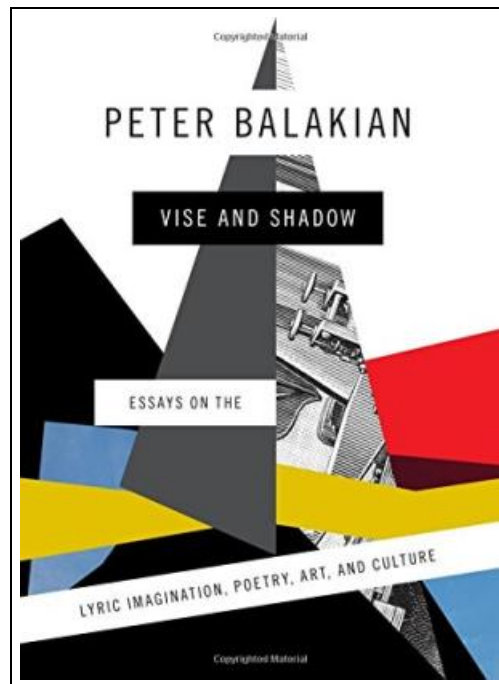


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The University of Chicago Press, United States, 2015. Paperback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Peter Balakian is a renowned poet, scholar, and memoirist; but his work as an essayist often prefigures and illuminates all three. I think of vise and shadow as two dimensions of the lyric (literary and visual) imagination, he writes in the preface to this collection, which brings together essayistic writings produced over the course of twenty-five years. Vise, as in grabbing and holding with pressure, but also in the sense of the vise-grip of the imagination, which can yield both clarity and knowledge. Consider the vise-grip of some of the poems of our best lyric poets, how language might be put under pressure as carbon might be put under pressure to create a diamond. And shadow, the second half of the title: both as noun, the shaded or darker portion of the picture or view or perspective, partial illumination and partial darkness ; and as verb, to shadow, to trail secretly as an inseparable companion or a force that follows something with fidelity; to cast a dark light on something-a person, an event, an object, a form in nature. Vise and Shadow draws into conversation such disparate figures as W B Yeats, Hart Crane, Joan Didion, Primo Levi, Robert Rauschenberg, Bob Dylan, Elia Kazan, and Arshile Gorky, revealing how the lyric imagination of these artists grips experience, shadows history, and casts its own type of light, creating one of the deepest kinds of human knowledge and sober truth. In these elegantly written essays, Balakian offers a fresh way to think about how the power of poetry, art, and the lyrical imagination illuminate history, trauma, and memory.

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