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BOOKLIST REVIEW: HOW NEW YORK BREAKS YOUR HEART

By Annie Bostrom, February 2018



Hayes' New York City portraits were a small but significant piece of his patchwork memoir, *Insomniac City* (2017); here they're the whole show. A handful of sentences accompany more than 100 full-color portraits of strangers and one photograph of Oliver Sacks, Hayes' lover, whose illness and death weighed heavily in *Insomniac City*. Most of Hayes' subjects are powerfully aware, looking at the camera poised but never posed. Some were clearly going about their days when Hayes asked to take their pictures, and kept right on doing so with barely an interruption. Hayes' subjects are old and young, friends, couples, and kids who are stoic, joyful, annoyed, and amused. In his spare lines, Hayes' story emerges: of coming to a new city, falling in love with a man and losing him, and the endless serendipity of photographing strangers who, with this one small act, become familiar. There's wistfulness in Hayes' title, for the beauty that breaking reveals. With his photos, Hayes seems to say that if a city breaks your heart, look to its people to piece it back together again.