

Olive Green



**True stories from someone that never thought
her life would ever look like this.**

- N.K.C.

Olive Green

I've been home for 2 days and I already look at my backpack with envious eyes. Having a hard time readjusting to the sedentary life. It's only a matter of time before I jump in a train again and make my way towards more adventures.

I guess I should start with the beginning of this story.

It all started at the end of May. I was sitting home drinking beer and making pizzas with a few of my housemates, when Peter walked in.

I had met Peter a year earlier when he first came to my old squat, but I never expected to see him again.

Peter is a Canadian bum that basically lives in his backpack. Ugly, destroyed and very old backpack that he's been carrying for about ten years.

Always by his side, his dog Lou is an endless target for compliments because of his bright green eyes.

I was very shy to approach him at first, because he has the lifestyle i've always wanted but have always lacked the courage to embrace. I saw him as some kind of surreal being.

Little did I know he would be in my bed by the end of the night, and the next four days.

On the fifth day, he looked at me and said: "I'm going to meet up with some friends in Berlin, wanna come?"

My brain stopped working for a second and I answered, laughing:

"You can't be serious dude, I can't leave my place just like this, I have stuff to plan, and I've only been hanging out with you for like 5 days what tells me you're not some sort of twisted serial killer that targets girls with dreadlocks that haven't showered in 3 weeks?"

And so obviously the next day we were on a train towards Germany, because my desire for adventure was stronger than my anxiety.

And I wish I could say all went well and I adjusted instantly to this lifestyle but that would be a lie.

#1 Munich-Nürnberg-Leipzig-Berlin-Stuttgart

The first weeks we traveled together would go like this: I would wake up super early and go walk around with my dog, waiting for Peter to wake up, then, we would get breakfast, and then we would go sit on the street and busk for a few hours. Every day a different city, and every night we would argue about where to sleep because I was actually terrified of sleeping on the streets. My brain would instantly bring up rape stories and mysterious disappearances of traveling girls every time we would try and settle down for the night. Not only was it fucking terrible for me, but I could clearly feel I was being a pain in his ass. Which made me feel even worse.

Aside from the night-time anxiety, everything else was just like I imagined it, maybe even better.

We got around by taking trains without paying, and getting millions of fines that we would never have to pay because we are not registered german citizens. Peter calls it "creating train drama" because we always get yelled at by train employees and sometimes they call the cops on us,

but none of them can actually do more than check our passports and forbid us from creating more train dramas.

(WHICH NEVER WORKS LOL SUCK MY DICK DEUTSCHE BAHN)

I think my favourite part of all of this is the reactions of people on the streets. Some of them look at us with disgusted stares, others give us 20 euros with a smile, and some ask to take pictures of us in exchange for a few coins.

Being outside 24/7 really forces you to connect with people, and I think I needed that to grow as a person. I've always been shy as fuck, and being forced to walk up to food stands to ask if they can fill up my water bottle sounds stupid, but it was actually a hell of a lesson.

Back on the train to Germany, after the millionth exasperated train employee interaction, we finally made it to Berlin.

There, we walked up Warschauerstrasse, the street where dozens of homeless punks gather around the metro station to drink, sing and annoy passers by asking for money in a very obnoxious way.

Then Peter took me to a place called StandUp, a house project that used to be a squat.

We waited at the door for someone from the house to walk by, and then asked for Vee, the girl that welcomed Peter in the house the last time he came.

She took us to the guest room and put our name on a list. Then she explained that since we were guests we were only allowed to hang out in the guest room or the living room and kitchen next to it.

To me it was very weird, because I had been around squats for five years and it was the first time I saw a place with such rules.

Everything went well the first few days we stayed there, and then my dog managed to fuck shit up.

One morning, I was on the balcony of the living room smoking a cigarette, when some guy from the house came up to me really angrily and said "what the fuck is wrong with you you're supposed to watch over your dog at all times."

My entire body just went full panic mode. What had he done? And where was he?

The guy took me all the way to the other side of the house where we were not supposed to go, and turns out my dog had shit all over the staircase. I don't know who I wanted to shoot the most, my dog or me.

I was so fucking embarrassed, I cleaned up the mess and then proceeded to look for my dog that was nowhere to be found for another half hour. When I finally found him, I was so angry and ashamed that I locked him in the guest room, and started crying. I was trying to make good impression and be nice to this house full of strangers, even though I'm really shy, and it really angered me that the thing fucking it up was my dog. Really sucks when you're trying to do everything correctly and a living being that you just can't control 24/7 messes it up. It's frustrating.

After that incident, a few people in my house started calling my dog "Poop Dog". The first few times I wanted to disappear under the ground, but luckily I had good people with me that helped me get over the whole thing.

We ended up staying for two weeks at StandUp. During those two weeks we met a whole bunch of punks that showed us bars, parks, lakes and concert venues.

Two weeks being the maximum time you could stay as a guest at StandUp, we then had to find another place, this time with two more friends and two more dogs from Canada. Wasn't an easy task, but we ended up waiting in front of the oldest surviving squat of Berlin. After five minutes, a punk dude wearing a skirt came up to us and asked what we wanted. We explained to him our "homeless" situation and he immediately took us to the trailer park next to the squat. Took us to his trailer, and said that we could use the smaller trailer next to it to store our backpacks or sleep in if we wanted to.

