

# embrace



# summer nostalgia



# Colophon

*EmbrACE is the official magazine of the Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication. It connects students and faculty staff with topics related to history, culture and the media industry. The editorial team of EmbrACE is part of the International Faculty Association ACE.*

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# Editor's Note

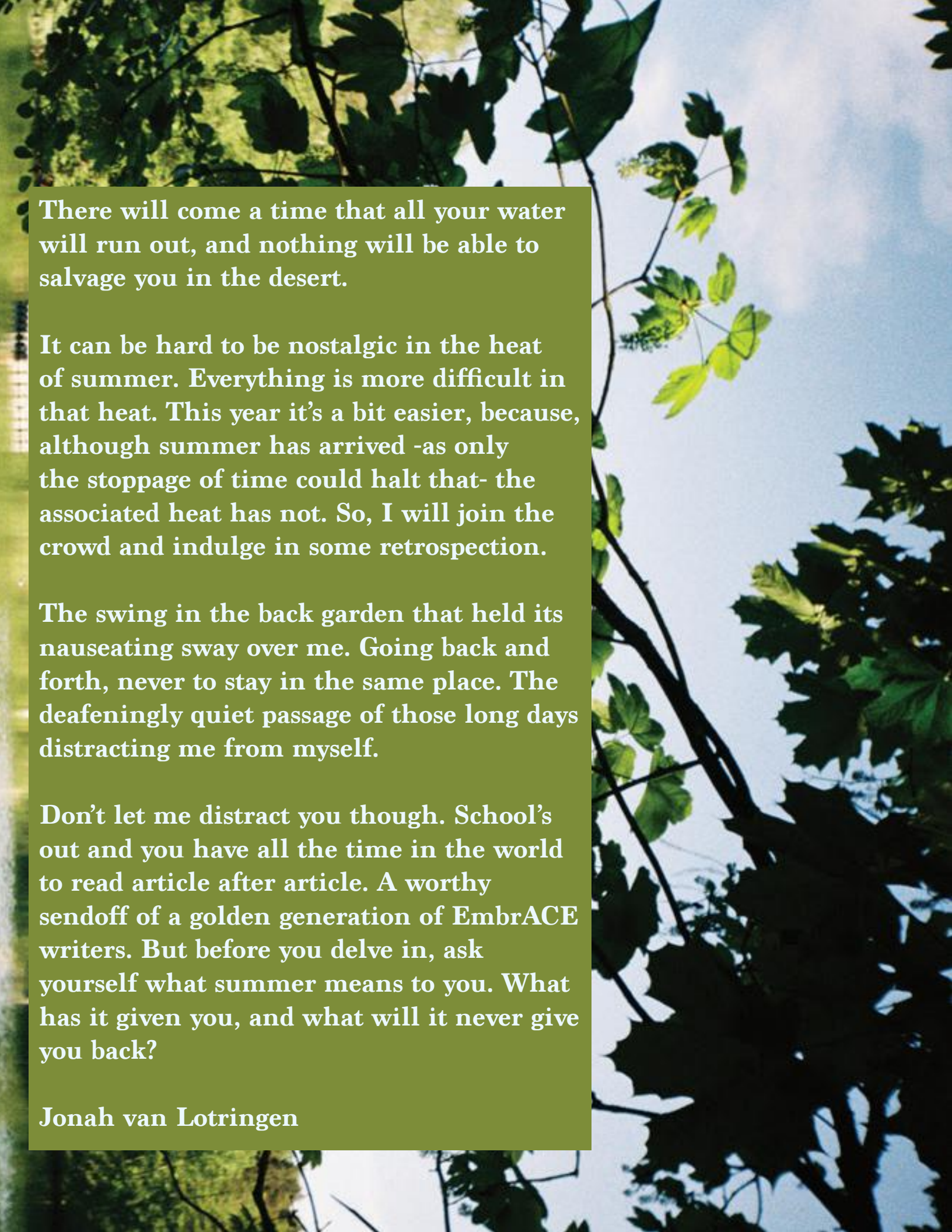
Dear reader,

Summer lies in between spring and autumn like a desert. A bleak, dry, scorching desert. Little life lives here and it's hidden from sight. The only thing standing out in sandy seas is a fatah morgana, that will drain you if you can't accept its illusory nature. You may venture into this desert accompanied, but you will leave it alone. You won't even get the opportunity to say goodbye, because how could you say goodbye if there was never a proper hello?

