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## "No Sign" Back Cover

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*Peter Balakian's first collection since his Pulitzer Prize-winning Ozone Journal*

Balakian understands the bewildered music of our times,  
and *No Sign*, more than any other contemporary book of poetry,  
teaches us about the properties of time; we are inside the speech that is  
addressing time and opposing it, witnessing it, and walking two steps ahead.

This 'time-sense' is explored with depth in the brilliant title poem.  
Balakian is able to praise the world though he knows its "bitter history."  
And praise he does! The lyricism here is of utter beauty.  
*No Sign* is a splendid, necessary book. —Ilya Kaminsky

In *No Sign*, Peter Balakian continues to write intellectually challenging poems of  
"bright unbearable reality" that are part of his ongoing conversation in American poetry.

They have the horizontal continuum of history, like Walcott and Heaney,  
but they also have verticality which arrests time and  
connects with the demonic and divine. —Bruce Smith

"A voice of witness which also makes room for an  
irrepressible sensory imagination." —Sven Birkerts

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For over 40 years, Peter Balakian has been writing layered, expansive poems that take on trauma, historical memory, and the difficult complexities of our time. Indeed, the Pulitzer committee's description of *Ozone Journal* might well describe any of Balakian's books, including his newest: "a collection of poems that bear witness to the old losses and tragedies that lie beneath a global age of danger and uncertainty."

In his recent books, Balakian's inventive, long, multi-sectioned poems ingest traumatic events that include 9/11, the AIDS crisis of the '80s, the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide, climate change, and the failures of American foreign wars. Out of this darkness, his work affirms the power of art, the endurance of love, and the possibilities of transcendent seeing.

The poems of *No Sign*, Balakian's first new collection since winning the Pulitzer Prize for *Ozone Journal*, wrestle with current culture and politics, including challenges for the human species and the planet amid planetary transmutation and the impact of mass violence.

Whether meditating on the sensual nature of fruits and vegetables, the COVID-19 pandemic, the Armenian genocide, James Baldwin in France, or Arshile Gorky in New York, Balakian's layered, elliptical language, wired phrases, and shifting tempos engage both life's harshness and beauty and define his inventive and distinctive style.

At this collection's heart is "No Sign," the latest in Balakian's series of long-form poems, following "A-Train/Ziggurat/ Elegy" (*Ziggurat*, 2010) and "Ozone Journal" (*Ozone Journal*, 2015). This dialogical, multi-sectioned poem set in the cliffs of the New Jersey Palisades finds an estranged couple encountering each other for the first time in years.

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**Peter Balakian** is the author of eight books of poems, four books of prose, three collaborative translations, and several edited books. *Ozone Journal* won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for poetry. *Black Dog of Fate*, a memoir won the 1998 PEN/Martha Albrand Prize for the Art of the Memoir, and was a best book of the year for the *New York Times*, the *LA Times*, and *Publisher's Weekly*. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response* won the 2005 Raphael Lemkin Prize and was a *New York Times* Notable Book and a *New York Times* Best Seller. His translation of Grigoris Balakian's *Armenian Golgotha: A Memoir of the Armenian Genocide* was a *Washington Post* book of the year. He is Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities, Professor of English and Director of Creative Writing at Colgate University.

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