We happily agreed, and shortly after we were sitting around drinking beers with some other people of the trailer park.

I immediately felt more at home there, because it looked more like the kind of places I was used to. Everyone was friendly, and the whole place was basically some sort of punk apocalyptic wasteland of things that were under construction and piles of junk between the trailers.

People were so nice to us that we ended up staying an entire week instead of the weekend we had asked for. Every time we would say "We're leaving tomorrow" all of them would say "no you are not" and dammit they almost got us to stay more than a week because of how cool and friendly this place was.

And i haven't even begun to tell you about the amount of booze and drugs they offered us every night. It was a tough time for my liver, but a very fun time for me.

Again, the punks we met showed us funky places. One afternoon, a guy from Israel took us to the river. We spent a few hours playing in the water with the dogs and drinking Pfeffi, the national mint liquor. And by drinking I mean they drank it because I think it's disgusting (suck it fuckers Berliner Luft is better).

As the sun was setting we walked back to Friedrichshain, the neighbourhood with the most house projects in Berlin. There was a street festival organised by the people of Super (another house project) with gigs, food stands and d.i.y distro with homemade patches, tapes and tee shirts.

Few days after that, it was time to head back to Switzerland. I almost followed the Canadians to Finland for another festival, but had a change of heart at the last minute because my poor alcohol and speed fuelled body was telling me that one month in Germany was enough for the moment. Surprisingly, Peter followed me to Switzerland. I was expecting him to follow our friends because he hadn't seen them in a long time and that festival sounded really fun, but he didn't. He said "I brought you all the way to Germany so I'm bringing you back home."

(I actually will never know if my dad had any influence in there because he met Peter before we left and said to him that he had to keep me safe lol so I imagine there was some sort of unacknowledged pressure in Peter's brain.)

It took us about a week to go back to Switzerland. Stopping in different cities to make money along the way, I somehow feel like the most intense part of the trip was the way home.

Right after Berlin, we stopped in Leipzig. We had already been there on the way to Berlin, but didn't find it as interesting as everyone else

said it was. This time, a guy from Kapa House had given us one of his friend's phone number so we would have a place to sleep.

We got to Leipzig, called the guy, and shortly after we were sitting in his apartment with cans of beer. Turns out this guy was the singer of Visions of War. (REALLY COOL BAND GO CHECK IT OUT)

He had some sort of guest room in his attic, and we instantly became kings of the place because it was huge and us and the dogs were the only ones in it.

The next morning was pretty funny too when our host told us that we would be better off "doing the kangaroo" above his apartment than his neighbour's place. I guess the floor isn't as sound proof as we thought... oops.

We stayed at his place for two days before hitting the road again. Before we left, Peter made poutine, the traditional Canadian hangover food.

(Damn I wish i could live in Canada to eat poutine every day...)

After that, we went back through Nürnberg, the town where we had ended up in another trailer park called "Diamond Palace" a few weeks before.

Didn't go to the trailer park that time, but it was funny to see how punks gathered around me the second Peter left me alone in front of the train station to go get food.

"Where do you come from?" "Where are you going?" "Wow your dogs look really cool" "Do you need a place to sleep?"

Wasn't really easy to communicate with them because they didn't really speak english and I don't really speak German, but it was really nice to see how we all stand with each other and share experiences in this scene.

Our last stop before Switzerland was Stuttgart (FUCK STUTTGART DON'T GO THERE) The beginning of the day was just like any other day. Had slept in a park the night before, woke up to get breakfast and go busking. I guess I haven't mentioned yet the sign system we have. Peter likes to have multiple cardboard signs and cups with inscriptions like "for ice cream, for beer, for clean socks, for beer, for weed, for dog food, for plastic surgery."

It makes people laugh and it catches their attention. Works pretty well too. The only problem is that when we were in Stuttgart it caught the attention of the cops too. When they showed up, we thought it was going to be just another passport control and "you can't beg here" but it wasn't. They told us that begging for drugs (cause of the "weed" sign") was illegal and that we needed to follow them to the cop station. There, they took Peter to a different room and left me locked in the waiting room. I could see them ask questions through the glass door, and was getting increasingly nervous because they were not giving us our IDs back.

After half an hour Peter looked at me and gave me a thumbs up. We were safe. They let us out of the cop station with a paper that said we were banned from the center of town for five hours and that they would arrest us and pretty much try and deport us if we tried to busk again. Stupid pieces of shit cops.

Then, we decided to get the fuck out of that stupid city and catch the first train going towards Switzerland. We arrived in Bern that night, too late to catch a train back to where my van was parked so we had to sleep outside again. We tried looking for a place for a good while, but all the spots were shitty or too complicated to access with dogs.

We did end up finding a place behind a wall next to a park, but by then I was too excited about being so close to my house and wasn't feeling sleepy at all. Plus the first train to go to my place was only three hours away.

Peter got pissed off about it because he really wanted to sleep, but he ended up staying up with me to keep me company.

And oh boy how fucking orgasmic it was to sleep in my own bed again.

Once we were home, me and Peter spent three days watching movies and cuddling. (hi Peter if you're reading this i know damn well you don't like the way i talk about it but its my story okay)

After that, he left to meet up with our other Canadian friends in Amsterdam.

The first few days on my own were kind of boring, but nothing unusual. If only it had stayed that way...



