

# CONNECTION THE GO









My arranged travel plans ripened. It was early July, and I traded my American car for trains, trams, trolleys, metros, buses and shuttles, leaving home to traverse and trot through Central Europe by way of a transportation system that I came to recognize as a living, breathing, buzzing entity on which many a city is centered around -- a lifeline stitched into the map by the diverse populace who've built their lives around it.

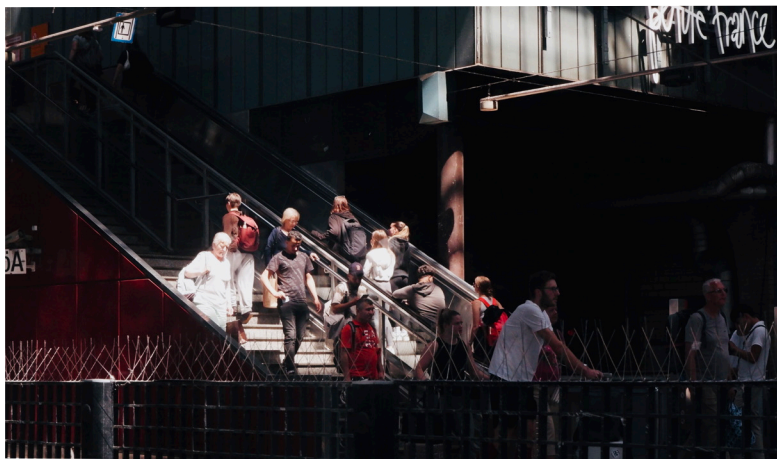
A railway map: a mirror of a body's arteries and veins, a vestige of what once was and still remains today. The subterranean complexity, the communities interwoven, the transfers required so destinations are reached. Hubs with pulsating activity dotted along stretches of muscle, the town's core, the joints the suburbs where the people keep the world working, the blood flowing. It's raw, it's unadulterated.

Smelly workmen's armpits rub up against you. The baby screams. The screech of the wheels the dark air flooding in, the foreign conversations filling the scene. A droplet of stress, but then maybe a breath of life. You step off at your station and up the steps from the platform out to level ground and onwards through that typical crowd, alone.

But disconnected you are not. For a brush of connection minutes ago with a stranger when grabbing the handrails, a wink or long curious stare held between two unknown stays with you aboveground. Maybe the sight of a kiss between lovers or the thought that each passenger standing before you has experienced the throes and triumphs of youth reminds you of this. Maybe the family hurling the kids into their departing train car, the way many give up their seats for you or situate to the right in case one is caught in a rush. There is a flow of things down there, though chaotic. No words may be spoken, but there's a trust, a congruency in the scene.

And out from underground, exiting a city by train, whisked away to another country, leaving those bygone memories behind -- it is here where this similar human harmonization also happens. Sinking into one's seat, knees bashing the stranger across the way. Panoramic passages past the last of the graffitied streets out to green countryside leave everyone lethargic, nostalgic. Carried off and away. In conjunction, together as one.





b.



c.



d.



e.



f.

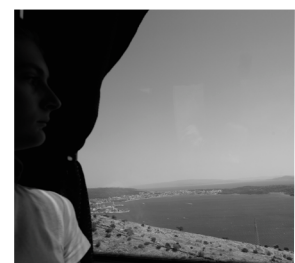
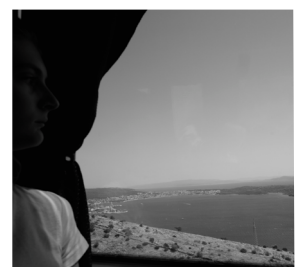
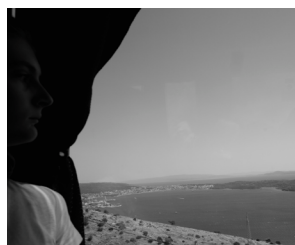


g.





h.



i.



j.



## DEAR DIARY,

We are on the second train of the day, after an early morning flight out of Split. There has been a reoccurrence of awaking with the early dawn, a magical time to enjoy so dreary-eyed and listless, registering so differently in my body as it stretches and curls amongst the sheets and steps out into the new day. I know I will sleep later, when the afternoon heat blankets whatever city I'm in that day and makes everything under it slow and lethargic.

