\*From iPhone\*

\*2:30 pm, I think originally written a few days earlier\*

Kath is fucking incredible:

Paula is dating a guy who is European (Dutch) who is wealthy but she doesn’t wanna end up with him and she’s with the guy who works at the bar but it’s a supportive relationship and even though he is a great father to her son (not his) she doesn’t love him in that way even though he is in love with her. Eve has 6 kids and is the one who had to get a surgery to not have more she is so fertile she can ‘get pregnant by cleaning men’s boxers 😂’ the first 5 were with an awful man who only visits when she has one of the kids basically, the last one is also with not a great guy. Dina has been so stressed and is dating a guy who is really not good to her and is an asshole and she only has Isabella who is so sweet but she has to bring her to work a lot because he won’t take care of Her a lot and she cleans for work and at home... evalyn and Alfonzo are the cousins of... (keyla and Claudina maybe?) but evalyn and alfonzo are cousins and also married - apparently that is normal here, their kids are grown up mostly (the guy who is always motor biking up here with a big smile is one of them) and aparently dating women who can’t have kids. Their dad is the guy who works here who is on the Instagram (can’t remember his name) so yeah Keyla and Claudina are sisters (Claudina is the older one) and Claudina has 2 kids with two different guys but the dads are great and the kids live with their dads mostly. Keyla is just finishing school. Oh yeah and Keyla and Claudinas dad is the one that Paula is in a non romantic relationship with.

I’m dying😂

Lo lolol.

Also holy shit Keyla needed just 150000 pesos to graduate and was crying over how to get this money and she got a loan from kath for it but holy cow perspective. And kath said that helping these people is like adopting a child for 5 years... you can’t just give them money you have to encourage them and support them (the support is the hardest part). And she has to be a hardass with them sometimes and tell them about not getting stds and she made them all get iuds luckily.. but yeah they are from so much more poverty it’s hard to not want to give everything she has to them because she knows she can’t and she needs to run a business but how do you know when to tell Dina that Isabella can’t be around all the time or something along those lines when you’ve created these relationships and these people NEED help in any way they can get. She also said it’s important to know that when you help someone it’s never a one time thing (aka the adopting a kid for 5 years thing)

Reserve = 30 hectares, they use 5 ish

Elkin (pronounced el-keen) is one of the workers here

Monday: May 20. 19:23 pm. Sitting on my bed in the volunteer dorm on the reserve. Just took a shower and am winding down for bed, avoiding having a drink with the people visiting here, and fighting off a bit of a stomach ache. Been laying down almost all afternoon. Also day 1 of intermittent fasting.

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Life on the reserve is both simple and complex.

I have what feels like unlimited time to myself and no time at all.

I can spend endless amounts of time preparing food and mindfully eating, but I have very little ingredients to work with. The lack of overall food or a grocery store encourages creativity in the kitchen... and also makes it difficult to make anything sometimes.

The lack of electricity mandates disconnection. I find my afternoons and now evenings filled with audiobooks, journaling, and thinking. Often times I’m thinking about all of the things I could be accomplishing if I had access to the internet. I also think about all of the things that would distract me if I had access as well.

I only have a few things I truly need to or want to accomplish during the day: making my own food, 5 hours of volunteering (more or less), cleaning my clothing or bedding on occasion, journaling, and trying to do personal yoga and meditation.

But often times my days get consumed with mental fatigue from speaking Spanish and working during the heat of the day, questioning if this is what I should be doing with my time right now, pondering the notion of true poverty and isolation that I’m first experiencing some glimpses of, trying to keep my living space somewhat clean in the middle of a jungle, learning to live in isolation from the world, and what seems to take up the most mental and physical energy than anything else here on the reserve: dealing with the *insects.*

True relaxation seems impossible to find when every few seconds I have to stop a bug from biting me, entering my mouth/nose/ears/orifices, entering my food/drink, crawling into my bed and laying eggs in my sheets, infesting my mattress, room, or house.... I feel always slightly on somewhat of an edge.

Even now at this moment I am fearing using the light of my phone to write this, because the termites came back again last night. (Though never nearly as bad as the first time)

Even though ironically I am using my phone because I am too afraid to write in my journal, since that would require turning an actual light on.

On the plus side, the simplicity of bugs is that they aren’t attracted as much to places without light - so I’ve been forced out of any inkling of fear that remained about the dark and being alone. I don’t stay up late on social media or YouTube because I can’t without WiFi (or power for that matter). I wake up and sleep pretty closely with the sun. I do my work for the day and take rest for most of what’s left. I think about a lot. I try to think about nothing often. This is time for me, to live in sweet simplicity. Blissful disconnection in the form of foreign, reserve-mind naïveté.

Here the entertainment options are slim. I find myself constantly confused in the last two afternoons that I’ve taken for myself. With no internet to distract myself with, no inkling or want to interact with those around me in the evening. I am happy with this simplicity, at least for the moment. I think my body has taken the form of a depleted battery and a few afternoons of laying down doing nothing but staring and listening to a book are metaphorically plugging me in and connecting me to an energetic voltage of sorts. I find that I get so distressed or worried or unnecessarily pressured and tensed when I am doing what feels like nothing.... and it’s good to explore that part of me. Realizing that when given the option, I will ALWAYS choose to add more to my plate. And for once, at least right now. I have no need to. I don’t need to think of the future and what I will be doing, I don’t need to take any actions towards what I could be doing... because I can’t (at least not without WiFi). I am breeding an acceptance mindset to stop dwelling on the things I could have done or should have done or have done in the past... I’m trying to really just be here. In the present moment. Even if that means simply laying down for hours, listening to Michelle Obama’s voice on audible. Staring at the wooden boards of the bunk bed above my head.

Sweet, complex simplicity.