

STEVEN
KASHER
GALLERY



HOW NEW YORK BREAKS YOUR HEART: A PHOTOGRAPHIC ELEGY
FOR THE CITY OF ELECTRIC BEAUTY WITH AN EDGE OF SORROW

By Maria Popova, March 13, 2018



“A poem,” E.B. White wrote in his timeless 1949 love letter to New York, “compresses much in a small space and adds music, thus heightening its meaning. The city is like poetry.” The poetics of any city, but especially of this city, springs from its glorious, unmeasured humanity. The New York poem is sometimes a serenade to loneliness, sometimes an ode to unsung heroes, and always an elegy in the classic poetic sense of celebration and lamentation welded together. That electric beauty with an edge of sorrow comes alive in *How New York Breaks Your Heart* (public library) by Bill Hayes.

After his stirring memoir of Oliver Sacks and New York, Hayes — himself an elegant science writer as well as a photographer — turns his sensitive, sympathetic lens to the human poetics coursing through the streets of the iconic city

STEVEN
KASHER
GALLERY

at all hours of the day and night, across every social stratum, every age, every feeling-tone. From the hipsters and the homeless and the protesters and the lovers — oh so many lovers — emerges a chorus of humanity singing the siren song of New York.

“First, it lets you fall in love with it.

And lets you think it loves you back.

You begin to forget the sorrow that brought you to New York in the first place and the love you feel for the city becomes the love you feel for another man.

But then, when he is taken from you late one summer night,
there is New York — right there, outside your window.”

Complement *How New York Breaks Your Heart* with Hayes’s splendid prose counterpart, *Insomniac City*, then revisit Walt Whitman’s sensual ode to New York.