

'Nine Lives: Death and Life in New Orleans'

By Dan Baum (Random House, \$26)

Baum's coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath for *The New Yorker* remain a stunning achievement, as well as being the definitive account of the disaster. As he observed New Orleans and its people, he looked beyond the devastation to ask why citizens of the region are so emotionally attached to a place, which even before the storm was one of the most corrupt, impoverished, and violent corners of America. In documenting the lives of nine people over four decades bracketed by two major storms, Hurricane Betsy which struck the Gulf Coast in the 1960s, and the more recent Katrina, he found not only what was lost in the storms but also what was saved. This incredible book is so well-written, it will leave you breathless.