

Snails can sleep for up to three years during dry conditions. This dormant period includes lower metabolic rate and reduced activity. Estivation serves the purpose of retaining energy, with the snails retreating into their shells to conserve moisture.

I like to pretend these snails have favourite memories
Vignettes of life that replay in subconscious visions during their fateful hibernation—
The feeling of pavement beneath their bellies, dampened from springtime downpour.

Is the smell of earth as pungent in wild dreamscape as it is during the moments not spent in their unconscious daze?
Or do they simply cease to remember at all—
the blackened blur behind closed lids, all they call home
for three years?

Three years seems long.

Almost like the middle of the Venn diagram between

‘Breathing You’

‘Forgetting You’.

And

That thin cross section looks like half-hearted crosswords in stuffy rooms—
your trembling hands that flicked absentmindedly through the pages, trying to find a five-letter word
for ‘grave, sombre’.
It sounds like listening to Nat King Cole
Poorly sung lyrics imprinted on a foggy frontal lobe
longer than my name.
It smells faintly of lavender talc and cigarette smoke that clung to old knitwear—
the scent that stained my skin with you long after the embrace was over.

After the visiting hours passed in a senseless blur, you still existed
Buried in the drawers of my quiet room.
In there still is the gardening book you gave me so many birthdays ago.
I search endlessly to find the dog-eared page that told me what deterred snails from leafy plants.
I think it was eggshells, but it’s all too late now.

I try to remember what shade of rouge you painted on thin lips.
I find myself more fixated on the tinges of green that bruised your shins—
A physical manifestation of your mental suffering, spread across your wrinkled skin
A map that leads to nowhere.

The snails have curled into themselves beneath the soil by now.
I’ve forgotten why *Mona Lisa* was your favourite song.

Has Spring’s cruel return truly withered away what memories remain?
The wilted leaves crumble beneath my heavy boots
Only a reminder of your aching spine, your weary gait.

Curious time keeps moving—
Yet I am still waiting where you left me.

In this three-year slumber, I pretend you have relived it all—
The cries of your firstborn
or the bitter taste of your favourite tobacco.
A screening in technicolour for one.

Somewhere beneath the garden, the snails will soon wake.
They'll carry with them the weight of remembered rain.
I hope when I see them on the damp footpath, they remind me about you.