To summarise, I spent all of July and almost all of August sobbing and hating myself. I broke the pact we had made.

Right when we arrived in Germany, we were getting drunk in a park, and talked about the fact that none of us wanted a relationship whatsoever. I had just gotten out of a messy one, and he wasn't interested in dating anyone because he traveled too much. So with that we made some sort of pact. We would travel together and hook up, but no feelings.

It worked completely fine until he left.

Between pain, sadness, disgust, anger and immeasurable love, i think I explored and suffered pretty much every emotion possible.



During this month and a half of loneliness and suicide temptations, I rediscovered the meaning of "It's funny how artistic we become when our hearts are broken." That Hotel Books wrote in one of his songs.

And one day, finally, after weeks of literally trying to kill my brain with drugs and alcohol, I had the opportunity to see him again. There was a festival in Berlin, and I was 100% going there.

The night before, with heavy knots in my stomach, I wrote this:

The one

Do you ever feel like somebody is "the one" ?

Someone that makes you feel like if it doesn't work with them you'll never be in love ever again

And you're maybe better off shooting yourself in the head after that but at the same time you're willing to take the risk and do whatever it takes to make them happy and get to spend time with them, even if you end up hurting yourself.

I am preparing to travel 1'044 Kilometers just to see the person I love. ☹

It's terrifying to see how much being in love with him impacts my life.

When he's not here I fall into a self-destructive spiral of "he'll never love me" and not knowing the interest of being alive. All I do is cry, get drunk and do drugs that keep me from sleeping so I avoid the deception of seeing him in my dreams and waking up sobbing

But here I am, backpack and burden of existence on my shoulders, about to travel hundreds of kilometers for my love, without knowing if he loves me or not.

I may come back rejected and suicidal, but the only thing I want is to see him happy, even if that doesn't involve me.

#3 Berlin - Dresden

I got to Berlin after 12 hours on a train. I was exhausted, pretty pissed that my train had taken longer than the initial 8 hour trip that was planned, and I honestly just wanted a beer and a cigarette at this point.

Right when I got out of the metro to meet up with Peter and the group of friends he was with, my phone rang. It was my best friend being an overprotective (but adorable) potato asking me for news. Right as I was about to hang up to go look for them, a voice I knew damn well yelled in my ears.

"YOOOOOOOOO WHAT'S UP"

It was Peter 20 meters behind me. I felt my intestines tossing and turning to end up in knots. I was both terrified and really fucking happy.

He walked up to me, gave me a hug and introduced me to all his friends. Three Estonians, and two german girls.

One of the girls left pretty much as soon as I arrived, and the rest of us just kept drinking.

Not even an hour after I had been awkwardly sitting there and saying nothing, I saw Peter suddenly jump on the second german girl, Marina. I hadn't followed the conversation so I had no idea what they were wrestling about, but it seemed really funny. That, until after three seconds of not paying attention I saw them make out.

I immediately got up and almost ran off into oblivion. Instead, drunk and devastated me decided to call my mom. I will never figure out why I did that because my mom is one of the people on this planet that I dislike the most. To my surprise she was actually really helpful on that one. I don't really remember the exact conversation we had, because most of it was just me screaming and crying out of pain, but I know that she at least got me to come back down to earth for a bit and join the group again.

Later that night we slept in our tents at a trailer park Marina knew. Before bed, some of us stayed up for one more beer. I went in my tent earlier than the others, estimated they were far enough away to not hear me, and just burst into tears again.

Peter had installed things in his tent in a way i knew very well: the "there's gonna be two of us in here tonight" way.

Great, not only did he break my heart but he was about to have sex right next to the crying dumbass that I was.

Imagining him with someone else made me cry even harder. I had tried to picture him with someone else many times, but this one was just too real to tell my brain to fuck off.

I was halfway through listening to "A sad song about a girl I no longer know" for the millionth time, when somebody knocked on my tent. It was Peter. I wiped my eyes, opened the door and aggressively asked: *"What the fuck do you want?"*

He said:

"Ah man I hate to see you like this, it hurts me when my friends are not okay. Is there anything I can do to help you? Please don't cry. I'm drunk as fuck and I never have the right words for this shit but fuck man i'm fucking sorry."

My throat felt like it was closing around my vocal chords, choked up by tears I was trying to swallow, so I just said: *"Don't worry about me,*

just pretend I am not here and you didn't see me, and it will be better for both of us."

He insisted, and stayed with me telling me stupid jokes until I was smiling again. Then I was so drunk I just fell asleep.

I'll never know if he did end up having sex with her or not, but just the fact that for a second he cared about me more than he did about this chick that was a thousand times cooler than me was kind of comforting. He broke my heart, but in a way I felt like he had respect for my emotions. And to me that's a pretty big deal because the other boy that shattered my heart when I was younger didn't give a fuck and it took me about a year to recover.

On the other hand, I don't know what he told Marina, but she did not talk to me for two days.

The next morning, I had my head up my ass and just felt tired, depressed and really fucking hungover. I got dressed, got out of my tent and went to sit with the others that were already up. Five minutes later, I had a line of speed up my nose and a beer in my head. A kind of "Friday morning before a festival" feeling.

And thank god for speed, there's no space for emotions when you're on drugs, so I managed to feel like a human for the rest of the day.

Once everyone was up and had packed, we went to a local thrift store because Marina and her friend Joan that had joined the group wanted to find ugly outfits for the festival.