Don't let this disparage you though. The coming of summer is inevitable so you might as well embrace it. Speaking of embrace, you are currently reading the last issue of EmbrACE for this academic year. Our wonderful writers reflect on nostalgia, and how summer always seems to feed this haunting spectre of the past.

Summer does not hold its sentimental power over me personally. I have a somewhat colder relationship with these warm months, although the silky soft claws of summery rays of sunshine have nearly seduced me plenty of times. It is not I who chose this antagonistic relationship with this time of year however, and if I get an apology, I will happily dance to the singing of waves crashing on a moonlit beach.

Summer is the deluge that cleanses us, but every year a bigger deluge seems to be needed. Too big to be caught in even the biggest of paper cups.



There will come a time that all your water will run out, and nothing will be able to salvage you in the desert.

It can be hard to be nostalgic in the heat of summer. Everything is more difficult in that heat. This year it's a bit easier, because, although summer has arrived -as only the stoppage of time could halt that- the associated heat has not. So, I will join the crowd and indulge in some retrospection.

The swing in the back garden that held its nauseating sway over me. Going back and forth, never to stay in the same place. The deafeningly quiet passage of those long days distracting me from myself.

Don't let me distract you though. School's out and you have all the time in the world to read article after article. A worthy sendoff of a golden generation of EmbrACE writers. But before you delve in, ask yourself what summer means to you. What has it given you, and what will it never give you back?

Jonah van Lotringen



# A Guide to Eastern European Childhood

BY SOFIA MAIOR

Hi, traveller. I'm so pleased to welcome you here. Don't be afraid, we have many things to share with you.

Okay, I'm just kidding. I had a hard time writing the opening for this article as it isn't just a guide - it's a representation of 17 years of my life in Ukraine and the lives of fellow Eastern Europeans. It is something that is both tough and delightful to talk about. But there are no better words than the truth, so I recommend we jump straight into the topic and get the full-range notion of an Eastern European childhood. Don't worry. I will be your guide today.

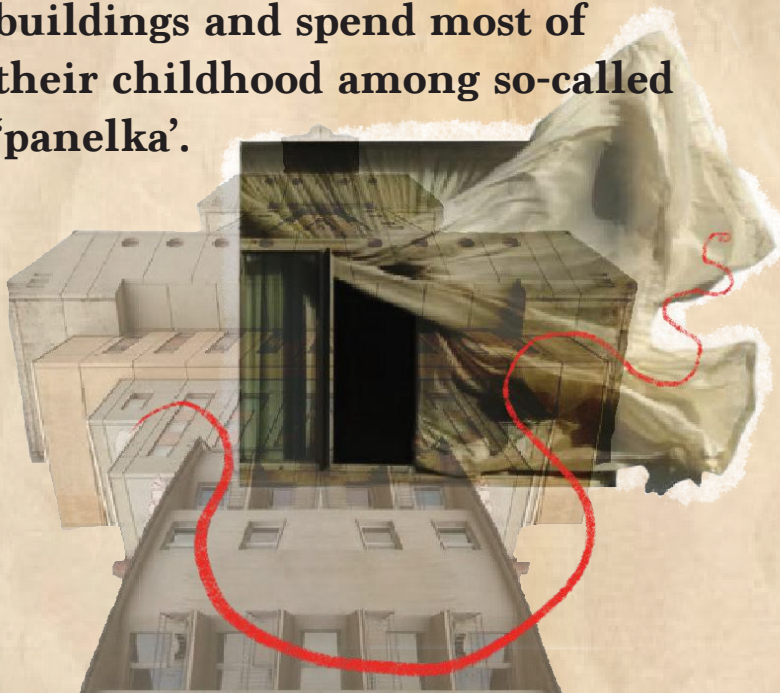
We are just beginning our path.





