

Mt. Meron journal

Thurs. May 31 I had the most wonderful evening pre-senior-meet a woman named Martha in my Airbnb. We chatted in the late afternoon on the deck. Thessaloniki is immediately comforting - I missed Greece and its concrete apartments. Martha is from Australia but moved to Europe accidentally, intending to stay for six days and staying instead for five years. I had my favorite Greek foods in a café by the water - ordering enough to share out of habit, and dining like a queen - until Martha swooped me later. We polished off the satafiel together and meandered towards the water to take one of those tourist boats that looks like a mini golf course. It was lovely. We walked back together and she told me about her Greek parents, stopping to peer in the window of a toy shop, enchanted. That evening she gifted me a vintage dress she bought in Athens earlier.

Sunday, June 3. I'm not used to seeing Greece like this! Many tours and long walks through churches, many more than I knew were here. Lovely side chats between tours with this group. Funny how the chats are almost always about anything but not often the subject of the tours: Malina & I talked about Bosnia, Nikki talked about the difficulties of her first year. Days are long in great ways. My feet are dirty and my head is full. Can't decide how to compare Thess & Athens. Different than any trip I've been on, in terms of subject matter, group composition, seminar aims, expectations — excited for the week.

Wednesday June 6. I love the mountains so much. Nothing brings me more peace than that towering expanse, with sharp shadows slicing through its ridges in the afternoon light. An idyllic place, but I don't feel entirely comfortable. Maybe it's the hot sun disagreeing with my long sleeves, or the headaches I've been having. I also feel quite over my head and a bit disconnected - unprepared academically to be here, not quite understanding the religious aspects of the monastery nor the historic aspects that the group has. I wish there were more opportunities for slow time w/ the nuns, to talk one-on-one, not just a Q+A at the end of a long day - but we're already asking so much of them. Enjoying the food, the company, the landscape, the respite very much. Happy to be here.

Sunday June 10. A rough finale in the ER with the stomach flu and sinus problems causing the headaches. Funny how many problems can be attributed to your health - discomfort actually mostly in my sinuses, not in my state of mind here or play in the program. Very grateful for the kindness in caring for me by the group and the nurse.

Bought an airtight of that mountain tea before leaving - all my faith is that tea's power to settle my stomach. Not what I expected, this past week. More... I don't know. Grateful to have been here. Hope to see these mountains + kind faces again.