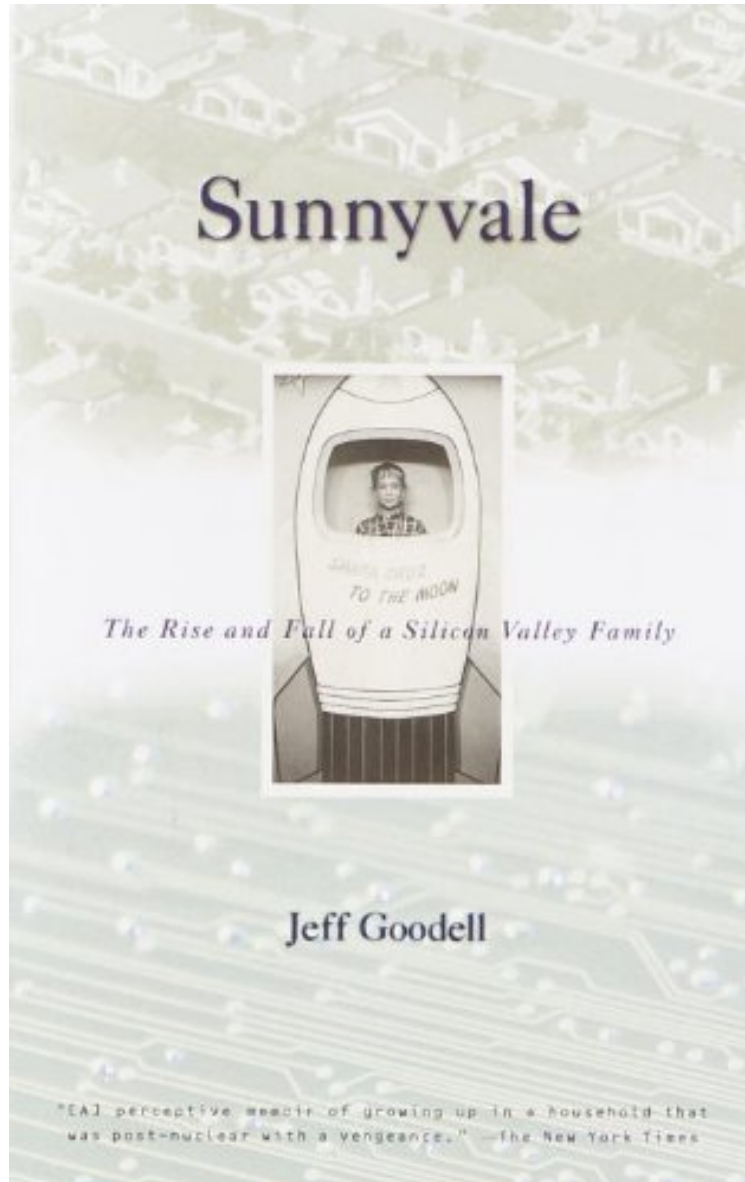


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Sunnyvale: The Rise and Fall of a Silicon Valley Family

Jeff Goodell

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Jeff Goodell : Sunnyvale: The Rise and Fall of a Silicon Valley Family before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sunnyvale: The Rise and Fall of a Silicon Valley Family:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Lovely, touching story, but ...By BhuvanShomeGoodell has written a wonderful, very touching saga about his family. Anyone with a dysfunctional family background will be able to empathize with him. But I also see it as a lost chance. It could have been a classic (or at least a local classic). But it only remains a good read. The difference is lack of vivid imagery. Steinbeck's "Cannery Row" comes alive because of the

vivid imagery he conjures of the people, and the area. Goodell fails dismally at describing the beautiful Santa Clara Valley area (or maybe he didn't even try). There is absolutely no local color. But still, I would highly recommend this book, just for its rich touching story. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read from a unique time in Silicon Valley. By Honest Review. Great read from a unique time in Silicon Valley. Thank you Jeff ... Fremont High Class of 81, grew up by Ortega Park. 17 of 17 people found the following review helpful. A very powerful, beautifully written book about family. By A Customer. Silicon Valley provides an eerie backdrop for this book, which is about family, and the disappointments, tragedies and shattered expectations that are so much a part of family life. Goodell takes the wind to the media hype about Silicon Valley as a place of unbounded wealth and joy, but that isn't the point of this book, which reviewers are correctly calling harrowing and beautiful. The target is family life, and our universal search to come to terms with the things that happen to our families. In Goodell's case, his family fell apart after his parents were divorced, and his brother brought a painful tragedy to what was a sad and difficult situation. This book reads like a terrific mystery, which is what it is. Why does tragedy strike our loved ones, how should we respond, and how can we move on? Goodell deals with these questions in wonderfully frank and beautifully written ways. This transcends memoir and speaks very powerfully to anybody who wrestles with the question of family. Personally, I found the juxtaposition of the Goodell family tragedy against the explosion of wealth and greed in Silicon Valley to be a very powerful combination. I felt I was reading the "Perfect Storm" set in the hopelessly naive expectations of an oblivious, helpless California family on the eve of one of the greatest explosions of wealth and cultural change in history. Great book for any parent and any kid.