Where are we heading? My dear friend, this considerable bridge building is called a Stalinka. Stalinkas, named after Joseph Stalin, are massive buildings, characterized by their neoclassical architecture. Built with durability in mind, Stalinkas were designed to reflect the might and stability of the Soviet Union. The apartments inside are typically large, with high ceilings and thick walls. These buildings were a statement of power and stability, often located in prominent areas of cities to showcase Soviet architectural prowess.

Even though the Soviet Union era is long past, many people still live in these old panel buildings and spend most of their childhood among so-called 'panelka'.



If we go a bit further, we will see a classic playground with some of my favorite attractions. Here, you can find a rocket-shaped climber—my ultimate childhood choice. As for games, we played hide-and-seek, touch-and-run, and the special one, 'The Sea is Waving', or original name 'More volnuetsa'. Here is a short guide with some rules just for you.

Before the game begins, a captain is chosen using a counting rhyme: "Waves were wandering on the sea, And the ship they were rocking, But the storm isn't scary for us - We have a brave captain!" (The person who is pointed to at the word "captain" becomes the captain and steps forward, standing in front of all the players).



The captain recites the words, and all players, moving their arms, imitate the waves in the sea: “The sea is waving – one! The sea is waving – two! The sea is waving – three! Freeze in a sea figure pose!” After these words, all players who were imitating the waves “freeze” in a static pose.

The captain then walks among the frozen figures and gradually touches them with their hand. The one whom the captain touches “comes to life” and starts moving to portray the character they have chosen. The captain tries to guess and name the image being portrayed. The more images the captain guesses correctly, the better the result.

We couldn't imagine a proper childhood without a village. We all used to go there during summer holidays or weekends. We all had some grandparents living in the countryside, and visiting them was an essential activity at that time because you could walk in the forest, swim in the lake and river, play in the field, and many other things that weren't an option back in the city. We all enjoyed a long, lazy nap on a huge down pillow under an old, colourful carpet hanging on the wall.