The train just stopped at Grosseto, a comune on the Western coast of Italy, below Levanto, our main destination, and Pisa, our stop for the night. From the window I watched an Italian family embrace as the father pulled away from his wife and kids after a final kiss goodbye before boarding. I don't know him or where he is going, but I'm comforted by him being nearby because of the love I just witnessed. Around me are men of different ages. One moved over to the other side of the aisle to give Wes and I more space, the other ate a decadent sandwich a few hours ago and has been away deep in sleep ever since. I, too, slipped into a nap that my body, in its irritable state, began to demand. I awoke feeling safe and content as people passed in the aisle.

The countryside is sweeping by from the window. There's nothing specific to look at but I appreciate the expanse as my mind works better in the middle of this rather than the foreign streets and graffitied buildings and endless people. It is almost a certain initiation period we go through, traveling by train through the barren

landscapes and isolated stations of a country before arriving in the city we plan to sleep in and get lost in and eventually attempt to get to know. It is in these stretches of time beforehand when I see clearly the extent of movement we have embarked on. And it allows me to silently slip into this travel with others who share my destination. We all jump on a train and together, get thrust through all this land -- I quite like this thought.

I'm coming to terms with not only my evolving nature on this trip but the trip's own fluidity. Karen and Jo have left to make their way home; we recently left Rob and Mackenzie in Pirovac. Italy and Switzerland remain, and the great journey home, of course. It has felt long and short and exhausting and all the while, the most energizing thing I've ever done. It has brought new feelings to the surface, morphed my interpretations, written new code into the self -- these are things one can't quite pinpoint or plan for. To the same extent I am moving through this journey, it is moving through me. And this, I find fascinating and in need of more reflection, possibly when all is said and done, and I am back home wondering where all the time went. Dissecting each memory engrained and etched into this July and August, I'll sit back in remembrance. I will sit there for hours maybe, or simply slip back into this calm state I find myself in right now, during the months that follow, as the journey I call "done" is in fact only just begun. And that, is why I travel.

August 4, Italy



## START

GOD THE JOYS OF GETTING TO A TRAIN  
STATION ON TIME, ONE WITH THREE  
PLATFORMS TO BE EXACT, AND JUMPING ON  
OURS WITH THE EASE OF TWO GIRLS WHO'VE  
BEEN AWAY FROM HOME FOR SOME TIME AND  
SPENT MUCH OF THAT WHOOSHING THROUGH  
STATIONS, LOOKING UP AT THE TIME BOARD WITH  
HURRIED EYES, HOPING THE MINUTES WILL STOP  
AS TO ENSURE WE FIND OUR DAMN PLATFORM THAT  
SEEMS TO BE HIDING FROM US -- BUT ISN'T THAT ALL  
PART OF IT? THE AIR IS COLD, THE COACH IS EMPTY SAVE  
FOR A WOMAN LISTLESSLY STARING OUT TO SEA ACROSS  
THE AISLE FROM US AND A FAMILY WITH YOUNG BOYS  
ENJOYING THEIR PASTRIES. I LOOK OVER AT WES, WHO LIKE  
ME, HAS GROWN USED TO THIS NOMADIC SUMMER OF OURS,  
SPENDING NO MORE THAN THREE DAYS IN A PLACE. WE BOTH  
SUNK INTO OUR TRAIN SEATS AND SPRAWLED OUR BELONGINGS  
ON THE TABLE IN FRONT OF US LIKE WE HAVE SO MANY  
TIMES THIS MONTH. IT HAS BECOME A  
JOY, A PLEASURE I NEVER  
KNEW I WOULD