They ended up buying matching pants and a bright pink jacket from the 80s.

Peter on the other hand, found a ridiculous hat made out of fake fur and a jacket with a mysterious colourful pattern, and since he didn't want to pay for them he threw them out of the third floor window to retrieve them outside.

As we walked down the stairs, my fucking dog that I had left outside originally was running around the aisles. I was kinda mad at him but it distracted the employees of the store so Peter got his stuff for free. Teamwork, as some would say.

After that, we went to Alexanderplatz where Marina and Joan had organised some sort of "punx meet up". We sat there drinking, talking and making music for a couple hours, waiting for the rest of our friends to show up. I spent most of my time there talking to Sam, another guy that had joined the group. It was a nice surprise to be able to talk honestly about anxiety and psychological disorders with someone. And it helped me take my mind off of the other motherfucker that broke my heart.

Once we had gathered all our friends, we took a train out to the countryside, where the festival was.

We built our tents, and to my surprise, Marina put her stuff in one of her friend's tent, all the way at the other side of the festival. Confusing.

Once the gigs started and I put many, many lines of speed up my nose, I met a couple of guys and pretty much ended up spending the weekend with them, away from Peter.

I didn't talk to Peter at all the first two days of the festival. He was being friendly with me, but I didn't feel like even looking at him.

I had a pretty good time with the group of people I was with, and was actually starting to think about the fact that maybe i wouldn't feel like killing myself on my way home. Eternally grateful for these people that didn't let me waste my Friday and Saturday over a human being.

Everything was fun and entertaining Friday and Saturday night, but hold your horses, I gotta tell you about Sunday night...

It started out pretty mellow with just a couple beers as the sun was going down, and then as the sun was almost disappearing I saw something shiny in the grass.

It was a piece of tin foil with a green ecstasy pill in it.

I considered leaving it there at first, but come on I was sad as fuck so I literally just wanted to kill my brain. Plus, i had kind of missed out on all the fun of Saturday because all the speed I did made me really anxious.

So i took a quarter of it and put the rest in my pocket.

About 20 minutes later, I was on my way to my tent to put on a sweater, and suddenly the empty field in front of me with pink clouds in the sky and not a single person around seemed to be the most beautiful thing ever. It started out slow, but about 2 hours later I was sitting around the fire with some people and my sadness had completely vanished. I felt silly, and kept talking shit. Eventually I shared the rest of the pill with people around me, including Peter for some reason. I guess drugs made me forget the fact that i wanted to die every time he looked at me.

Another hour went by, and then everyone was really high.

I'm probably gonna remember what happened next for the rest of my life. I've talked about it with a few people but it still feels surreal.

I was sitting next to Peter, but having completely separate conversations with other people. Suddenly, he turns to me, looks me dead in the eyes and says: *"Hey, I love you. You set me on fire with those eyes."*

I was gobsmacked. What the fuck. I literally wanted to murder him the second he said that. I thought about the fact that I was rotting and crying in my bed for two months about his stupid ass, persuaded that he was somewhere fucking girls that are prettier and more interesting than me. I mean, maybe he was, but I guess it's mostly the loneliness and absence of structure in my life without him that fucked me over really bad. I still wonder why we always choose to hate the person that hurt us. Even if sometimes it's ourselves we hate the most.

Back to the story. I was so shocked by his words that I just shook my head and looked at him with the biggest, most genuine smile ever. I think every single one of my organs was smiling at that moment.

I was about to tell him how much I fucking hated him for doing that to me, when my dog, that was supposed to be locked in my tent showed up next to me.

My brain disconnected from the cheesy thoughts, and I immediately suspected that somebody had gotten into my tent. I said that to Peter, and he turned into a Superhero. He turned his flashlight on, took my hand and walked with me to my tent.

We checked both of our tents, but nothing had disappeared so I figured my dog found out how to wiggle out of the hole in the zipper i left open so he would get some air. I put him back in my tent and as I turned around to go back to the fest, Peter looked at me and asked: *"Can I kiss you?"*

"Of course you dumbass."

And right then and there, I found heaven.
In between laughter and cheesiness, he said "Fuck I had forgotten how much I enjoy kissing you."

The festival ended that night, but we actually ended up staying on the site until Tuesday because it's not every day that you can camp in the middle of nowhere, make a fire and do loads of drugs without risking an encounter with cops at all.

Monday was almost as mind blowing as Sunday, but on a different level. Marina and me went on a hitchhiking mission to get booze. Getting to the store took 15 minutes, but nobody wanted to pick us up on the way back, so we spent two hours waiting on the side of the road like idiots. Those two hours were actually incredibly fun, because me and Marina really got to connect and talk. In a way I guess it helped me calm down about my emotions, because before that day I fucking hated her for no other reason than I think she's cooler than me and could get any guy she wanted, kind of in a Jolene (DOLLY PARTON I LOVE YOU) way. Once we got back to the festival site, it was party time. There was only a small group of survivors, but we stayed up all night and it felt really good to have solved all my emotional clutter.

Once pretty much everyone had gone off to die in their tents, there was only me and Sam left. We decided to climb on top of some sort of bunker to watch the sunrise and do another line of speed. Then, he almost started crying telling me how much he did not want to go back home because he had to go to court for an old story and was going to rehab in 8 days. This is the kind of unexpected brutally honest moments I love at festivals.

