

Day 1

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

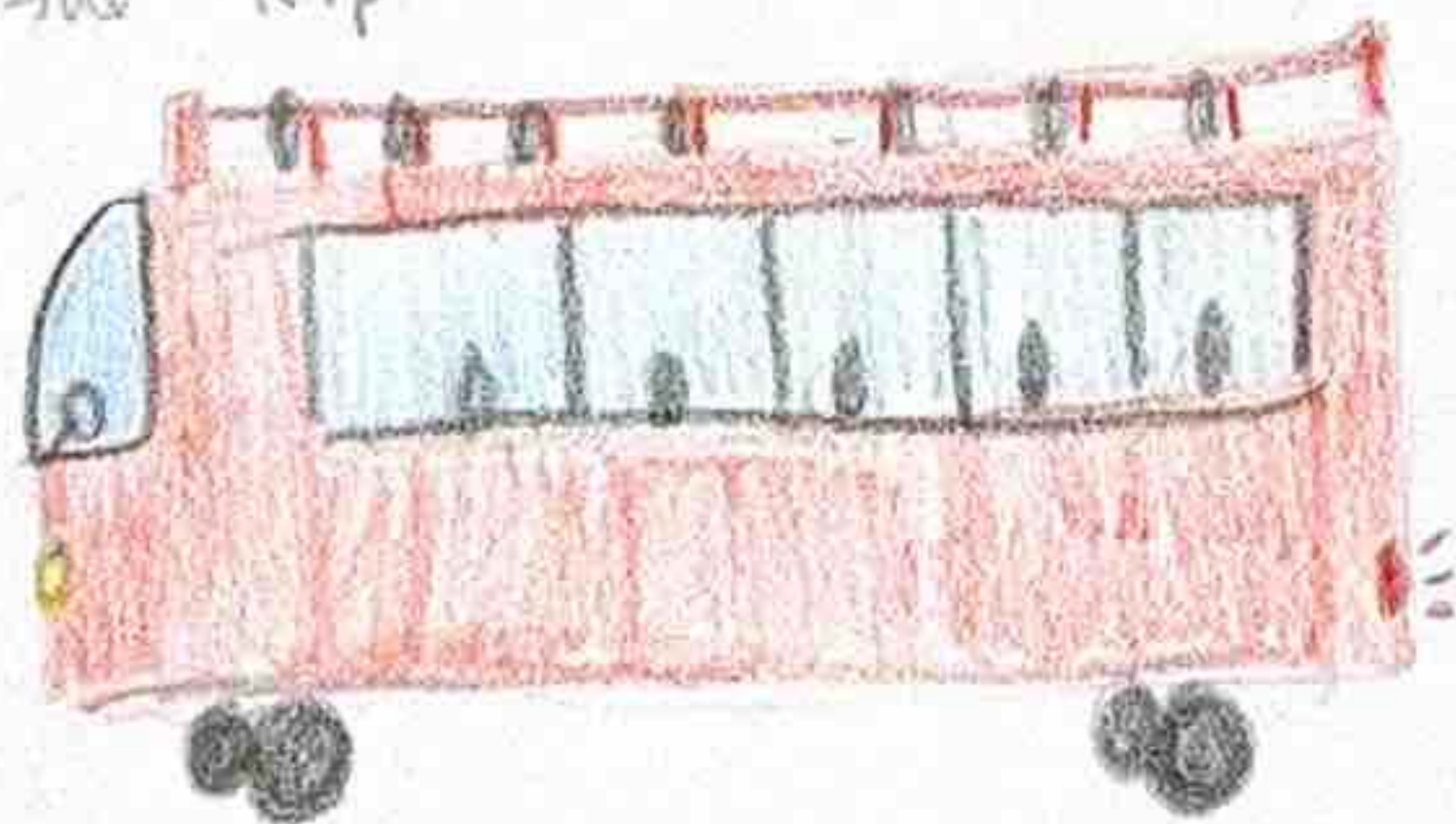
Dear Trip Diary,

This is the first entry so I hope I'm doing it right. Today is the first day of the trip! We met everyone in the hotel in London and went to dinner at the Horse and Guardsmen restaurant. It was nice to get to know some people a little bit more and build relationships/friendships.

