

my name is CVCV CVCVCVC  
today is june second two thousands thirteen  
and i will be talking about travel  
so my whole life our family has done a lot of traveling  
my parents have never really bought us stuff  
they would rather put their money towards experiences  
so i've been to more countries than states and almost as many continents  
so i'm very grateful for that  
when i was in fifth grade  
i don't remember if i was ten or eleven  
it's a little fuzzy  
cause it was so long ago  
but our family took a trip  
our grandparents decided to take us on a trip down to the galapagos  
which i think actually will be closed to tourism soon  
which is unfortunate  
cause it's so cool  
but on the trip down there we joked that hey we visited texas  
because we were in the airport  
but my mom said it didn't count  
so whatever  
but on our way down we stopped in the houston airport  
and then we had another leg down to ecuador  
and then from there we took a one hour flight out to the islands on this rickety plane that i  
was convinced it was gonna fall out of the sky  
because it was creaking as it was flying  
and it was really freaky  
but it was cool  
we landed  
and we didn't die  
so it was ok  
but when we got there  
we all got loaded onto these little boats that took us to the main boat  
i guess you could say  
there were forty eight people  
it wasn't really a cruise exactly

cause when i think cruise  
i think those big behemoth boats that are just ridiculous and hold a thousand people or something  
but there were forty eight of us  
there were a few kids mostly adults mostly old people  
but that was ok  
cause i was young and i wanted to be friends with everybody  
so i made friends with everybody  
but when we got there  
we were all exhausted  
so we went to bed yada yada  
the next day they took us ashore  
and we went on a hike  
and it was a lot of fun  
and of course i got yelled at  
because i had the tendency to run ahead of everybody else and get lost  
so they had to make sure i kept where i was supposed to  
but one of the little girls she was about six  
and she was really shy  
but she got all excited  
because there was someone who'd like to do active things  
and so she had her dad come up to me  
he's like my daughter was wondering if you would be her friend  
and i said oh yeah sure of course i'll be her friend  
and so that was the start of a glorious one week relationship  
it was awesome  
we had a really good time  
she was adorable  
her and her family were from argentina  
and so i was happy that i had a friend while i was there  
because my brother is a little standoffish sometimes when he's with other people  
he likes to pretend that we're not related  
so it's ok  
but we get along sometimes  
in any case there was also other set of siblings  
and we spent a lot of time with them

they thought my brother and i were a little insane  
cause we enjoyed jumping off the top of the boat  
but that's alright  
it was fun anyway  
they were missing out on a good time  
one of the things that i remember very clearly ironically cause it's about clear water but was  
that we would stand on the boat and we'd be in sixty to seventy foot deep water and you could  
look straight down and see straight to the bottom  
it was that clear  
and it was amazing  
you didn't actually get a lot of sunsets  
while you were there  
cause sunsets are created by the particles in the air blah blah blah  
i'm getting my biology brain on again  
but so while we were there  
apparently we got really lucky  
cause we got one sunset  
and it was pretty spectacular  
it was very very beautiful  
another thing that was pretty awesome  
because that's another great adjective  
cause i don't know how to exactly describe it  
but the animals there are not afraid of humans  
because they haven't been conditioned to be afraid of humans per se  
and so you could basically walk up to the wildlife all of the wildlife  
like you would get in the water  
and the sea lions would swim to you  
and they'd play with you  
we have a video of my brother playing in the surf with one of the baby sea lions  
it was so cool  
and when you snorkel  
they would come up  
and swim around you  
while you were snorkeling through the water  
and it was really cool  
on the other they have a tradition there

they have this old post office  
it's not really a post office  
but what you do is you go and you leave a card  
you put your address  
you write a little note  
and then you go through all the ones that are there  
and if you find one that is from where you live  
you're supposed to take it  
and then hand deliver it to the people that is addressed to  
so we left one  
and we actually found one from there  
which was cool  
i didn't deliver it  
my parents did  
but that was still fun  
but we left one  
and about a month later after we got home  
we got it in the mail  
a family in germany picked it up  
and mailed it to us  
and i think you missed the point of the experience  
you're supposed to pick it up  
but whatever it was ok  
apparently there's a redman in germany which is where we live  
and so they got all confused  
but that's ok  
we got our postcard back  
which was fun  
a downside to the trip a little bit was that one of the guides who was there  
he was best known for his penguin call  
there're penguins in galapagos found the story  
but he got kidney stones about halfway through the trip  
and so they had to get him out of there really fast  
that was unfortunate  
cuz he was really nice  
i missed him

