

Snails Taught Me Peace

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When I was little I lived in an apartment with my family. It was blue with a red-leafed tree and purple naked ladies planted in front. When the weather was damp, and it usually was, the small patches of soil and flora came to life with aromas and insects. Everything smelled like rain and mulch, eucalyptus and salt. The bugs were drawn out by the moisture, and though I never cared for the worms or the beetles, there was one little bug that held a place in my young heart. I'd soon come to know him as Snaily.

I met him first on the fence post at the end of our walkway. He sat perched on the rough, square wood, unmoving. I never touched him, though I was thoroughly enchanted. Most snails seemed intent on getting somewhere--the next garden, maybe, or a wet patch of ground to rest on--but not Snaily. Snaily didn't move at all and he didn't seem to want to either. I contemplated the comfort of the wooden post and decided it was less than ideal. Still, he seemed perfectly content where he was; he had gotten himself there after all. I examined him closely, his brown murky shell, his green gooey body, his gravity defying eye stalks. He was one of the most beautiful creatures I'd ever seen.

Not the usual thought for a young girl to have about an insect, but it was mine nonetheless. His beauty came from his calm, I decided later, and his patience--not just with a singular thing but with the entire world. "Yes, I know I'm slow," he seemed to say, "but you go about your bustle without me. I'll sit here and enjoy the view."

Snaily stayed on that post for a few days and I greeted him every morning. He was my zen master and my best friend. Then one day he was gone, off to find another view somewhere else. All that he left was a snail trail, a memory, and a young girl with an inexplicable love for snails, fence posts, and sitting still.