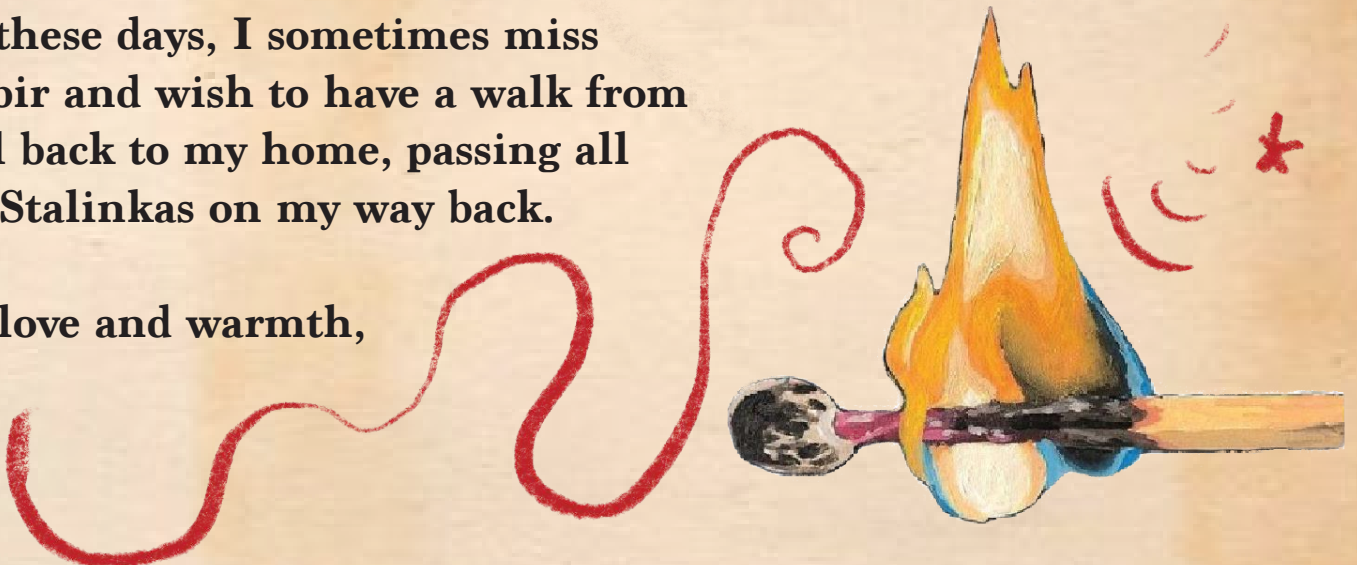




What about our food of choice? The top products were bracelet candy, which you could eat straight from your hand (they even had a watch version for boys), Zyvchyk, a sweet lemonade which you could get in pear, apple, and cherry flavors, and the last one, plombir - an ice cream made with vanilla, cream, eggs, and sugar. It's sweet and natural and doesn't have any artificial flavorings. We used to call it plain ice cream and enjoy it being sold directly in a waffle cup glazed with some sugar on top.

Well, that's it. I could spend hours and hours telling you all about the games, TV shows, and favorite activities, but I feel like I gave you a solid base for your future research. Take care, and always return to your memories when you miss home. Sometimes only a warm touch of childhood memories can help you to recollect who you are. Even these days, I sometimes miss Plombir and wish to have a walk from school back to my home, passing all those Stalinkas on my way back.

With love and warmth,  
Sonya





# A Bookish Childhood Abnormality

BY MAYA  
BARAKOVA

Somehow without thinking, reading books became a habit of mine slowly taking over my childhood summers. My cousin and I would spend every sunburnt summer minute together - from rollerblading at the park, pretending to be spies, to generally just running around. One of the things we also did together was reading, however, this pastime was not a choice, it was rather urged by our moms to read the school summer book list. Our ten-year-old selves were still malleable at the time so we just did what we were told. We had our moments of rebellion but those faded rather quickly; we were both generally agreeable by nature. Regardless, in our minds summer was time to unleash bursts of energy, it was meant for frolicking at the beach and completely disregarding the immeasurable August heat.

However, sometime in the long afternoons after gaining a considerable amount of sunburn at the beach and maybe or maybe not having gotten a heat stroke, we go back to the safe space of my grandma's AC-ed home and open a book. In my vague recollections of those summer reading times, I remember reading some extensive journey notes of some Bulgarian high society figures. One should wonder what a ten-year-old could do with information about a man visiting a butcher shop in Chicago. For a couple of years, during my gullible pre-teen to early teenage years, we kept reading the school summer book list. As a not-yet-developed-



frontal-lobe-pre-teen I was struggling with the material, yes, but I was struggling together with my cousin. In a way suffering together was what made my memories all so bittersweet. Being caught sleeping over a Bulgarian classic was less embarrassing knowing somewhere my cousin was dozing off to the same content.

Yet this wholesome journey my cousin and I go through every summer has an inevitable turning point. At some point, both my same-age-yet-some-how-cooler cousin and I, to both of our moms' disappointment, lost the interest in reading any of the books from the school list. However, we had different reasons to do so. She developed other interests while I found the Hunger Games trilogy. It was during one of those hot filled with mosquito bites summers that I received the three books as a gift. I consumed that young adult

fiction like I was a starving man on a deserted island. I felt like I was a house-elf and that trilogy was what set me free. With my newly discovered free will, I wanted to read books outside of the small summer list set by our schools. From then on I picked various books from my grandma's library. By library, I mean her bookshelves and an entire attic filled with books. Most of the books my grandparents owned were not young adult fiction. However, there were some real gems patiently waiting for me to pick them up. Even when I don't always find anything interesting to read I have always found it fun to see what other people were reading. Even if that meant going to a dusty suspicious-looking old attic.

Nostalgically,  
Maya





# Do you remember the days,

when time flew by,  
and you were sad that you could not  
play outside anymore with your friends.  
Where everything around you seemed  
brighter.

Where there was a time you ran inside to  
drink some water,  
and went straight back to playing outside.  
The time when you had no worries,  
unless your favorite candy was not there.  
Or when you had energy for two,  
that even lacking sleep you still weren't  
tired.



