



# The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating

By Elisabeth Tova Bailey

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**The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating** By Elisabeth Tova Bailey

*"The hero of this story enters . . . well . . . rather slowly. It doesn't don a cape or sport a lightening bolt on its chest, but its effects are monumental. The actions of this tiny mollusk become all-consuming . . . Everything about this slip of a book is unassuming, yet its petite size, prose, and characters rise like quiet giants from its pages."* --BookBrowse.com

In a work that beautifully demonstrates the rewards of closely observing nature, Elisabeth Bailey shares an inspiring and intimate story of her uncommon encounter with a *Neohelix albolabris* -a common woodland snail.

While an illness keeps her bedridden, Bailey watches a wild snail that has taken up residence on her nightstand. As a result, she discovers the solace and sense of wonder that this mysterious creature brings and comes to a greater understanding of her own confined place in the world.

Intrigued by the snail-s molluscan anatomy, cryptic defenses, clear decision making, hydraulic locomotion, and mysterious courtship activities, Bailey becomes an astute and amused observer, providing a candid and engaging look into the curious life of this underappreciated small animal.-

Told with wit and grace, *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* is a remarkable journey of survival and resilience, showing us how a small part of the natural world illuminates our own human existence and provides an appreciation of what it means to be fully alive.

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## The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating By Elisabeth Tova Bailey Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

*\*Starred Review\** At age 34, Bailey was stricken with a mysterious virus while on a trip to Europe. Her healthy life had been full of activity, and now just the thought of getting up to get something was exhaustive. When a friend found some violets and brought her one in a pot, she also added a live snail below the violet's leaves. Bailey wondered why she needed a snail, but after square holes began to appear in a letter propped on the violet's pot, it occurred to Bailey that the snail needed food. She put a withered flower in the saucer below, and when the snail began to eat, Bailey realized that she could hear it eating—it was the sound of someone very small munching on celery. Soon the author realized she was attached, the snail providing an oasis of calm for her frantic and frustrated thoughts. She worried that the snail's world was too artificial, so her caregiver created a woodland terrarium. Not only did the snail have a new home but Bailey had a new game: hide-and-seek with a snail. She began to read about snails, learning from scientists, early naturalists, poets, and writers, and found herself beginning to understand a snail's world. And when her snail began to lay eggs, Bailey discovered that she might be the first person to record observations of a snail tending its eggs. This beautiful little book will not only make snail lovers of its readers, it will make them appreciate the small things in life. --Nancy Bent

From Kirkus Reviews

A charming, delicate meditation on the meaning of life. -- Kirkus Review

Review

*"An exquisite meditation on the restorative connection between nature and humans . . . with sentences of stunning lyrical beauty.* --Huffington Post

*"How interesting can a snail be? Entirely captivating, as it turns out. [Bailey] is a marvelous writer, and the marriage of science and poetic mysticism that characterizes this small volume is magical . . ."* --Star Tribune

*"Wait, did you say a wild snail? As opposed to domestic? Well, I'm intrigued."* --"Books for Dudes," Library Journal

*"[Bailey] honors the gastropod with a poetic history of its short, astonishing life."* --MORE Magazine

*"[Bailey] found comfort in an unlikely companion--a tiny snail, whose micro-doings are the source of a surprising philosophy."*  
--Entertainment Weekly

*"What starts as an improbably story becomes an irresistible one . . . this elegant little gem is a triumph."* --Maine Sunday Telegram

*Riveting . . .* --DownEast Magazine

*"One sweet story . . ."* --Indie Next List

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### **From reader reviews:**

#### **David Soto:**

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#### **James McFarland:**

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