

Walter Barks at Buses
by Sheila Cowley

Read Along Script

Walter barks at buses.
Any time, and any day.

Walter barks
in the dark
when the 4:12 trundles by
steaming with the coffee trapped in travel mugs

Walter barks in broad daylight
when the 9:19 bus passes
stuffed with stragglers
late to work
and sleepy college students (*yawn*)

Walter barks at rush hour
and Walter barks at noon

It's the noise
that drives him crazy
vrruh vrruh vrruh

and vrrroo vrooo vrooo

the hoo-WEEEEEE-shuk of the air brakes

and the KRREE-chukk as the bus door opens
four floors down from Wendy's window

It makes Walter feel so small

Wendy works from home
She tries not to schedule phone calls
when the 2:08 bus goes by
or the 3:16

Wendy takes her coffee breaks
when Walter barks at buses
at 10:27
and 2:42

But sometimes
it is difficult

– Bark! Bark! Bark!

(sighs)

All the bus drivers know Walter
and they go HONK!! ONK! A-OOO-GAH!

That makes Walter bark! much harder
so that Wendy's window rattles
and her coffee cup goes
rackle!
splushhhh
and Wendy goes
"Oh, darnit! Walter!"

– Bark!!

One day Walter barked so hard
as the 1:14 got closer

vrruh vrruh vrruh

and vrrroo vrooo vrooo

hoo-WEEEEEE-shuk

KRREE-chukk

HONK!! ONK! A-OOO-GAH!

BARK! BARK!! BARK!! BARK!!!

Walter barked so hard that Wendy's laptop shorted out
in the middle of a totally important online meeting
that she didn't want to go to
anyway

So Wendy shoved her chair back
rrrrkkk!

grabbed Walter round the middle
wooop!

plucked his leash up
bingle! bonk!

and pounded down the stairs
pum pum pum!

to the bus stop
as the bus pulled up
hoo-WEEEEEE-shuk

– Howl !

The bus door opened
KRREE-chukk

The bus driver waved at Walter

Walter had a mouthful of big barks
just bursting to come out
but Walter swallowed them

Walter's ears went up
as Wendy waved her bus pass at the driver

and the driver waved her on
with Walter

The bus smelled like rubber, gas,
and air conditioning

like the lady with her coffee
and the man with a ham sandwich
in his lunchbox

and the baby with a bottle
and right now, like Wendy

Walter sat in Wendy's lap
and the bus drove off
with Walter!

vrruh vrruh vrruh

and vrrroo vrooo vrooo

Walter watched as they drove by the water
where it smelled like seagulls
diesel
shrimp and mud

He saw the horizon
So much farther
than the corner he and Wendy turned around at
when they went out walking

Walter watched
the people outside
walking
jogging
swishing by on bikes

Shoo-tinkle ding-ding-ding!
Walter saw a lot of buses

vrruh vrruh vrruh-ing
vrrroo vrooo vrooo-ing

but he didn't want to bark
because being on his bus made Walter feel much bigger

Walter watched as people on the bus got off
at a hospital
woo-ooo woo-ooo *[a siren]*

at a university
that smelled like books
and socks

and at a grocery store
that smelled like everything

Walter's tummy rumbled
floom-floom-burble

Wendy sneaked Walter a treat
chomp! chomp!

Walter watched as
the bus passed musicians
ooba-dooba-dooba-oo

he saw mimes
!

and jugglers
woop! woop!

Walter was especially interested in the jugglers.
Wendy gave Walter his ball to hold.

The bus driver put the brakes on
hoo-WEEEEEE-shuk

and pulled the bus up under a big tree

Wendy thanked the bus driver as they got off.

“You bark at me every day,” the bus driver told Walter. “But it’s different when you’re on the bus, yes?”

Walter smelled the bus driver. She smelled like peanut butter sandwiches.
Walter let the driver scratch behind his ears.

“Nice to meet you, Walter.”
Walter’s wet nose gave her hand a gentle nudge.

Wendy and Walter got out of the bus.
The driver waved and creaked the door closed.
KRREE-chukk

The bus honked
HONK!! ONK! A-OOO-GAH!

Walter
didn’t bark

Wendy put Walter down on the grass. It smelled like a thousand sneakers,
and a peanut butter picnic.

Walter quickly flipped over and had a great big wiggle.

“Bath day,” Wendy sighed.

Walter watched as
people in the park did t'ai chi
as third graders danced
and a Weimeraner strutted by

Walter smelled an empanada,
and falafel,
and a bean and cheese burrito
that was almost three days old!

Walter smelled a big dog
and a small dog
and that Weimeraner

and pulled Wendy through the park
She enjoyed the trees and flowers

Walter liked the smell of picnics, past and present.

And now Walter barks Hello!
at buses

and the drivers all
HONK!! ONK! A-OOO-GAH!

And on weekends, Walter enjoys riding on a bus with Wendy
to see where the 8:16 goes
and discover where the 2:12 bus can take him.

Smelling parks that smell like picnics.

Rrrrrrackk! Rackk! Rackk!

Walter, wait – don't chase that skateboard!

– Woops!

– Howl !!!

– THE END –