

## The EthnoFolk Letters Lucky 13

### My Travels

I arrived exhausted in Hervas, Spain, at around 8:30pm and gratefully allowed my friend to hoist my bag onto his shoulder and saunter on ahead, while his twin and I trudged along behind him, already talking. The bus had left from Madrid at 4:10pm, and I'd just managed to catch it before it left, with maybe 2 minutes to spare. The plane had landed at 1:10, and my mother (Judith Cohen) and I had had 2 grab our bags and lug them into the city, where we'd eaten lunch @ a friend's before heading over to da bus station. Lunch usually takes an incredible amount of time in Spain, but we managed 2 finish it in under an hour, I think. Record time!!!!

This wuz pretty much wat the whole trip was like. Rushing from 1 place 2 another, w/ almost no time ta do NETHing (anything) but travel. I think we must have spent more time on trains, buses, and the occasional car or taxi than sleeping!!!! I've decided that if I ever do any traveling when I grow up, it'll have to B WAY in a more relaxed manner. -That is, spending more time in one place, traveling in a car (for of course I will drive), stayin' in more luxurious places such as Hotels w/ pools, and definitely NOT doin' NE fieldwork! (Watch me totally b the opposite!) Anywayz, back 2 this trip.

We must have gone to more places in the North, South, East, West of Spain in three weeks than most people that live there ever go to in their lives. Almost evrybody I talk to sayz that I'm lucky to be able 2 do all this, but personally I find it somewhat tedious. I know, U R probably thinking—what a snob! But really I think i'm just so used to this kinda life that i don't even think once about it—never mind twice! It's kinda like I've 2 lives: my basically normal, school and social life here in Trawna (Toronto, joke on how people say we pronounce it), and my life in Spain and Portugal where I travel around continuously, performing and doing fieldwork in little villages with my mom. Talk about 2 extremes! So, on the one hand, you'd think incredulously "Woh! Cool! U get to go 2 Spain EVERY summer!??? Wicked!," not knowing that it's SO not a holiday 4 me. On the other hand, U might think "Oh. You have to go to Spain and Portugal during the school year + bring homework with U," sneering cuz you know I don't wanna.

Of course, I guess I should admit that it's not ALL bad. For instance, some of the friends i make; like Josue and Paola, the twins I mentioned B4 that live in Hervas, and Maya, a friend of mine that lives in Madrid. There R also all the EXTREMELY unique people that live in Belmonte, Portugal. U C, there R 3

different "groups" in Belmonte. The Christians, the Gypsies, and the Jews. The Jews have, like, a gadjillion dif. sections dividing them, such as, those who hav officially converted to modern Judaism, yet still practice Crypto-Judaism secretly, those who've converted and don't practice Crypto-Judaism, those who haven't converted, those who've converted but don't really do anything about it, and the list goes on. I'm pretty sure my mom's told you about it, and if not, well i'd have 2 write a whole letter just about them and the infinite amount of relationships between themselves and the others that live in Belmonte! It's incredibly amazing how little people manage 2 talk and associate w/each other when they live in the very same, small (and almost always cold), secluded mountain village in Portugal.

Now, as I sit @ the computer at my dad's house writing this, my mom continues her trip in the Iberian Peninsula (I just returned last week), recording old ladies singing still older songs (her kinda music). While she does so, i am completely content to either endlessly listen to my kinda music (which is bound 2 B popular music), or happily enjoy a pointless TV show, such as Friends. This is how I tend to see things: What's the point of trying to preserve things from the past when there R much better things now, and 2 come? Obviously, that's not how others like my mother C things. I sometimes understand, though. Like that time I started to do my own little interview w/an old lady (on the bus 2 Hervas). I stopped myself, shocked-but only too late, 4 i'd already begun. I then realized that I'd been doing exactly what I always complain about my mom doing. Interviewing.

Well, now that U know a little about what I think of these trips, my letter will end. I thought it would be much harder to write, and so I kept putting off, but once I got around to it, it wasn't bad at all! I encourage everyone to write in to the *EthnoFolk Letters*.

PS The above is basically written in the style that my friends and I, and most of the rest of the population of kids that write in English, use. It's used 4 e-mail, letters, and passing notes cuz it's faster + more efficient. It is not always consistent as you may hav noticed. Here are some examples: 2= to, too, or two; 4= four or for; B= be, bee; (therefor B4= before); @= at; hav= have; wat= what; w/= with; U= you; C= see or sea; evry= every; doin'= dong; NE= any; R= are; sayz= says; wuz= was; cuz= 'cause, dif.= different, etc.

Bye 4 now, T@M@R /-\DA/\\$ (Tamar Adams), 13, from Toronto.



*The watchful harpers touched the sweetest strings  
Their tall harps owned; such soothing, dream-like notes  
As murmur in the cups of deep, dusk springs  
In dreamy woods. The strain seductive floats  
In trancing sounds, which, as they melting die  
In ear and soul, breathe softly, "Prophesy!"*