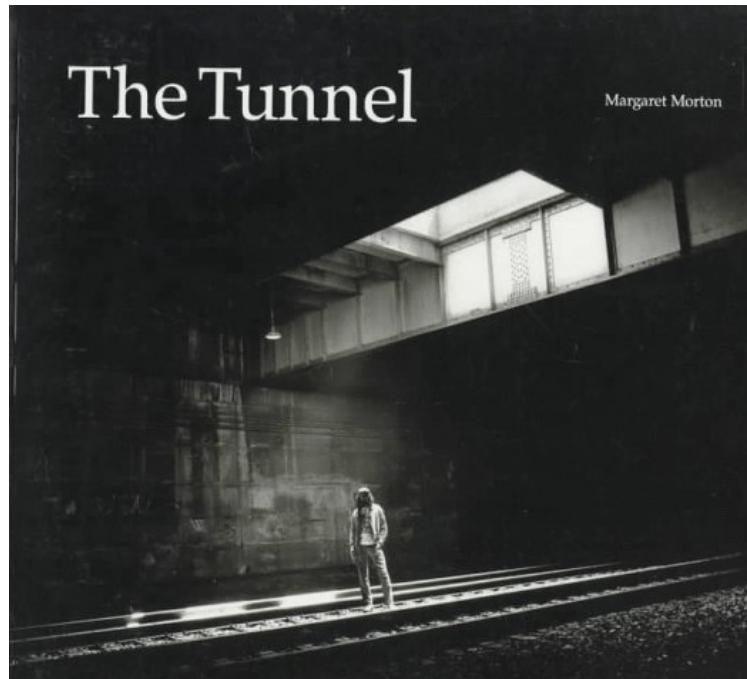


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## The Tunnel: The Underground Homeless of New York City (Architecture of Despair)

*Ms. Margaret Morton*

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**Ms. Margaret Morton : The Tunnel: The Underground Homeless of New York City (Architecture of Despair)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Tunnel: The Underground Homeless of New York City (Architecture of Despair):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you have a home, BE GRATEFUL!!! By Kimmy Kay This book has opened my eyes about the problem of homelessness in America. After seeing the photos and reading the stories of the few homeless people portrayed in the book, I felt frightened and sad at the same time. With America being one of the richest countries in the world, it would seem like NO ONE should be homeless. It takes a lot of guts to live in a tunnel, especially when dealing with rats, filth, the bitter cold days of winter, and mostly darkness. It's also scary when these dwellers have to watch for oncoming trains, especially at night! Reading THE TUNNEL makes me grateful everyday that I have a home to go to. 45 of 56 people found the following review helpful. Wow. By aortoI stumbled across this book in my local library and could not put it down. It is said that we are all connected, that we are each others' mirrors. While looking at the photos in this book I realized that I was looking at a side of myself I had never lived. And yet it was a side I was familiar with... Part of me was drawn to it, intoxicated by it, a deep, dark fantasy brought to light. Here are people living out the darkest fears of mankind, boldly and with conviction. It is truly a remarkable book as no judgments are made; the photos speak volumes and any and all judgments are left up to the reader. 11 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book with great photos. By Hempist In this book the author goes underground in a train tunnel in New York City where a bunch of homeless people are living. She interviews and photographs them in an unobtrusive way that is very respectful of them and their situations. It's a

pretty disgusting place with rats (dead alive), garbage, excrement, and no fresh air. It is really amazing how people have built comfortable housing down there with electricity even! They get hot water dripping from the pipes to shower wash clothes. I liked this book and thought about it for a few days afterwards. The book has a lot of photo's and you'll read it pretty quickly.

One of the oldest surviving homeless communities in New York City has been hidden from public view in an underground train tunnel since the 1970s. Residents dwell in continual darkness along the two-and-a-half mile stretch, which is penetrated only by shafts of light angling through air vents. The residents who have been there longest live alongside the tracks in cinder block bunkers originally used by railroad personnel. Other residents are hidden high above the tracks in recessed niches that are accessible only by climbing. More recent tunnel dwellers have built freestanding structures in the dark alcoves of the tunnel or perched themselves on concrete ledges. This work, the first in a group of three books documenting the lives and living spaces of New York City's homeless population, is narrated entirely by tunnel residents. Margaret Morton's photographs combine with four years of audiotaped oral histories to create an archive of individuals living in an extraordinary social, political and economic condition.

From Publishers Weekly Morton's four-year photographic journey takes place in a structure that was created by Robert Moses in 1934 in order to hide the Hudson River Railroad from the expensive apartments on Riverside Drive. When the rail line was closed down in the 1970s, this concrete tunnel stretching from 72nd Street to 125th Street along the Hudson River became a shelter for a large community of homeless people who are now being forced out as a result of neighborhood pressure. Using both text and 60 duotone photographs, Morton offers a sympathetic, multidimensional and powerfully humane portrait of this invisible neighborhood. Many residents have lived in the tunnel for 10 years or more, creating homes which in both cleanliness and amenities (appliances, pets, art?one residence includes a wall-sized mural based on Goya's moving May 3, 1808) disprove many common assumptions about the homeless. The text, drawn from interviews with the tunnel's residents, is a poignant sometimes surprisingly optimistic accompaniment to her pictures of a persistently nocturnal place pierced by rays of light. "Once the weather really breaks and gets warm, certain seeds will drop through the grate from up top and things sprout over there," says one resident, adding, "I always throw the melon seeds of the watermelon, and they sprout and the vines will grow down the hill. And they always end up dying, but whatever. It's just good to see something green over there. That's why I do it all the time." This is an impressive suite of photographs and voices that need to be seen and heard. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Like a present-day Jacob Riis, Morton (art, Cooper Union) seeks to bring to light the hidden lives of New York City's desperately poor. In an Amtrak tunnel, stretching 50 blocks under the West Side Highway beside the Hudson River, a group of homeless have managed to carve out for themselves a community unlike any other in New York. Morton enters their lives and their cavernous, dark, and often well-appointed dwellings. Living as scavengers, they have managed to find furniture and pots and pans. They recycle cans to buy food and sometimes liquor and drugs. Morton combines photographs of the tunnel with soliloquys from 14 residents, who discuss their lives and jobs before the tunnel, plans for life afterwards, and the reasons they arrived there in the first place. At times it seems that their musings are edited to hold the reader's sympathy; however, by and large, the accounts feel genuine. The reproductions of Morton's well-composed photographs are a little flat. Recommended for urban studies collections. ?Adam Mazmanian, "Library Journal" Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.