

Slow Days, Fast Company: The World, The Flesh, and L.A. (New York Review Books Classics)

Eve Babitz

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There was a time when no one burned hotter than Eve Babitz. Possessing skin that radiated "its own kind of moral laws," spectacular teeth, and a figure that was the stuff of legend, she seduced seemingly everyone who was anyone in Los Angeles for a long stretch of the 1960s and '70s. But there was one man who proved elusive, and so Babitz did what she did best, she wrote him a book. She also pulled off a remarkable sleight of hand: Slow Days, Fast Company far exceeds its mash-note premise. It is a full-fledged and full-bodied evocation of a bygone Southern California. In ten sun-baked, Santa Ana wind-swept sketches, Babitz recreates a Los Angeles of movie stars distraught over their success; socialites on three-day drug binges, evading their East Coast banking husbands; soap-opera actors worried that tomorrow's script will kill them off; Italian femme fatales even more fatal than she is. And she even leaves L.A. sometimes, spending an afternoon at the house of flawless Orange County suburbanites, a day among the grape pickers of the Central Valley, a weekend in Palm Springs where her dreams of romance fizzle and her only solace is Virginia Woolf. In the end it doesn't matter if Babitz ever gets the guy—she seduces us.



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