Those were the days of being a child.  
Those are the days of nostalgia.  
Because now you have worries,  
not about candy but about life.  
Now you are tired more easily,  
so you want to sleep early instead of  
begging to stay up and watch a movie.  
Now you have to behave like an adult,  
with the child buried deep inside you,  
which is only allowed to come forward  
when it is time to reminisce, about the  
old days.

**BY SAKINA  
FUTTERER**



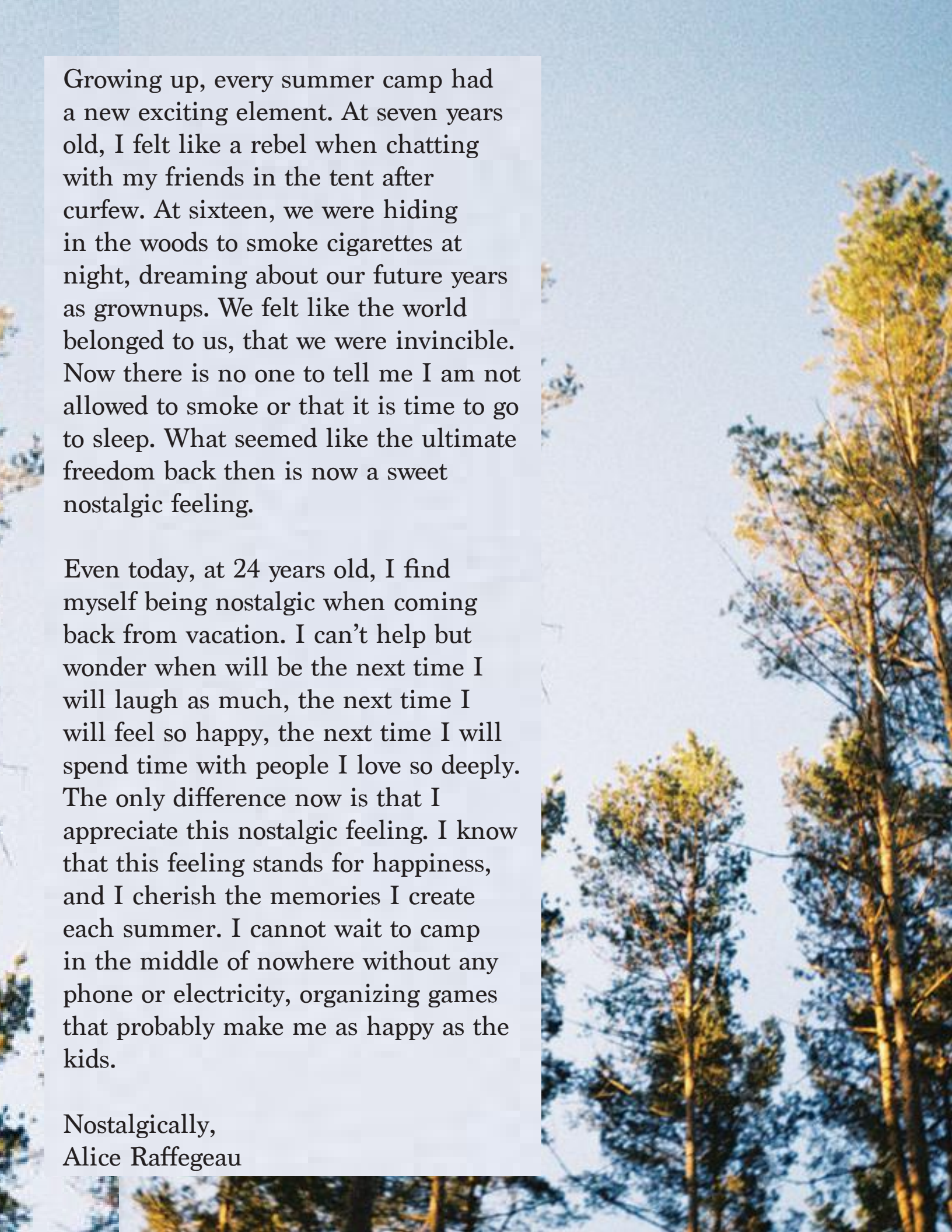
# Echoes of Summer

BY ALICE  
RAFFEGEAU

Every summer since I was seven, I have spent part of my summer break on a scout camp. Every time I was dreading the departure, knowing that I was going to sleep in a tent for two weeks and take icy showers. However, returning from these camps I always felt nostalgic, wishing I had stayed there forever. Back in my bedroom, I would sit in front of my window and let the memories from the previous weeks invade me. After spending every minute of my days surrounded by friends, familiar voices, and loud laughs, there was nothing but loneliness left. My parents and siblings were there, but it wasn't the same. They were not interested in strolling through the forest while looking for the perfect spot to build a swing. They didn't know the right songs by heart and were not interested in racing until the closest tree with me.

I missed the smell of campfire and the burned taste of grilled marshmallows. I missed the satisfaction of sleeping in a tiny tent that felt like our home, surrounded by a bunch of friends. Going to sleep alone, without anyone to say "Wait I didn't tell you..." after everyone said goodnight already, made me realize how these insignificant moments were extraordinary. I was missing the daily activities, being busy playing games and building stuff in the woods all day, and singing songs at night. During these two weeks, there were no no parents, no classes, no humdrum. It was a different world, with its own rules and hierarchy, that overall fitted me way better than the real world.





Growing up, every summer camp had a new exciting element. At seven years old, I felt like a rebel when chatting with my friends in the tent after curfew. At sixteen, we were hiding in the woods to smoke cigarettes at night, dreaming about our future years as grownups. We felt like the world belonged to us, that we were invincible. Now there is no one to tell me I am not allowed to smoke or that it is time to go to sleep. What seemed like the ultimate freedom back then is now a sweet nostalgic feeling.

