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The Best Books for Photography Lovers

William Meyers recommends new books from 2015.

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“Alexey Titarenko: The City is a Novel” (Damiani, 208 pages, \$60) is a wonderful title for this book. Mr. Titarenko’s pictures of St. Petersburg, Venice, Havana, and New York are not about the buildings, streets and parks of those cities per se, but about them as sites of narrative. In most of these images one feels the setting is a place where something has happened, or is happening, or is going to happen; there is a theatricality about them. The technical device Mr. Titarenko uses to achieve this effect is the long exposure, keeping the lens open so that moving figures are blurred, sometimes appearing almost as wraiths. He is also a brilliant printer, able to control the tonal values in his prints to emphasize and deemphasize particular elements. In an affecting autobiographical essay he tells how reading Dostoevsky and listening to Shostakovich freed him from the Soviet mindset to become truly creative.