After dinner, we all piled onto a red bus and went on a tour around Parliament. We passed Elizabeth tower, Buckingham Palace, and some other monuments / places.

I learned a lot today. I had no idea that there were multiple palaces in London! And, as a history lover, it was cool to find out the origin of some palaces and buildings (like King Henry the VIII's ^(or?) Hunting Lodge). Most of all, it is so amazing to me that random buildings on the street have such deep meaning and history. I would have overlooked many buildings we stopped at, and I am glad I had the chance to fully appreciate them.

Overall today was awesome and I'm excited for the rest of the trip!



(Red bus from memory)

From,

Kendall Kibler

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

WE STARTED OUT WITH THE GROUP NAVIGATING THE PARIS TRAIN SYSTEM. IT SEEMED A BIT INTIMIDATING AT FIRST, BUT WITH THE HELP OF SAŠO EXPLAINING WE FELT MORE AT EASE

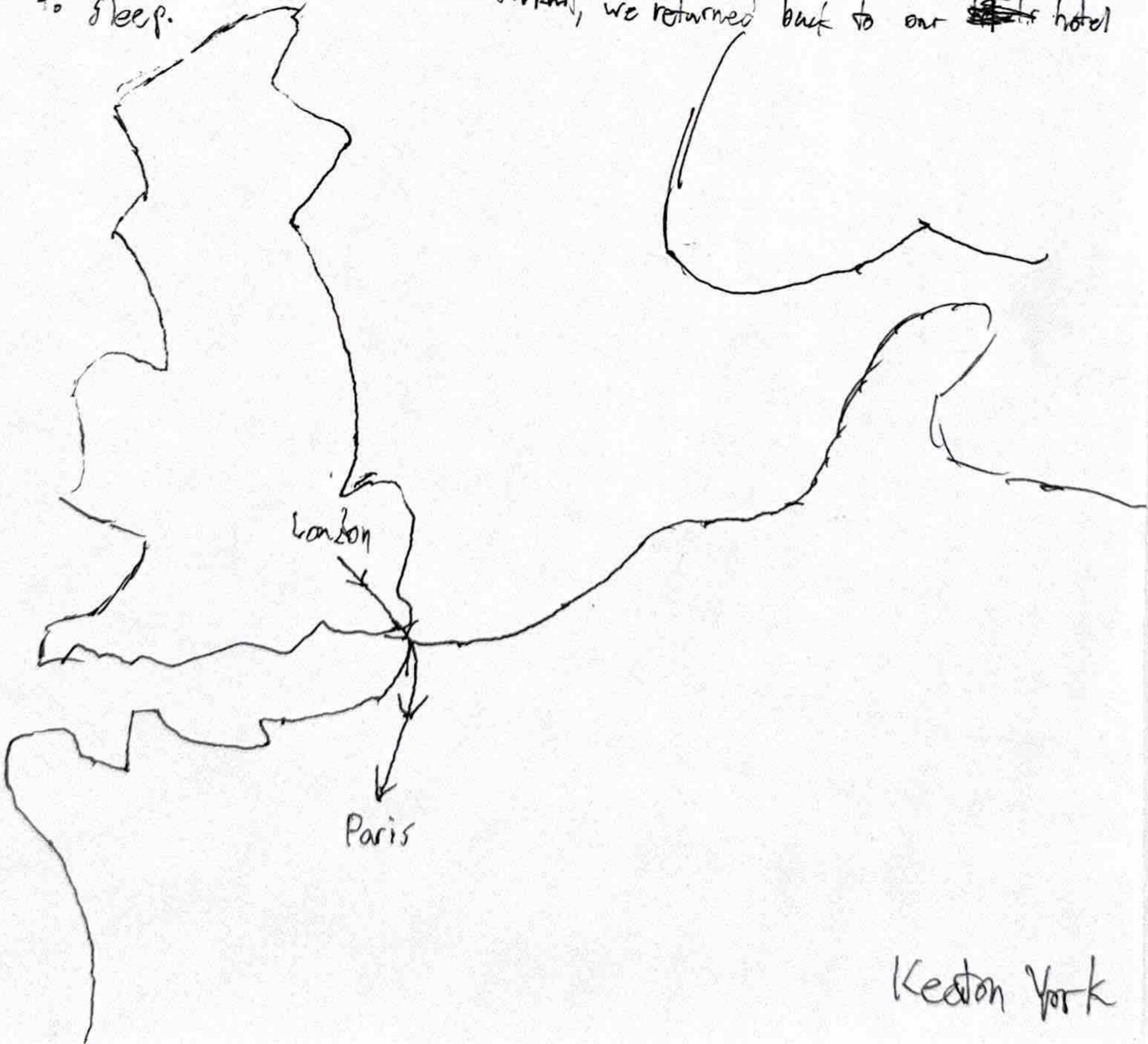
OUR FIRST STOP WAS AT THE LONDON BRIDGE, WHICH IS A UNDERWHELMING STRUCTURE. I HAVE ALWAYS SUNG SONGS ABOUT HOW THE LONDON BRIDGE WAS "FALLING DOWN" AND THE PICTURES HAVE BEEN OF THE LONDON TOWER BRIDGE. AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS FAILED ME.

