



River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West

Rebecca Solnit

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powerfully defined contemporary society.

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The world as we know it today began in California in the late 1800s, and Eadweard Muybridge had a lot to
do with it. This striking assertion is at the heart of Rebecca Solnit's new book, which weaves together
biography, history, and fascinating insights into art and technology to create a boldly original portrait of
America on the threshold of modernity. The story of Muybridge—who in 1872 succeeded in capturing highspeed motion photographically—becomes a lens for a larger story about the acceleration and
industrialization of everyday life. Solnit shows how the peculiar freedoms and opportunities of post—Civil
War California led directly to the two industries—Hollywood and Silicon Valley—that have most



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