# Milano

## August 7

### 10:50 am


SAY, TO HAVE THREE HOURS AHEAD OF US SCHEDULED TO DO NOTHING MORE THAN LOOK OUT AT THE PASSING SCENES. RIGHT NOW IT'S THE TOWN OF RIVA TRIGOSO. AS I LOOKED UP FROM MY PAPER I CAUGHT THE LAST GLIMPSES OF A SMALL CEMETERY, WITH STONE STATUES OF ANGELS AND GODS AGES OF GENERATIONS TOWERING OVER ALMOST EVERY ONE OF THE SLEEPING DEAD PUT TO REST THERE. THOSE VIBRANT PASTEL COLORS THAT I LOVE SO DEARLY BLEND OUTSIDE THE WINDOW WITH THE DEEP GREENS OF THE OLIVE GROVES AND FLOWERING BUSHES. AS WE KEEP MOVING THROUGH THE COAST, IN AND OUT OF TUNNELS CARVED INTO THE MOUNTAIN SIDE, STOPPING AT QUIANT STATIONS, LOOKING AT ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE PLATFORMS, AND HOPING THE ONES BARRELING THROUGH THE AISLE WITH THEIR GIANT SUITCASES, DOGS OR LOUD CHILDREN DON'T STOP AT OUR TABLE TO SIT, I STILL HAVE A BURNING DESIRE TO REVEL IN MY CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ALL THESE STRANGERS. THE FOREIGN CONNECTIONS THROUGH SILENT STARES AND THE OCCASIONAL SMILE EXCITE ME VERY MUCH. NOW WE ARE STOPPING IN SESTRI LEVANTE. A HOUSE JUST OFF PAST THE TRACKS HAS LAUNDRY SWAYING EVER-SO SLIGHTLY, CASTING A SMALL SHADOW ON THE SIDE OF THE WALL, PAINTED A BUBBLEGUM PINK WITH DARK GREEN WINDOW SHUTTERS. I'M GLAD WE STOPPED SO I COULD SPEND EVEN A FEW SECONDS STARING AT THAT BEAUTY, A REMINDER OF ALL THAT'S OUTSIDE, AROUND ME AND INSIDE. A PRODUCT OF MY PAST AND THIS DELICIOUSLY BEAUTIFUL SUMMER I'VE WADED DEEP INTO, SOON TO BE MADE FULLER IN MILAN AND SWITZERLAND.

## MIDDLE OF NOWHERE



Home started out singular,  
one feeling cultivated  
in one place  
replication impossible  
then moved to being  
wherever  
family resided.  
Now it is inside of  
me, home.  
I carry it and it  
displays itself  
out at sea on a  
Croatian island  
and in a stuffy hostel  
in the MIDDLE OF  
NOWHERE  
and every-  
thing.



A photograph of a person sitting on a balcony, viewed from behind. The person is wearing a dark blue shirt and light-colored shorts. They are sitting on a red tiled floor. In front of them is a yellow wall. To the right, there is a blue water bottle and some other items. The balcony overlooks a valley with houses and a hill in the background. The sky is clear and blue.

Out on the balcony  
trying to write  
My stomach, tanned  
by this heat, lays  
limp on the red tile

Out past the hill I'm situated on  
lays a valley of houses pastel, vibrant  
verandahs and that line of laundry  
hanging off every window  
baking in the sun and  
reminding me I'm far from home.  
The cicadas make this heat hotter  
I close my eyes to feel

the wind and I

open them to life here until my train  
departs

and life here con-  
tinues.



n.



o.



p.



q.



r.



s.



a. Karen Gry from out the window during our train's brief pit-stop; somewhere in NORTHERN CROATIA b. Passing faces; HAMBURG, GERMANY c. Reflections; BERLIN, GERMANY d. Boarding; somewhere in NORTHERN CROATIA e. S-Bahn train; BERLIN, GERMANY f. Hands; PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC g. Arms; train to ZAGREB, CROATIA h. Legs; train to ZAGREB, CROATIA i. Silhouette; SPLIT, CROATIA j. Girls en-route; SPLIT, CROATIA k. Movement from a stationary perspective; COPENHAGEN, DENMARK l. Waiting for the bus; SPLIT, CROATIA m. Body on the balcony; LEVANTO, ITALY n. Lethargic train platform; LEVANTO, ITALY o. Rushhour; VIENNA, AUSTRIA p. A cramped correspondence; VIENNA, AUSTRIA q. Whisked through town via tram; PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC r. Commuters and tourists; PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC s. Train conductor; stopped somewhere in NORTHERN CROATIA



BY

ANGIE STEVENS

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