WE THEN HEADED TO THE TOWER OF LONDON WHICH HOLDS THE CROWN JEWELS. GETTING IN EARLY GAVE US A CHANCE TO SEE THE MAJOR ATTRACTIONS BEFORE THE SCHOOL GROUPS ARRIVED. WE MADE OUR WAY THROUGH THE WHITE TOWER TO THE TOWER GREENS HOSTING THE BLACK SQUAKING CROWS AS THEY POSED FOR PICTURES. THEY DO BITE BY THE WAY, MAKING OUR WAY NEXT TO SEE HOW THE PRISONERS WERE TREATED ALONG WITH SOME UNIQUE TORTURE DEVICES. IN THE BLOOD TOWER.

FINALLY WE WERE SET OFF TO EXPLORE LONDON ON OUR OWN. WE WERE NOW PRO'S WITH THE TRAIN SYSTEM!

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

Today we traveled from London to Paris by train. The trip lasted about 3 hours, and I watched Nathan play several variations of Vno throughout the entire ride. When we arrived in Paris, we went directly to our hotel to unpack, then took the metro to a nice French restaurant. For dinner, I tried escargot, and it tasted surprisingly good! After many fun hours at the restaurant, we returned back to our ~~hotel~~ hotel to sleep.



FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS
in Paris

Today everyone got up and had breakfast and we left at nine. We walked for a while and saw Notre Dame after having ridden the metro for seven stops. We saw a car full of bread to go to a bakery I assume, and a really small space that was a house, which was insane as it was unbelievably small for a house.

A little later we waited in line for the boat and eventually boarded. The boat ride was very informational as we learned about many of the bridges, buildings, and other amazing landmarks along the way. The woman doing the commentary said everything in both French and English which was cool to hear. There was a gorgeous view of the ~~the~~ famous ~~Eiffel~~ Eiffel Tower which people got a lot of great pictures of. Overall it was a really great day and I think everyone had an awesome time! After the boat, everyone had the day to themselves which was really nice.

- Sophia Taft ★

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

First we woke up ate breakfast and packed all our stuff into the bus. Then we went over to the train station and rode thirteen stops.

After we arrived we got off the train and walked until we got to the Louvre. The museum had lots of statues ~~most~~ were made of marble, but ~~some~~ some were made of clay, metal, and even glass. ~~The~~ The museum also had lots of paintings like the Mona Lisa the ironic thing about it is a lot of people said ^{the Mona Lisa} it's smaller than I thought! Then when you turn around there's a giant painting covering the whole wall.

