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Like Sand through the Hour Glass . . .

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Like Sand Through the Hour Glass...

02/20/2014



Picasso's Guernica, spray painted on a wall

Next week, I will have been in Spain for six months. *Six months*. The time has flown by so fast that I honestly can't even tell you what I have done one minute to the next.

I have an interesting opportunity with my particular abroad experience: I can take what I learned last semester and apply it immediately to this semester. I won't have to repeat the embarrassing mistakes that happened in Sevilla (just so you know feminine hygiene products in Spanish is *productos de higiene femenina...* you can imagine that conversation) and I can build an even stronger relationship with my host family and peers, purely because my Spanish is better.

My host family is a mom and her 23-year-old son. My mom is bright and outgoing, and my brother is sarcastic and funny. We all get along fantastically. From Sevilla I learned that in order to communicate to the best of your ability, you have to throw your whole soul into it. With more confidence in my speaking ability and vocabulary, I can be even more involved with my family. My brother and I go to the University of Alicante together, and we bond over our mutual love for Misu, his cat. I walk Tizón, the dog, with my mom while we talk about everything from how to make paella to boys. It is so much easier to relax when the language barrier is no longer like the Great Wall of China and is instead more of a manageable fence with barbed wire.

Without all the worry from Sevilla—new country, new language, new people, new life, etc—I can fully appreciate the way I am living. I even get to go to the University of Alicante and take classes with other students. However, even as I type I can feel the time slipping by. It is a little frightening because I know that in 122 days (yeah, I counted) I will have to re-adapt to life in the US. When I have already spent six months training my mind to no longer be shocked at what goes on, how will I survive by returning to my old life (which admittedly has very little shock in it)? This is something that my friends and I often ponder together. I think that the majority of study abroad goers have a special place in their heart for where they went. A part, large or small, of a study abroad student will always live in their country of study. No other part of life will exactly equate to this time I am having right now.

At the risk of sounding clichéd, I am going to say that the colors seem brighter here, the vistas a little more breathtaking, and life just a little bit sweeter. However, I think anyone would find this place as charming as I do. After all, where else could you find Picasso's Guernica spray painted on the wall outside of your house?