



# The Sound I Saw

*Roy Decarava*

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## **The Sound I Saw** Roy DeCarava

This is the long-awaited publication of a moving masterwork by one of the greatest photographers of our time. Conceived, designed, written and made by hand as a prototype by master photographer Roy DeCarava (b.1919) in the early 1960s, yet unpublished for nearly half a century, *The Sound I Saw* has largely existed as a legend among the cognoscenti of the photography world. Presented as a stream of 196 soulful images interspersed with DeCarava's own evocative poetry, the book is, in its form and effect, the printed equivalent of jazz. "This is a book about people, about jazz, and about things. The work between its covers tries to present images for the head and for the heart and, like its subject matter, is particular, subjective, and individual," writes the author. DeCarava is a life-long New Yorker who from his immediate world creates images that transcend the specific to depict universal themes of joy, anticipation, pain and survival. Largely unpublished, he was first recognized for his images of daily life in Harlem (the subject of *The Sweet Flypaper of Life*, his 1955 collaboration with Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes) and portraits of musicians like Duke Ellington and Billie Holiday. It is these two themes, Harlem and jazz, interwoven and inseparable, that are the ostensible subject of the book. However, the seemingly casual yet deeply felt compositions and the deep, rich tones of DeCarava's photographs stir emotions that resonate far beyond one neighbourhood and one era.

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