Also when you're done you could go to the food court and get lunch. When it was 12:30 everyone met at the starting area and we got back on the train. Then we rode back to where the bus was parked and got on for a two hour ride.

We ~~just~~ arrived at the hotel and got set. Then most of the kids went to the pool while ~~the~~ the adults chatted wine - I mean tasted wine.

Next everyone sat down for dinner the food was salmon, roast beef, artichoke, chicken, and more. The dessert was a custard raspberry cake. After dinner all the kids went outside and hung out by the sheds.

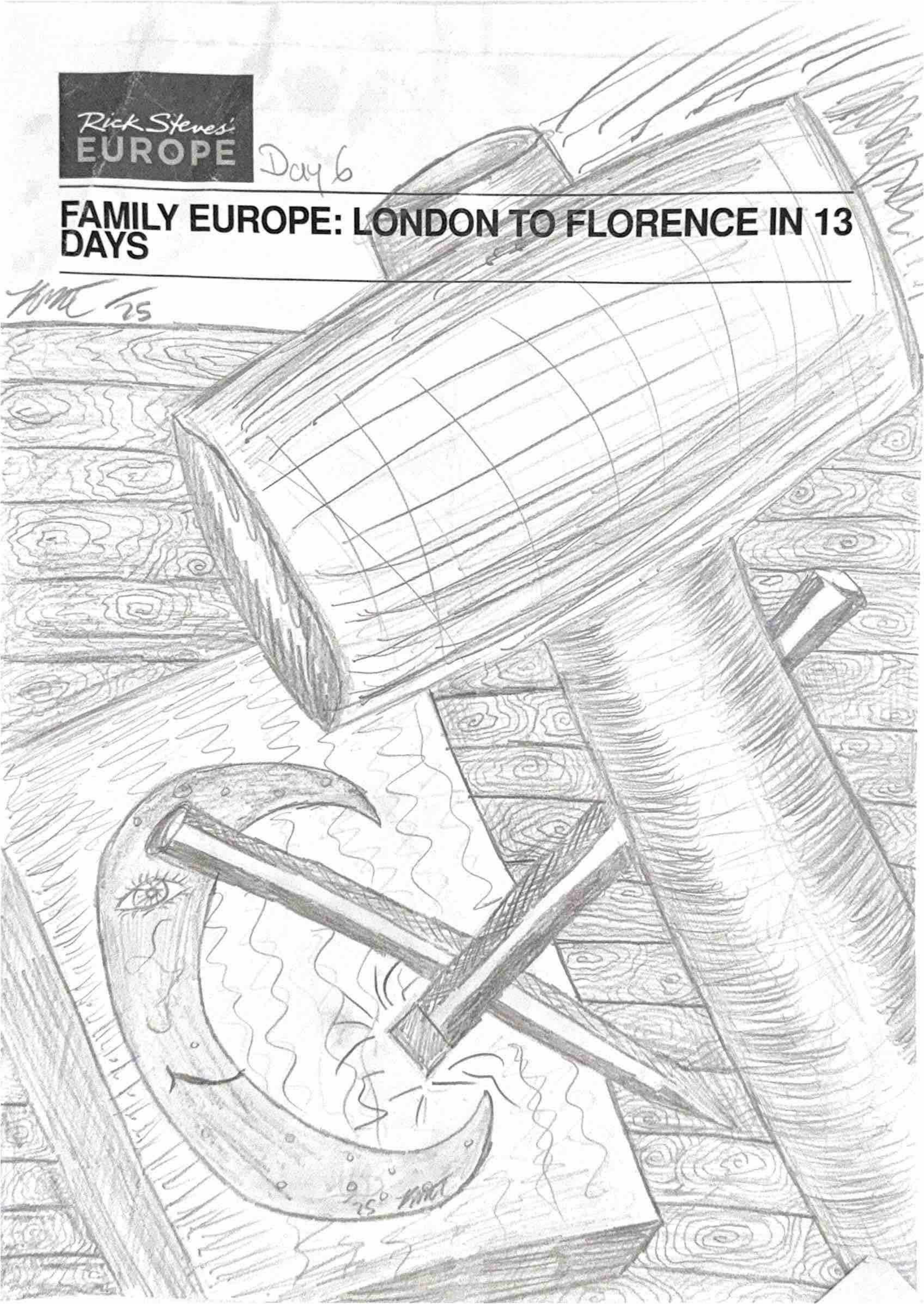
- caston

Rick Steves'
EUROPE

Day 6

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

MM 25



Bus ride to Switzerland

We said good-bye to the French countryside as we loaded the bus to Switzerland. We stopped every 2 hours for a break - the rest stops offered fresh pastries, coffee, etc.