Even today, at 24 years old, I find myself being nostalgic when coming back from vacation. I can't help but wonder when will be the next time I will laugh as much, the next time I will feel so happy, the next time I will spend time with people I love so deeply. The only difference now is that I appreciate this nostalgic feeling. I know that this feeling stands for happiness, and I cherish the memories I create each summer. I cannot wait to camp in the middle of nowhere without any phone or electricity, organizing games that probably make me as happy as the kids.

Nostalgically,  
Alice Raffegau



# To Live for the Hope of it All

BY ANUSHKA  
MASSAND

Summer in India was filled with afternoon naps, two showers a day, spending afternoons walking in air conditioned malls. The house smelled of mangoes wrapped in newspapers. The wait for those alphansos to ripen perfectly so you can eat them messily. You could feel the frustration of parents having their kids at home all the time so some of us were enrolled in hobby classes or you were just kicked out of the house after breakfast with an expectation to be back by lunch which was followed by a mandatory afternoon nap. Evenings were play time again and dinner was at home or at a friend's house. There was something freeing like a sock being handed to you with play time extending post 7pm.

Just the idea of summer makes me so delighted. Summer smells like freedom in my airy cotton dresses. I could do anything. The part of summer I do not like apart from the heat is that it comes to an end. It's the same but not really the same next summer. All good things come to an end, so does the vacation, the time off and all the summer romances. As they slowly disappear like the sun, I try to carry parts of me from all the summers I have lived and loved. I am excited for this summer. I hope to live for the hope of it all this summer. The world feels to be filled with possibilities again. I feel like I am in Phineas and Ferb. Everyday I wake up, I could do something different. I wonder why we ever stopped it? Why did we stop making summer bucket lists?



# \* Here's my 2024 summer bucket list: \*

- Go swimming (at least float) in the ocean
- Wear summer dresses
- Cycle through Kinderdijk
- Go out on a date
- Pet 3 different types of animals
- Build a tent
- Send postcards
- Hug a friend and mean it
- Make dessert
- Go to the beach to see the sunset
- Visit an amusement park or water park
- Visit Texel
- Roller skating
- Go to Cinerama
- Paint your nails summer theme
- Make a summer playlist
- Watch a play
- Write a fictional story about your life
- Film a short summer movie (bonus if you get people to act in it)