At around 11am, festival staff showed up in a van to pick up the remaining garbage (us) and crates of beer they hadn't sold during the weekend.

They told us that the owner of the place was pissed off that there was still a bunch of punk kids getting trashed on his property. (LOL FUCK OFF).

Everyone except me climbed in the van to go back to the train station. The amount of speed I had taken was making me anxious so I felt like I needed a moment on my own to walk back.

They left, and immediately after I started sobbing. My body was SO DONE with emotional rollercoasters that I literally cried the whole way to the train station.

Then I met the others waiting for the train and we went back to Kapa House in the centre of Berlin.

When we got there, the place was buzzing with people. I guess most people from the festival decided to go drink beers there. I was still feeling emotionally overwhelmed and as time went by the amount of people surrounding me was only making things worse. I hate speed comedowns.

At some point it got so bad that i had trouble holding tears back, so right as i felt I was gonna burst into tears I asked Peter *"hey do you want to go walk the dogs real quick?"*

He was confused for a second but I guess he understood I had to get the fuck out of here from the look on my face.

We hadn't even reached the road that I started screaming and crying out of anxiety. Fucking stupid anxiety.

Peter took me in his arms and squeezed me so tight I was barely able to breathe but it's exactly what I needed. We walked down to the river at the end of the street and sat down under a tree. It was nice to have some quiet company from a reassuring person because I was freaking the fuck out.

When I finally calmed down, we started talking about the festival, and eventually got to Sunday.

He told me he didn't remember a thing.

Great.

I laughed it off and started telling him everything that had happened.

Turns out he was already mega drunk when I gave him ecstasy and he had no idea about what he said that night.

So, with a huge grin on my face I told him word for word the things he had said to me.

His cheeks turned blood red and he hid his face in his shirt.

"I'm sorry.. Oh boy hahaha that's embarrassing."

"Don't be embarrassed. It was a nice night."

We looked at each other silently for a second, and then he got closer to me, put his arm around my shoulders and kissed me.

For a second, I felt on top of the world. I think it was even better than that Sunday night because this time it was sober honesty.

After a while of talking shit and laughing about how stupid we were, we walked back to Kapa House.

Peter and the others started drinking again, but my body was rejecting any type of physical proximity with alcohol. If it hadn't been for the amount of speed I had taken earlier that day I would have puked for sure.

I guess Sam was feeling the same because every time our eyes crossed he looked like he was on the verge of crying.

He left later that night to go back up north with two of his friends.

The rest of the people we had spent the day with went to a gig somewhere else, so in the end there was only Peter, Marina and me sitting around. At 1am, drunk Peter started talking about how he was REALLY craving pizza.

We went around the neighbourhood to see if there was any place that was open, but the only places that were still open were a late night shop and some sort of bakery. We walked into the bakery, and they told us they were not making pizza anymore. Peter got mad, and started insulting the poor employee.

Peter has a tendency to get reaaaally annoying when his drunk self wants something.

We dragged Peter out of the place and went to the late night shop to grab lousy chips and guacamole.

Then we walked down to a part of the river where there was a sand beach and decided to sleep there.

We ate our disgusting Guacamole in silence, as Peter had ruined the mood for everyone, and then Marina went to sleep.

Peter was still going on about how he reaaaally wanted pizza and it started to make me mad.

Three seconds later I was fed up with his behaviour and I couldn't help but to yell at him.

It went approximately like this:

Me: *"DAMMIT Peter SHUT THE FUCK UP WE'RE ALL HUNGRY DO YOU REALISE HOW FUCKING SELFISH YOU SOUND RIGHT NOW? I GOT IT, YOU WANT PIZZA. I HEARD YOU THE FIRST 63 TIMES YOU SAID IT SO NOW IF YOU HAVE NOTHING ELSE YOU WANT TO SAY ASIDE FROM THE FACT THAT YOU WANT PIZZA THEN SHUT UP."*

Peter: *"FUCKING HELL DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO!"*

Then he called his dog and stormed off somewhere at the other side of the beach where no one could see him.

I admit it, I wanted to punch him in the face right then. I was exhausted, both physically and mentally, and dammit I didn't need more crap. So, of course, I sat down by the river, checked if Marina was sleeping, and started crying, again.

I guess I was crying because somewhere in my brain I was upset about the fact that I yelled at Peter when my idealistic self was sure that everything was supposed to be "perfect" between us. You know, the classic utopia of every relationship.

Between my tears I suddenly saw flashlights at the end of the beach. My heart started racing. "It's the cops" I thought to myself.

"Peter please please please come back" I whispered. He knows how to handle that shit better than me and right now it's freaking me out.

I forgot to mention that I was having hallucinations due to my lack of sleep that night, and everything around me was distorted. I was seeing monkeys and huge birds in the trees and every shadow looked like a human. Needless to say, it freaked me out even more to think about the fact that the cops were gonna arrest me because I looked like I had been doing acid for five days.

Anyway, the flashlights were moving closer to us, and Peter wasn't coming back. I was almost having a heart attack at that point. I held my breath trying to hear what the people with the flashlights were saying, and suddenly I was relieved: they were listening to music. Turns out it was just a bunch of hippies from the place next to the beach.

Right after that I saw Peter's dog from afar walking towards me. Peter was back. He stood behind me, and for the first time ever his voice sounded different. He had just cried.