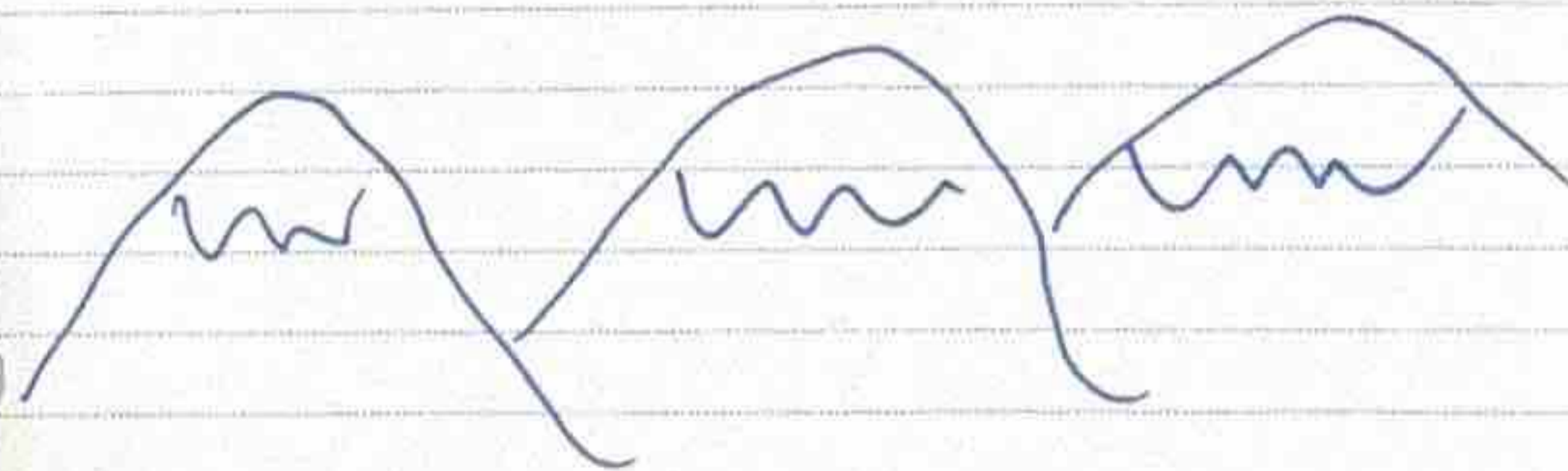
We stopped for lunch at a shopping mall, where we could get snacks, ATM and sandwiches. Back to the bus - to be entertained by an adult/child generated playlist!

Upon arrival in Switzerland, we rode a cog train from Lauterbrunnen to Wengen, where the hotel car picked up our baggage as we walked our final ascent to the hotel.

The hotel was quaint, with beautiful views of the Alps. Dinner was at the hotel (chicken Schntzel, hochbruns, etc.)

After dinner, we enjoyed a performance on the alpine horn and accordion, along with yodeling. It was sweet when mother/son, friend, dad/daughter got up to dance! We all sang along to "Eidelweiss."

We ended the evening with a piano performance by tour-member, Keaton.



