



## **There is something about the French bread.**

There is something about the French bread. Somehow, whenever I land in Paris, some of my first steps always lead to a bakery. In France, fresh bread is a human right. The bread is unmistakable. It's the kind of bread that is worth one's last penny. The kind of bread that smells like breakfast with family.

There is something about the way the German watch football. On football nights, six-packs of beer are sold out. On football nights, families and friends meet up over dinner and snacks, toddlers run around with their sippy cups, cheering everyone, 'Prost!' On football nights, everyone is welcome to join the party.

There is something about the Dutch windmills. The wind that spins those windmills is the same wind that forces waves against the noses of the boats you can board to sail down the streets of the local towns, and the same wind that's rushing through your hair when you get a free ride in the back of a bike of a stranger. It's wind that freezes your fingertips but doesn't at all feel *cold*.

There is something about planning a trip to one of the Scottish lakes and wake up the next morning just to find out that the weather laughed you out once again. Still, you can sit on a terrace of a pub, drink your glass of highland whisky, and observe, well, nothing specific—merely observe life. Never bores me.

There is something about the Swiss water. It's so clean that you can see through it all the way to the very bottom of the lakes, so clean that you can most definitely drink it from any of the city fountains. There is enough for everybody. Enough to float all the swans, enough to hydrate all the mountain cows that give milk for all the cheese. Pick any kind, they're all magnificent.

There is something about wandering around the tiled streets of Prague, thinking of all the rulers and tramps that once walked those streets, too. Thinking of the first time I met Mori, who ended up teaching me an important lesson on freedom, and thinking of how, no matter how endless the walk, I'll end up crashing in Gully's teahouse in the end.

There is something about the French bread, about the Polish dill, about the Belgian chocolate, about the street music echoing through Austrian cities. There's something about adding honey to your afternoon tea in England. It's all so peaceful, so familiar, so affable. It's all so diverse, yet so united. It's all just trying to tell me one thing: *welcome to Europe, dear, welcome home*.