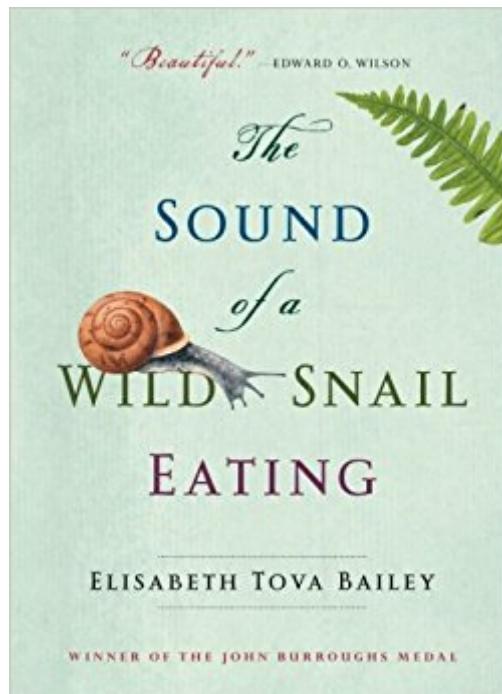


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# The Sound Of A Wild Snail Eating



## Synopsis

In a work that beautifully demonstrates the rewards of closely observing nature, Elisabeth Tova Bailey shares an inspiring and intimate story of her 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 place in the world. Intrigued by the snail's molluscan anatomy, cryptic defenses, clear decision making, hydraulic locomotion, and courtship activities, Bailey becomes an astute and amused observer, offering a candid and engaging look into the curious life of this underappreciated small animal. *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 can illuminate our own human existence, while providing an appreciation of what it means to be fully alive.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

\*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 --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A charming, delicate meditation on the meaning of life. -- Kirkus Review --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I loved this book. Though it's not a mystery as many of Alexander McCall Smith's books are, the tone of the book reminded me of him. It is the story of an invalid who finds and cares for a wild Snail which has arrived in her home on a potted plant. She studies the Snail, its physical body and what she imagines to be its emotional and intellectual life. She derives much companionship from its presence and through many reference books (charmingly, most are written before the early 1900s) learns much about its species. In the end, the book tells one person's tale of learning to adapt to her new life by watching a small wild creature adapt to changes in its own.

I have significant damage from my time in service and when I first lost the ability to walk and then unable to stand or sit for more than a few moments I could have used this book. Here is a woman who is speaking the language of those whose recovery is measured in years and setbacks measured in multiple falls to the floor. The snail in question became a sort of muse and certainly a bonding occurred between the snail and Elizabeth. The way that she articulates how it feels to be so ill and look so normal at the same time was moving. Never have I been so moved by a book that struck so close to home.

This beautifully written book will take the reader out of the daily chaos and rushing to a place that is so simple and still that, as the title implies, she can hear the sound of a wild snail eating a mushroom. The author's observations of her small companion, her own interactions, and her

subsequent education about snails is told from three perspectives all at once: sharing her isolation with the snail, how that connection with another living thing kept her connected to her own life, and it is all interspersed with the extensive factual research she undertook to learn about her companion. In short: I loved this book. I read the Kindle version, but will be ordering several hard copies for gifts, and definitely a copy for my own nightstand as a lovely solace from life's daily chaos.

Who knew a snail had such a fascinating life?! While the author's story is sad, I admire her for making the best of a difficult situation.

A short, charming book with fascinating details about the life of snails from acute, intimate personal observation complemented with insights from scientific and literary writings throughout history. I found it particularly interesting to discover the number and variety of books in which snails have popped up over the years - from poets, novelists, philosophers, naturalists, scientists. The book is a homage to a tiny creature whose lineage is almost as ancient as life itself and who helped bring the author through an extremely debilitating illness. Do not look for the depths of the foul rag and bone shop of the heart but through the daily rhythms of hope and despair there is a sustaining warmth and richness springing from the discovery of companionship in the unlikeliest of places. It is an easy read and well worth the short time it takes to read it.

That book is an excellent gift and it came to me at the right moment. I was also convalescing and had lots of free time while laying on my back, so I read and read and read. It helped me to be more patient with myself and try daily not to do more than I could, which was not much. I'm still a long way to go but just as the author said, I am concentrating on "the task at my elbow," and that's all I need to do for today. The epilogue where the author explains the diagnosis was also helpful. I have relayed the information about the patient illness to a friend whose daughter is having the same symptoms and the doctors have not been able to find out exactly what the problem is. Perhaps this will help her also. Excellent book. I recommended highly. Blanca Miller (Author of *Don't Bury Me Yet* - Published by [...])

The author picked up an unknown illness while she was traveling in Europe that left her unable to care for herself. At one point during her illness a friend gave her a snail she found in the woods. She spent the next year with the snail as her main companion and reason for living. The book is very

short, but I found it be engaging and touching."Given the ease with which health infuses life with meaning and purpose, it is shocking how swiftly illness steals away those certainties. It was all I could do to get through each moment, and each moment felt like an endless hour, yet days slipped silently past. Time unused and only endured still vanishes, as if time itself is starving, and each day is swallowed whole, leaving no crumbs, no memory, no trace at all.""We each have the same number of minutes and hours to live within a day, yet to me it didn't feel equally doled out. My illness brought me such an abundance of time that time was nearly all I had. My friends had so little time I often wished I could give them what time I could not use. It was perplexing how in losing health I had gained something so coveted but to so little purpose."

If you love animal and are a nature nerd like me, you are going to enjoy this very touching personal account of the author and her terrestrial snail friend. I highly encourage you to read this book. It was an easy read and you could feel through the author's writing a sort of peace. This book is a lovely read.

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