Meredith

Aerie Streetman
aerie

Rick Steves'
EUROPE

Day 8

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

On my day we were in Switzerland. Day 8 was a free day but every body basically did the same thing. We hiked/walked up a mountain. I don't know about any one else but I had a blast! It was so beautiful! Like something from a dream. It was definitely one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen. The small town we went to had such great views of the mountains. I must admit the walk was pretty exhausting. The sight was worth it though!



FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

Dear Journal,

Today we all got on the bus at 7:55 am for a 7 hour drive through Switzerland. The views were very pretty. Lots of snow covered mountains, waterfalls, animals, etc. Everyone was looking out the window at the various views. About an hour or two later, we stopped for lunch. I had chicken, fries, and a fizzy raspberry drink. It was all very good and I think that was the general agreement when we all got back on the bus. So we gave us all a chocolate called Ragusa, it was good. We arrived in Italy around 2 pm. It took us another two hours to get where we needed to be in Italy. We started driving down the hill which was pretty scary. It was ~~so~~ a winding road and fairly steep. At first, it seemed like we could pass through with no hiccups, but a few minutes in we ran into another bus (not literally). It was a real "what are we supposed to do" ~~moment~~ moment. It was backing down the mountain so the other bus could find room to maneuver. Paul started past us. It took roughly 7 minutes, but the busses were able to pass each other without hitting the other. Lots of applause. When the bus ride was over, our luggage was taken up in a car (which everyone was happy about). We got to the hotel and had 30-40 mins before aperitivo (drinks before dinner) and then we had dinner at 7, which was pretty good, very seafood heavy. There was fish soup, muscles, crab cake things, mixed seafood salad, rabbit, potato olives, etc. After dinner, Sophia, Kendall, Kyle, Aerie, Caden, Logan and I all walked to the beach and played in the water and skipped stones for 30ish minutes. We all walked back and made plans with our families for the next day.