"We're fucking ugly my dude" he said.

"I know right."

We were both sniffing like overly emotional idiots.

He sat down next to me and waited for me to finish the beer I had just opened out of emotional overwhelming. I honestly didn't want to drink it but my entire body was just asking for it at this point.

I guess Peter was pretty shook up too because he had trouble looking at me and holding his tears back at the same time.

"I hate having emotions, fucking hell I can't handle them. I wish I could cancel my emotions, but I can't. Look at me, I'm a fucking loser. I'm sorry for the way I behaved before... Ugh I wish I could feel nothing..."

He had trouble finishing his sentences.

I guess the fact that I'm the one that yelled at him instead of anyone else slapped him in the brain.

I don't remember if I already told you, but usually Peter is always this happy, silly, constantly joking and talking guy. I had never seen him have any other emotion than happiness or anger.

I finished my beer and we went to bed. It was a bit cold so he held me extra close to him, which I liked a lot.

What happened next belongs to us only, but let's just say that the sunrise on a beach in the summer is beautiful.

The next morning, we packed and headed for the train station because Marina was going home.

Before she left we grabbed some pizza (FINALLY) and discussed our future trips. We were jokingly trying to convince Marina to come with us to this other festival we were going to the next weekend but she was having none of it.

She left an hour later and it was just me, Peter and the dogs again. Just like two months earlier.

Then, it was our turn to check the trains and head towards Dresden, where Parano Festival was happening the next weekend.

We got there two days early. The first night we slept under a bridge where Peter had slept in the past. There was a huge version of Peter's signature graffiti on the wall, and the surroundings were really pretty.

The next day was my birthday.

Peter woke me up by screaming "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" into my ears. How nice. I am not a morning person.

But I guess it's fair enough because I did the same when it was his birthday in June.

He then said that we would do whatever I wanted that day. I tried to think of something I could possibly want for my birthday, but with him by my side I felt like I already had it all. (YES I AM CHEESY FUCK YOU I HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY)

In the end, I bought myself a Polaroid camera with the money I had made from busking and Peter bought me a strawberry milkshake.

Fun fact: back in July when I was depressed as fuck and cried every night I always craved a strawberry milkshake for some unknown reason. I never got one till that day, so as stupid as it sounds that milkshake was extra special.

Overall it was a nice day until later at night, Peter left me with the dogs and the backpacks in front of a grocery store to grab some food. I am used to Peter taking forever to buy stuff but that night I actually wasn't super calm about it. Why, you ask?

Because the night before there had been a huge Nazi demonstration in a nearby town and all our friends that knew we were in the area told us to be careful because "non german-looking" people and punks got beat up. I thought it was bullshit and nothing would happen to us until I was left alone on that bench and I started hearing Nazi music at the end of the street. Once again my brain went straight to "Peter please come back" mode. (Dammit I sound like such a coward but whatever I AM ANXIOUS OKAY)

Eventually nothing happened, I told Peter about the Nazi situation and we caught a train to the area where the festival was happening. Thing is, when we got off the train we had no idea where the festival actually was and there was no indications anywhere around. We walked around for about half an hour trying to find a spot to sleep and ended up under a tree in a huge field. The next day found the festival, bought beer, and it was party time again.

The first night was pretty mellow, and actually kind of disappointing. It was nice to see our friends from On Fire Fest again, but we didn't have a group of friends and a venue as cool as the last one. The second night was much nicer. A girl I had met the night before and I drank too many Mojitos so drunkenness and amateur photography made it a lot more fun. Now, I look at the pictures we took and the only thing I can think of is that dammit I am glad I didn't stay in my shell my whole life otherwise I would have never met such amazing people. Never stop growing (and drinking)!

After Parano fest, it was time to head back to Switzerland again. I don't really remember the train rides because we drank vodka for three days straight on the way, but one of the rides we got was a bit special.. We were on a train from Stuttgart to Munich, it was about 11pm and both of us were pretty wiped out. Suddenly, the train employee came up to us, frowned, and told Peter to follow him. I could hear Peter get yelled at further down the hallway, and what I heard made me burst out laughing:

"YOU DON'T TAKE THE TRAIN FOR FREE IN GERMANY! You know, if I ever had to kill someone I'd do it here and drop their body off at the next station, there's nobody around here! I'm gonna let you stay on the train, but only because you have a girlfriend."

What a dumbass.

That night we arrived in Switzerland, slept in a park and decided to head home the next morning.

Back home we spent most of our time doing absolutely nothing. Except maybe watching movies, making out and eating. Occasionally we'd go busk to make the bare minimum of money we needed but that's about it. We went to a couple gigs too. One of the trailer parks of my city organised their annual festival, and to my surprise, two of the bands that were playing were people we had met in Berlin. The world is so small once you start traveling!

#3 Tübingen Silliness

In between bigger trips, Peter, me and two of my friends went to a gig in South Germany. It was only a matter of 24 hours to get there and to come back but oh boy we were dumb. Getting there was pretty chill, my friends were traveling separately, and Peter and me kept things calm. The gig itself was great. It was a one night festival in some sort of community building for artists and musicians. For once, I got fucking drunk, and had the same level of silliness as my friends. Usually, i'm the most sober and end up sighing in a corner out of tiredness while they're all having fun, but not this time! I guess we stayed up pretty late, or early, depending on your interpretation, but my last memory is sitting down on one couch and waking up on the other one across the room with Peter sleeping on my legs.