In Sunnyvale, California, in 1979, Jeff Goodell's family lived quietly on Meadowlark Lane, unaware that their town was soon to become ground zero in the digital revolution. Over the course of the next decade, as Silicon Valley boomed, the Goodell family unraveled. Splintered by their parent's divorce, Jeff and his siblings careen toward self-destruction, while their parents end up on opposite sides of the technological divide: their mother succeeds beyond her wildest dreams at "a small company with a dopey rainbow-colored logo," called Apple, while their father refuses to keep up with the times and loses his landscaping business. Affecting and personal, Sunnyvale is a portrait of one family's fate in a brutally Darwinian world. It is also a thoughtful examination of what has happened to the American family in the face of the technological revolution. From the Trade Paperback edition.

.com In the town of Sunnyvale, in the heart of Silicon Valley, every day brings sunshine and progress, and everything is supposed to work out okay. Not surprisingly, this thoughtful and deeply affecting memoir tells the story of a family that falls apart (or rather "off the Norman Rockwell easel") in the midst of this fantasy. When Mrs. Goodell decides to get a divorce, she blasts off from Planet Marriage and hitches her future to the embryonic Apple Computer company. The other family members, however, quickly unravel. Jeff, the oldest son, quits his Apple job for the casinos of Lake Tahoe, fully believing he is "leaving behind a bunch of nerdy machine heads who were destined to live small, narrow lives empty of romance or mystery." His father, a landscape architect and a family man devastated by the divorce, finds himself becoming an anachronism in the Silicon Valley chip-and-code culture. And the sensitive youngest son, Jerry, plunges into drugs, alcohol, and sexual experimentation. While there are amusing anecdotes about what happens in the cubicles of the computer industry, Goodell focuses his clear eyes and likable style on the powerful relations of family members in crisis--on the corrosive power of competition between siblings, the disillusionment of seeing a parent fail, the despair of witnessing a loved one self-destruct, and the inevitable backlash that happens when we try to run away. Goodell himself is party to this universal irony for, despite trying to flee Silicon Valley culture, he's become one of its best-known chroniclers. And in the Valley, he finds the greatest metaphor for escape: I feel like I'm looking down into the heart of a vast electronic hive, where the honey is time: faster chips, faster software, faster wires. It's not about efficiency--it is about cheating death. Dreaming of speed is the way engineers dream of immortality. The men in Goodell's family are, in their own ways, at odds with this reigning faith. Goodell has given us a powerful and ultimately redemptive example of a family caught in the vortex of rapidly changing times and the tragedy wrought on those left behind. --Lesley Reed From Publishers Weekly. The Silicon Valley bubble burst early for Goodell, who tossed away a plum gig at the pre-IPO Apple Computer to hustle blackjack tables at Lake Tahoe, becoming "the worst-dressed dealer in the state of Nevada." Yet that missed opportunity has been the least of his worries, he relates in this deeply emotional memoir about the ups and downs. Mostly downs. A of a "suburban American post-divorce, post-nuclear family." The implicit optimism in the name Sunnyvale, the Valley suburb where Goodell grew up in the late 1970s, proves grimly ironic as his father, a failed landscape contractor, dives into an emotional tailspin after a 1979 divorce and eventually succumbs to lung cancer. His mother, meanwhile, suffers scars from a burnt-out marriage she never wanted. The centerpiece of the book is Goodell's "nightmare of co-dependency" with his wildly unstable younger brother, a promising musician who pickled himself with alcohol before he was ravaged by AIDS. Caught in the middle of it all, Goodell describes himself as a vacant lot polluted by family toxins; this memoir is his remediation project, an attempt to sift through the lingering emotional sludge in search of some purifying understanding of the family's implosion. While the high-tech Valley subtext is not without interest (Apple gurus Steve Jobs and Steve

Wozniak make cameo appearances), Goodell's real subject is the paternal negligence that was carried from father to son through three generations in his family. Now a successful journalist in New York with children of his own, Goodell writes with more raw power than literary polish, ending with a hopeful vow to break the cycle of dysfunctional dads. Agent, Flip Brophy. 5-city tour. (July) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Just when we were starting to think that everybody in Silicon Valley must be a carefree gazillionaire, Goodell comes along to root us in reality with this sobering portrait of his dysfunctional Sunnyvale, CA. Goodell (*The Cyberthief and the Samurai*), a contributing editor to *Rolling Stone*, presents a moving memoir of his family's growth and disintegration over the last 40 years, paradoxically juxtaposed against the screaming, relentless drive to wealth and success in his hometown, which happens to be in the middle of Silicon Valley. From the belly of the beast comes a mindful story that will resonate with countless thousands of other families as they struggle with multiple divorces, alcohol and drug abuse, parent-child identity traumas, and emotionally distant relatives. While certainly not as extraordinary a memoir as Mary Karr's *The Liar's Club* (LJ 6/1/95), this heartfelt yet respectful family portrait is an admirable addition to the rapidly growing ranks of books that cathartically write out the traumas of the past. It's useful to be reminded how bound we are to family and how common family anguish is, permeating even the gilt-edged homes in Silicon Valley. DDale Farris, Groves, TX Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.