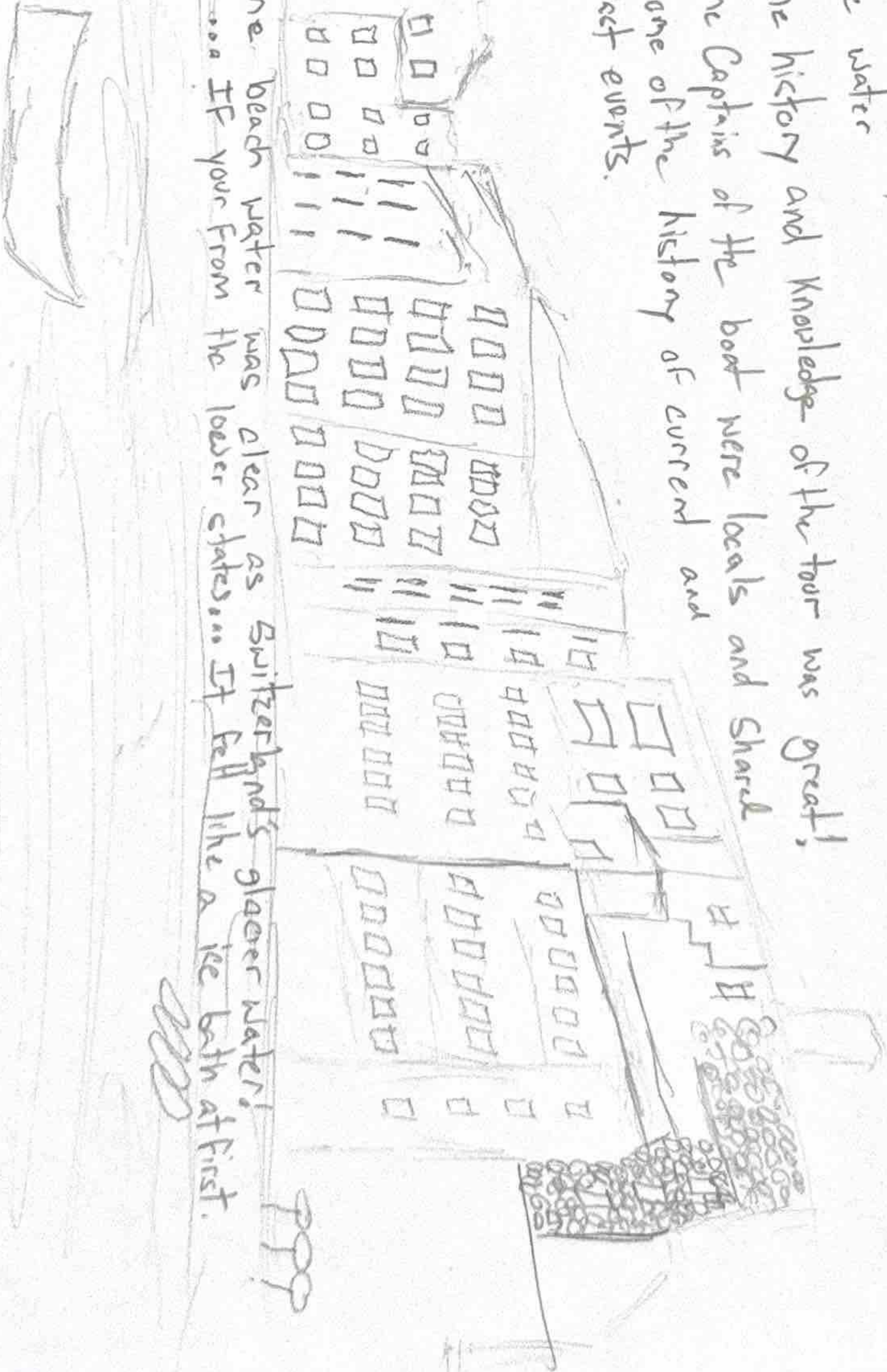
Arrivederci, Billy ♡

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

As we rise to the beautiful sunrise on the Mediterranean Sea, we set sail on a very intimate boat ride to see the cities of Chingue-terre from the water

The history and knowledge of the tour was great! The Captains of the boat were locals and shared some of the history of current and past events.