The organiser of the party woke us up at 8am and offered to bring us back to his place so we could sleep more. Peter, me and the boys were still drunk, and had the genius idea to head for the train right away, with more beers. It took me a while to start drinking again because I was feeling gross but come on, drunk train drama is so much more fun than getting kicked out sober!

We in fact did get kicked out of the train once, but we spent the time in between trains shooting empty cans with Peter's slingshot.

So in case you ever get thrown out of the train in Rottweil, the train station bar has a nice beer garden with tiny rocks all over the floor, bring your slingshot and kill some time. You're welcome.

Throughout the trip, we somehow ended up screaming about writing letters to the government and Schaffhouse. (If you know, you know. Love you guys.)

Once we got back to my house, one of my friends passed out almost immediately, and the rest of us aligned a couple more drinks.

Beginning of October, a couple came to visit one of my housemates. Unfortunately she wasn't there, but they hung out with us for a few days. He was english, and she was from Slovakia, but they both lived in Spain. They told us about the festival that their house was organising, and obviously a few weeks later me and Peter were on a train going towards Spain.

#4 Lyon-Montpellier-Barcelona-Vilanova

Getting out of Switzerland, our first stop was Lyon. We stopped there only for a few hours to buy food and catch the next train, but I was feeling super fucking happy about going south and escaping the cold.

While I was waiting for Peter to get out of the supermarket, two girls came up to me and handed me a banana milkshake.

"We just got it for free so we might as well share."

It's lovely that people share things with me, but it also means I have reached peak "I look homeless please give me things" aesthetic. Great.

Getting to the South of France was actually easier than expected because we managed to catch a fast train that went directly to Montpellier.

There, we had to find food and a place to sleep. We asked the McDonalds next to the train station to fill up our water bottles but they told us to fuck off. Assholes.

Seconds later, a guy and a girl came up to us and handed us almost untouched asian noodles.

Funny thing is: everywhere we go, we often find ourselves looking for food in the train station trashcans and we ALWAYS find asian noodles. So, once again we were eating noodles from the train station. I guess unwritten traditions never change.

After that, we had to find a place to sleep so we used the strategy that works best which consists of checking out a map of the area and picking the park/green space thats furthest away from the centre. Which usually leads to up to an hour of public transport.

This time, we found a weird forest area in-between buildings away from the centre. It was great because there were no houses too close to us and nobody came to disturb us.

In the morning, i woke up, Peter went to pee and suddenly he vanished. Confused, I tried to think of an explanation but couldn't find one. So I just waited around playing with the dogs. He came back twenty minutes later with loaves of bread fresh out the oven and said:

"I found Istanbul two blocks down from here!"

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"The whole neighbourhood is full of Turkish shops."

How the hell does he find those places?

I guess we'll never know.

We arrived in Barcelona that night and went straight to a squat that Peter stayed at the year before. Much to our disappointment, the people of the squat had all moved out, except for one guy.

The first night, we had beers and jammed with another guy that played guitar.

The second night, one of the squat's friends came to tattoo. He was pretty busy right away so me and Peter figured we wouldn't get tattoos and went to visit some other friends in their house.

There, we drank some beers and did a couple lines of speed. At 3am we got back to the squat and the tattoo guy came up to us:

"I just finished this other guy's tattoo so if you guys want something just come upstairs."

So I went. I had in mind to get my finger tattoos redone because they were fading, but I didn't expect i'd get out of that room 5 hours later with 9 new tattoos. The only thing that bummed me is that he was hitting on me obnoxiously the whole time. He finished my hand tattoo and was like: *"Wow looks good! Now I want to fuck you.."*

Jesus Christ. No thanks. Why do dudes like this exist?

I shrugged it off, thanked him for the tattoos and went to bed.

The next day, we caught a train to Vilanova, a city a bit further south. There, we went to the house of our friends that had been at my place just a few weeks before.

The house was really peculiar. It looked like a small castle stuck in the middle of modern buildings. There, we had the best time ever!

Turns out I already knew almost everyone that lived in the house because I had met some of them in Berlin and the others came to my place over the summer.

During our stay there, we helped them set up the festival my friends had talked about. And entire week of hanging out in a field listening to music, building structures and drinking beer. Once everything was done and the party started, we met loads of new people, danced to the music, shared stories, patches and overcooked pizza balls around the fire. It's really satisfying to spend a lot of time on something and see it work out perfectly.

One thing I noticed that I thought was really funny, was the diversity of nationalities in the house.

One night after the festival we were sitting around in the living room, and in the room there was:

- America
- Russia
- England
- Slovakia
- Canada
- Germany
- Peru
- Switzerland

(Yes, welcome to Spanish squats where nobody is actually from Spain.)

On Halloween, we somehow ended up celebrating Christmas. Let me explain: Two guys of the house made cheese soup for everyone, while another girl was making stew. In the living room, a big fire was lighting up the room and people were gathering around reading books and playing boardgames. Once the food was ready, everyone ate and shared their experiences from the festival. It really felt like a family reunion, but without the sarcastic remarks of my grandparents.

Suddenly, Peter's eyes lit up: he jumped out of the room, ran outside and came back with cartons of boxed wine. He disappeared in the kitchen, and came back with a pot of mulled wine with oranges.