# Nostalgia: A Longing for Something in the Past

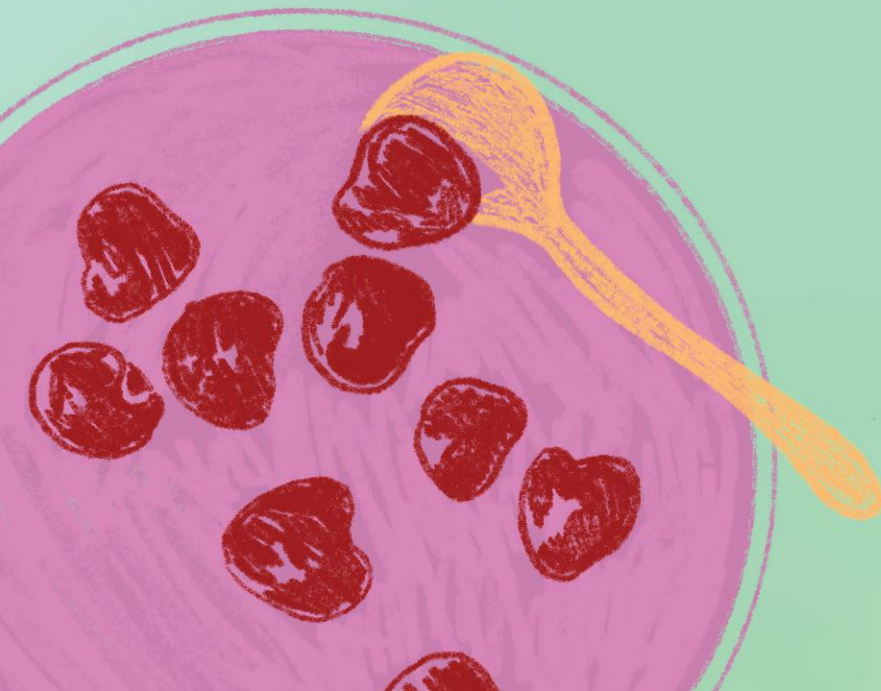
**BY ANNA  
MOTYBEL**

I suppose all of us have something from their past that they deeply long for. Something that, in the moment, they got to enjoy, but now can never go back to.

For me that would have to be the Polish summers. The warm days we spent together before the years

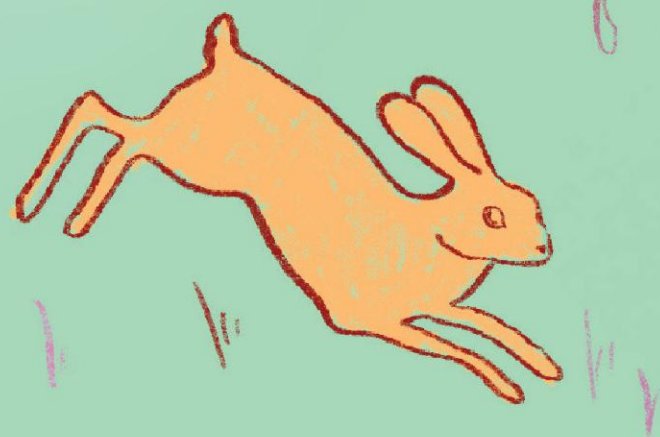
passed by, and tore us apart.

When grandma would make me cherry soup in the kitchen of her little apartment, while my sister and I would sit on the carpet making woolen dolls. And how she'd always take out the pits of a watermelon so that we'd only taste the sweetness and wouldn't get juice all over our hands. How we'd all sit and chat on the balcony till late at night, watching the rabbits down below. That's what I long for.





The summer warmth, the sun that hits the broken pavements. Country roads with a constant buzzing sound. The smell of morning dew when we'd leave the house to feed the rabbits and chickens at my grandpa's barn. The storks that would hang around the fields, looking for mice. The flower crowns and cucumber harvests. Singing to 'Czerwone Gitary' as the night fades.

