

Notes

For around 40 days I had to slow down. In a room. In a house, a house with a garden. A world closed on three sides, the fourth looks at the sea. I measured the garden walking back and forth. At a certain point, the geography that was so well known to me began to change. I started getting the fragrances, the smells, the sounds. They made an invisible map superimposed over the one I was seeing. Routes. Trajectories. Disembodied lines and trails.

In the home's entry hall, the swallows have returned. Every year they make it just this far from Africa.

I haven't been able to do much lately, not even read a book. I stop at magazine. We subscribed to *Internazionale*. It comes every week. Too often, at least for me. Palestine, Afghanistan, Lampedusa, the whole wide world.

There's also been the problem with the snails. These little charmers are a real scourge when they get to be too many. There's lots of ways to deal with them. Most are pretty gory. We decided on deportation. All in one big bucket. With a lid. We tell them we're going on a little trip and then abandon them at the nearest trail head outside the house. All slimy and vexed. Some of them even hiss at us.

The dry leaves shrivel up, lose their symmetrical form. Fold in on themselves and blur their colors. The fact that they're pastels makes them even more abstract. Who knows what they are? A start is the end of something.

At a certain point, the children start closing their doodles into wobbly circles. Then they put two dots inside. Another story is about to begin.

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