

SYA ITALY

The Final Countdown (<https://www.sya.org/life-at-sya/campusreporters/~board/campus-reporters/post/the-final-countdown>)

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Having spent the better part of the last year together, as would be expected, my peers and I now know each other much more intimately than when we came. Soon, just as we have countless times before, we will venture into Rome for a final farewell. I suppose that it would be logical to recall the more significant memories that we have shared, such as visiting the Uffizi Galleries or the Duomo of Monreale. However, in sorting through my memories from the past several months, I find that what comes to mind instead is the quiet moments in



between. Particularly, the train rides to and from Rome. Without signal or any other means of interacting with the rest of the world, we were always fully present in the moment.

I remember getting on the train in Rome when it was rush hour and scrambling up and down the train several times, searching for any available seats. There was always a tiny little trash can under the window. We would slot our legs together as we laid back in our four-person pods. That plasticky blue leather beneath our bodies. More than anything, though, I remember the feeling of it. **There was an overwhelming sense of contentment, because in that moment nothing else existed. Sometimes, when we were all worn out from a long day in Rome and on our way back, we would all sit in silence, simply appreciating the moment.**

I'll never forget AP Latin classes where we laughed at the sheer absurdity of our own translations, or Experiential Italian classes when we ended up forgoing the lesson plan altogether, simply talking amongst ourselves for the entire period. I won't forget Olga and Nadia, the mother and daughter who own Bar 103, the café down the street that keeps the entirety of SYA running. Neither will I forget those long afternoons we spent in Café Teatro or Bar Centrale, pretending to work on our assignments when in reality we were simply using work as a pretense to enjoy each other's company.

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These memories have stuck with me, not despite, but because of their banality. At the end of the day, it is the most mundane of moments that make life worth living. I am glad to have shared so many of them with some of the best people out there, and I know that this is not the end.

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