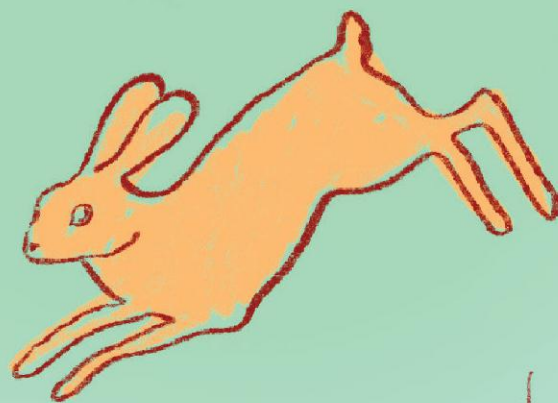


The warmth of a fire and soft cracking sound of wood. The taste of a grilled kaszanka, while i still didn't know what it was. And the bread slowly toasting on the stones of a fire pit. Those are all things that I long for.

How with my sister and cousin we'd make pea soup, out of the water from a barrel and uncooked peas from the garden. How we'd go picking raspberries, only to come out covered in mosquito bites and thorns in our hands. How the days were everlasting, the nights calm and quiet, the sky blue, and the grass scent present all around.

These were the times, I wish I could relive.

And now, as her red hair starts fading into silver, and as he starts to stumble and forget my name, as his house becomes empty, and as he starts to no longer care, the summer nostalgia comes back again.





# Back to Basics:

## Old-school activities that should make a comeback during your summer

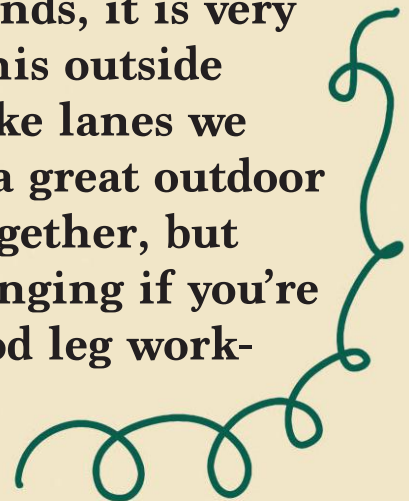
**BY NOA OP 'T ENDE**

Even though the weather might not look like it every day, summer is right around the corner. One more month of exams, thesis, and assignments to go, and then it's time to clear our heads summer style! And after having spent probably most of your academic year behind computer screens, a good screen detox doesn't sound so bad, right? And since the best summers are the ones filled with nostalgia (the smell of sunscreen, or that one 00's summer song), let me give you some suggestions on how you can spend all that free time you'll have - but extremely old-school.



### Roller-blading

When thinking of a true 80s activity our parents used to do, one of the first things coming to mind are those indoor skating rinks we see in the movies. The vibrant neon lights, the shimmering disco ball, and Whitney or a-Ha playing in the background. Roller-blading was a great pastime and social activity with friends, family, or a cute date - and it's making a comeback! But in the Netherlands, it is very popular to do this outside on the many bike lanes we have. Not only a great outdoor activity to do together, but also very challenging if you're in need of a good leg workout (trust me).





## Drive-in movies

Though going to a drive-in movie might not be part of your childhood, going to the movies most probably is. There's something so fun and comforting about watching movies on a big screen, with a big popcorn-bucket in your lap. But with nice weather outside, it doesn't sound as attractive to sit inside in the dark to watch a rom-com. Makes sense then that drive-in movies during these summer months are becoming popular again, right? Giving total Grease-vibes, it's a great alternative to a classic activity. Even better: you can bring your own snacks and make your seat as comfortable as you want. And if you don't have a car, outdoor screenings (at outdoor cafes, beaches, and on rooftops) are also really worth the hype. Not such a bad idea to be 'stranded at the drive-in', right?



## Friendship bracelets

Now that the year is coming to an end, it's also time to say goodbye. For some for only a few weeks, but others might be going on exchange, moving to another city, or perhaps even going back to their home countries. So would it not be especially fitting to make a nice token of friendship with your study buddy's? Go find some cheap beaded bracelets with your friends in the city, each choose your personal favorite, and make new bracelets with a mix of all your beads. Such a simple childhood activity, but one that can hold so many memories at the same time - especially from opposite sides of the world. Especially nice to do during that picnic you planned in the park!





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