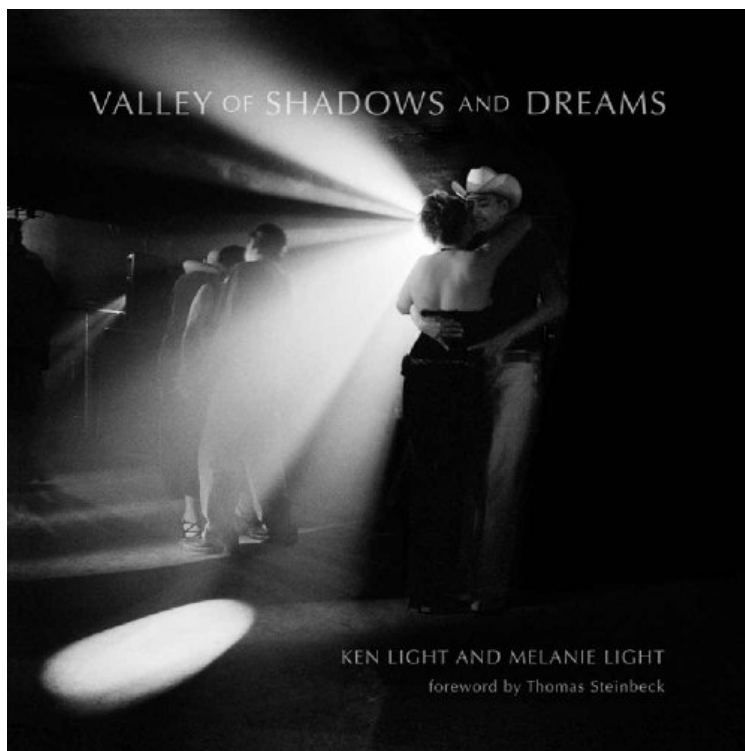


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Valley of Shadows and Dreams

Melanie Light

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Melanie Light : Valley of Shadows and Dreams before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Valley of Shadows and Dreams:

Ken and Melanie Light have embarked on a photographic and literary exploration of a region known for its agricultural plenty--and the marginalization of its people. In Valley of Shadows and Dreams they dig deep into the harsh truths of farm workers' daily experience, revealing a deep sense of anger and betrayal toward the destructive legacies of politics, bureaucracy, and control. The Lights show us once-viable farmland transformed into neighborhoods full of empty tract homes that no workers can afford. We are confronted head-on with the devastating results of foreclosure. We stand in the Community Center food line in Mendota, we slip magically onto a midnight dance floor with migrant workers in Tulare, and we sail out across the San Joaquin River on a rope swing. These photos and stories capture scenes of hardworking people fighting to preserve their livelihoods and traditions. With an introduction by Thomas Steinbeck and impassioned essays by Melanie Light about the importance of recognizing and rectifying the cycle of employers oppressing workers, Valley of Shadows and Dreams uncovers the realities of life in this troubled but vital region that are often hidden and difficult to capture.