are what you're looking for, Weston suggests the bus is the place to find it. The result is a moving meditation on living poor in the world's wealthiest nation.

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