"MERRY CHRISTMAS!"

The next day being a holiday, we continued in the family spirit and went to an all you can eat restaurant. I'll let you imagine the look on people's faces when 10 weirdos with dreads and coloured hair showed up on the deck of the place with three dogs.

I've never had that much grease in my entire life.

Once everyone had finished stuffing their face with food we walked down to the beach. There we met a group of Germans that had stuck around the area since the festival. We watched the sunset, passing a bottle of liquor around while the dogs were running in every direction.

Somehow, it reminded me of that scene in "Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless Mind" when they're partying on the beach and Joel sits in a corner drawing in his journal. (In that case, Joel was me. And also if you haven't seen that movie: shame on you.)

To me, Spain was a very liberating destination. I had a lot of time to connect with people, reconnect with my emotions and issues I hadn't fixed, and made loads of art. I don't know why I had stopped drawing for so long. But I guess Peter's presence is the main reason. When I make art or write, I isolate myself from everyone else and dive deep into my ideas, sometimes it's almost obsessive. This year, instead of obsessing over art and my ideas, I spent a lot of time trying to get Peter out of my head, which obviously turned into an obsession against my will. I don't really know why I am psychoanalysing myself, but I think I needed to establish a link between my recent drawings and the ones I did in the summer.

Flash forward a few days and we're on our way back towards France. Getting out of Barcelona, we got kicked out of the train and had to wait an hour for the next one. When it finally arrived, the train employee lady let us ride for free. We got to the last stop of the train, I grabbed my stuff, walked out, and right as I was turning around to yell at Peter to move his ass because he was being slow, the doors closed and the train left. *WHAT THE FUCK.*

I walked around the train station aimlessly for a bit, and for once I wasn't feeling stressed at all. It's the first time I realised I was starting to get the hang of the traveling mishaps. Some guy saw me looking a bit lost and came up to me to pet my dog. I don't know what he wanted from me because I don't speak Spanish... He ended up walking away awkwardly, and I went back to sitting on a bench and smoking cigarettes. Half an hour had passed and I was starting to wonder if Peter would be stuck in the train hangar all night, when suddenly I heard someone yell at the end of the train tracks.

"HEEYYY I AM FREE! BACKFLIPS BABY LET'S GET OUT OF HERE"

Peter.

We walked into the train station hall to check the departures and feed the dogs, and I noticed the guy that had pet my dog earlier walk back and forth in and out of the hall, always staring at me. What the fuck was his deal?

I realised that guy would have stressed me out more with his behaviour if Peter wasn't around, but right then and there I didn't give a single fuck.

Once the dogs were fed we took another train to the last city before the border. On that train we started drinking Sangria, as a farewell to Spain. We were deep in a conversation, when suddenly the lights of the train went out. We hadn't noticed that the train had arrived at its destination a while ago and they had locked it because everyone had left. We got up and started laughing, banging on the door. After a while, train employees came to us with flashlights, asking us in Spanish what the fuck we were still doing on the train. They noticed we were laughing and they just turned to each other shaking heads.

"Those fucking tourists..."

YES, you read that right: we got locked in trains two times in a row. The same night. It's called talent. Deal with it.

The rest of the way was super easy. Only one train employee yelled at us for being freeloaders. He actually threatened to call the Swiss train company and have us registered in their national files, but I guess he didn't know that both of us have a bunch of unpaid fines and we're already in the national files... We made it to Lyon the next night and slept in a park, where we realised that this was definitely our last trip before spring. Fuck the cold.

#5 November and the future

It's Wednesday November 14th, and quite a lot of things have changed. Peter officially moved into my house. We have a room together on the second floor where all my friends live. The backpacks are stored away in the closet, and we hung fairy lights above the bed. Winter is getting closer, and I find myself reading and writing poetry again. I bought Rupi Kaur's books, and i'm really excited to read them.

I've been collecting my feelings in the notes of my phone over the past few months, and this is what came out of it:

***It's 4:30 in the morning and I love you. You're sleeping soundly,
and you'll never know how looking at your face made me want to
dance that night.***

***It's 12:46pm, you were already out of bed and about to leave but
you turned around to kiss me anyway.***

***It's midnight, you're high as fuck in the next room, I'm sober in
bed and I love you.***

***It's 5pm at the beach in Spain, you're watching the sunset and i'm
looking at your sun-kissed face.***

***It's 3am in our new bed, I can't sleep because thoughts are
running through my head. I am scared of the future and the
uncertainty that surrounds relationships. I know nothing lasts
forever, and one day you'll break my heart and pick up your
backpack again, but right now,
I love you.***

We have lived countless adventures, laughed, cried, loved and hated each other through it all. I know that to some people it might not be much, or "just another backpack story" but this year has turned my life around. This experience is by far one of the most challenging of my existence. Trying to handle love and crawling out of my comfort zone hasn't been easy, and at times I would find myself praying for somebody to take it all away and give me my old life back, but in the end... I wouldn't have done a single thing differently, and I'll cherish the memories that I carry in my olive green backpack forever.

And you, what colour is your backpack?

Next up in my adventures: January in the south
(and the rest of 2019 that has yet to come.)

I can't wait.

P.S: all of my stories are real, every place, every person exists. And if
you know them, this book is our little secret. So please, don't talk
about it.