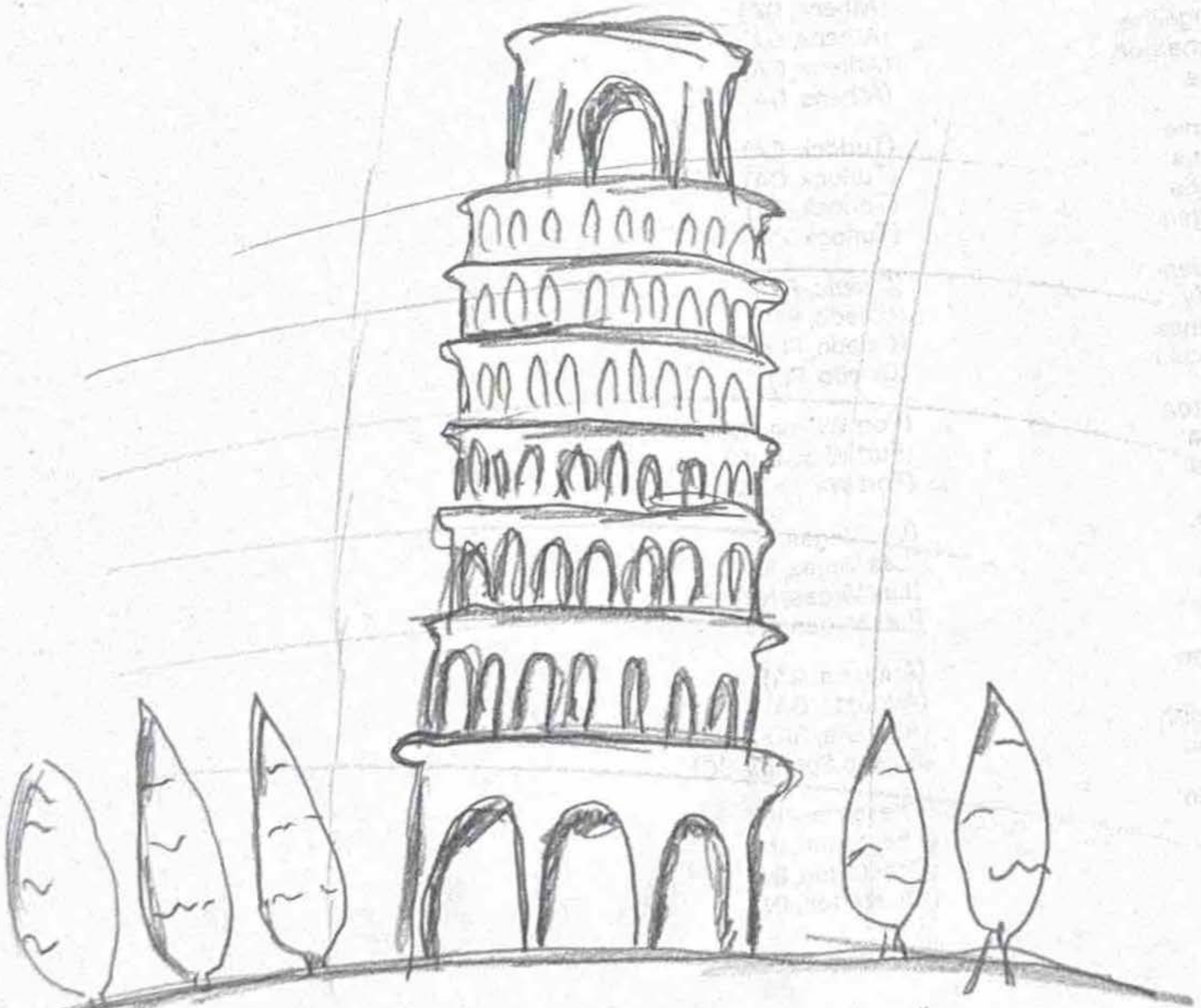
The beach water was clear as Switzerland's glacier water! IF your from the looser states... It felt like a ice bath at first.



FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

We woke up and ate a yummy breakfast at the hotel before getting on the bus with Paul (GOAT) to go to Pisa. Perseus, the pilot, but when I was awake, the views were beautiful plains before getting to Pisa. Pisa was fun, but so hot. We went to the baptistry and the cathedral, and the architecture was gorgeous. They angled the windows perfectly so beams of light highlighted religious statues. We also went and held up the leaning tower of Pisa, because we are just that strong. We then ate and got on the bus to Florence, where we checked into our beautiful hotel and then went on a walk. We visited an art studio where we made oil paintings with each other of the sea and ate some snacks. After a short dinner, I returned back to the hotel to sleep.

Day 12



PISA

[Signature]

FAMILY EUROPE: LONDON TO FLORENCE IN 13 DAYS

We kicked off our day at 9:30, well rested and ready to explore the beautiful streets of Florence. We split off into groups and had our lovely guides show us around the city, with fun stops for gelato and pictures. Then we made our way to the Accademia Gallery of Florence, where we admired various art pieces and sculptures, including Michelangelo's David.

After that, we said goodbye to our guides, and the families went off in their own directions for lunch and a last bit of exploring.

A fun dinner awaits us at 6, where we'll be cooking our own meals and hopefully sharing one last laugh together!

With our trip coming to an end, it's the perfect time to look back on what made this trip more than just sightseeing. I've got to say, this group was a good one! Spending 13 days with strangers can go in many different directions, but what surprised me the most was how easy it was for everyone to connect.

A lot of the best memories weren't exactly about the places, but the moments like Nathan spilling all his drinks at dinner, or the chaos of the kids table every other day.



Our mission was accomplished and
more! we came to explore Europe,
and we're leaving with new
memories and friends!