when he went  
but while we were there  
there was this guy who was taking a video of the trip and everything  
and he made dvds for everybody  
sometimes i still go back  
and watch it  
and realize that i was a very awkward looking child  
but that's ok  
it was fun  
i had this awesome pink bathing suit and with snorkels on  
it made it awesome  
but one of the other things that we did was we went to a wildlife preserve i think  
and they had the last of his species  
it was a giant tortoise lonely george  
i think he just died a few years ago  
but we got to visit him  
and he was the last of his species  
so he couldn't exactly make new baby lonely georges  
that didn't work that way unfortunately  
but i'd say it was exciting  
except for he didn't really move  
so  
as a ten year old it's a little hard  
when things aren't moving  
cuz you want things to be exciting  
on the way back home unfortunately my mom actually my grandpa my mom and my dad and  
i all accidentally drank the water  
on the way back we had managed to drink bottled water the whole time we were there  
and then in the airport back we thought we were ok  
i think my grandpa and my dad had ice in their drinks  
and so we all got really really sick  
so the plane ride home was not a lot of fun  
that's most of what i remember from that one  
last summer i went on a school exchange to australia for three weeks  
and i stayed with a family  
while i was there

i know i went on my summer vacation to go to school for three extra weeks  
but that's ok  
it was still a lot of fun  
and while i was there  
it wasn't hard to adjust  
but it was very very different there  
you go to a new place  
you're expecting oh the culture's really different obviously blah blah blah  
but i'd never really been to a place  
and lived with a family  
or been with the locals i guess  
to do what they do and see what they do  
cuz when you go to a place  
and my family's more of like we go to places and we're the tourist  
which i wish wasn't as much of a thing  
but sort of full places  
so i didn't complain obviously  
though i was there  
i was sort of in the culture as opposed to watching it  
and so i went to school with them  
and there were a lot of things that were very very different  
most of what i noticed was at school  
their school is a lot different than our school  
and maybe i go to a odd school in terms of relationships with students and teachers  
i'm very close with my teachers  
but there it was a business relationship  
the teachers taught  
and the students were supposed to pay attention  
but they didn't  
the girls i spent time with basically didn't do their homework ever  
which was weird for me  
because especially our class is sort of like let's do our homework and then some  
because we're just that over achieving  
cuz it's hey it made me do my work  
but that was hard for me to watch  
because i'm like aren't you supposed to be doing this

but we got there  
and they didn't do their homework  
they'd much rather be social  
and be in bed by nine o'clock  
and that's wasn't really something that i was used to  
so one of my biggest things was keeping my mouth shut about it  
because i'm only there for three weeks  
choose your battles  
there were a lot of cultural things too that i was unfamiliar with  
i'm sure they're here just in my small sheltered little community  
we're all very open and everything  
and so everyone's very accepting  
and they're very can't think of the word right now  
but anyone outside of their own little bubble  
you're not white and australian  
they make jokes about you  
which was uncomfortable for me personally  
because i don't know our school is like everybody all in one place  
and we're all pretty open about everything  
so they would make a lot of slurs about things  
which was me being all righteous  
but it was hard for me not to say anything  
and i probably should have  
but i didn't  
because there for three weeks  
and i decided to be friends  
instead of having oh that's the girl from america she doesn't approve of us or something like  
that  
which is probably good  
because then the girl i stay with came and stayed with us for three weeks  
so that'd been awkward oh hey that's the girl who doesn't like us maybe i don't wanna live with  
her  
that would've been a problem  
i actually got along with my host sister really well  
and she was really happy i was there  
because she didn't quite agree with a lot of what her friends said either

because she wishes

when she came to visit us at our school

she's like i wish i went to your school instead of mine because your guys are a lot more accepting and you're actually interested in doing well in school and you're not

that was not a sentence

but in any case yes that was a very interesting experience for me

and yes that is my story