



Wanderlust: A History of Walking

By Rebecca Solnit



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A passionate, thought provoking exploration of walking as a political and cultural activity, from the author of *Men Explain Things to Me*

Drawing together many histories--of anatomical evolution and city design, of treadmills and labyrinths, of walking clubs and sexual mores--Rebecca Solnit creates a fascinating portrait of the range of possibilities presented by walking. Arguing that the history of walking includes walking for pleasure as well as for political, aesthetic, and social meaning, Solnit focuses on the walkers whose everyday and extreme acts have shaped our culture, from philosophers to poets to mountaineers. She profiles some of the most significant walkers in history and fiction--from Wordsworth to Gary Snyder, from Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet to Andre Breton's Nadja--finding a profound relationship between walking and thinking and walking and culture. Solnit argues for the necessity of preserving the time and space in which to walk in our ever more car-dependent and accelerated world.



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The ability to walk on two legs over long distances distinguishes *Homo sapiens* from other primates, and indeed from every other species on earth. That ability has also yielded some of the best creative work of our species: the lyrical ballads of the English romantic poets, composed on long walks over hill and dale; the speculations of the peripatetic philosophers; the meditations of footloose Chinese and Japanese poets; the exhortations of Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman.

Rebecca Solnit, a thoughtful writer and spirited walker, takes her readers on a leisurely journey through the prehistory, history, and natural history of bipedal motion. Walking, she observes, affords its practitioners an immediate reward--the ability to observe the world at a relaxed gait, one that allows us to take in sights, sounds, and smells that we might otherwise pass by. It provides a vehicle for much-needed solitude and private thought. For the health-minded, walking affords a low-impact and usually pleasant way of shedding a few pounds and stretching a few muscles. It is an essential part of the human adventure--and one that has, until now, been too little documented.

Written in a time when landscapes and cities alike are designed to accommodate automobiles and not pedestrians, Solnit's extraordinary book is an enticement to lace up shoes and set out on an aimless, meditative stroll of one's own. --Gregory McNamee

From Publishers Weekly

Walking, as Thoreau said and Solnit elegantly demonstrates, inevitably leads to other subjects. This pleasing and enlightening history of pedestrianism unfolds like a walking conversation with a particularly well-informed companion with wide-ranging interests. Walking, says Solnit (*Savage Dreams; A Book of Migrations*), is the state in which the mind, the body and the world are aligned; thus she begins with the long historical association between walking and philosophizing. She briefly looks at the fossil evidence of human evolution, pointing to the ability to move upright on two legs as the very characteristic that separated humans from the other beasts and has allowed us to dominate them. She looks at pilgrims, poets, streetwalkers and demonstrators, and ends up, surprisingly, in Las Vegas--or maybe not so surprisingly in that city of tourists, since "Tourism itself is one of the last major outposts of walking." Inevitably, as these words suggest, Solnit's focus isn't pedestrianism's past but its prognosis--the way in which the culture of walking has evolved out of the disembodiment of everyday life resulting from "automobilization and suburbanization." Familiar as that message sounds, Solnit delivers it without the usual ecological and ideological pieties. Her book captures, in the ease and cadences of its prose, the rhythms of a good walk. The relationship between walking and thought and its expression in words is the underlying theme to which she repeatedly returns. "Language is like a road," she writes; "it cannot be perceived all at once because it unfolds in time, whether heard or read." Agent: Bonnie Nadell. 4-city author tour. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Solnit (*A Book of Migrations*) casts a wide net in an attempt to understand what walking contributes to the human experience. She argues that creativity has been linked to walking from human's first steps and that, now, our speeding culture discourages people from taking the time to walk. If this happens we risk losing a critical tie to ourselves as well as our communities and landscapes. Solnit's smart and entertaining points come to life through her study of the many literary references to walking (by such authors as Rousseau, Wordsworth, Woolf, Muir, and many others) and a social overview of the many ways people have

incorporated walking into their lives (through pilgrimage, wilderness hikes, political marches, and city strolls, to name a few). Each of these modes of walking is a vibrant part of this compelling, sometimes meandering, social history. Throughout, Solnit clearly enjoys the different feelings and philosophical thoughts that walking evokes, often telling stories of her own walks along the way. Personable, but challenging and serious, this is recommended for all libraries. [See profile of Solnit on page 185.--Ed.]--Rebecca Miller, "Library Journal."

---Rebecca Miller, "Library Journal"

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Weston:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material if you want something to explain what yours problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don't have spare time to accomplish others business, it is make one feel bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? All people has many questions above. They must answer that question simply because just their can do that. It said that about publication. Book is familiar in each person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this kind of Wanderlust: A History of Walking to read.

Geraldine Davis:

The actual book Wanderlust: A History of Walking will bring that you the new experience of reading a book. The author style to clarify the idea is very unique. If you try to find new book you just read, this book very acceptable to you. The book Wanderlust: A History of Walking is much recommended to you you just read. You can also get the e-book in the official web site, so you can quicker to read the book.

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Brandy Felts:

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you are read that hurriedly you can have whole information in it. Doesn't mean it only will give you straight forward sentences but tough core information with lovely delivering sentences. Having Wanderlust: A History of Walking in your hand like having the world in your arm, details in it is not ridiculous just one. We can say that no publication that offer you world with ten or fifteen second right but this publication already do that. So , this can be good reading book. Hey there Mr. and Mrs. stressful do you still doubt in which?

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