

## The Journey Begins

The word blog has never quite entered my vocabulary. In fact, I abhor it. It is one of those words that defiles the English language. I imagine our forefathers, their speeches filled with the brilliance, eloquence and supreme rhetoric of the English language and envision, say, Thomas Jefferson, using the word “blog,” or talking about a “tweet.”

Perhaps age has caught up with me and the necessary momentum of technology has left me behind. I think each of us, when we are young, *know* we won't let that happen. Yet somehow, it apparently does.



I cannot bring myself to truly call my writing a “blog.” It is a journey. It is my journal. It is my story. It is the story of my family.

So, what's the hook? What is this first story?

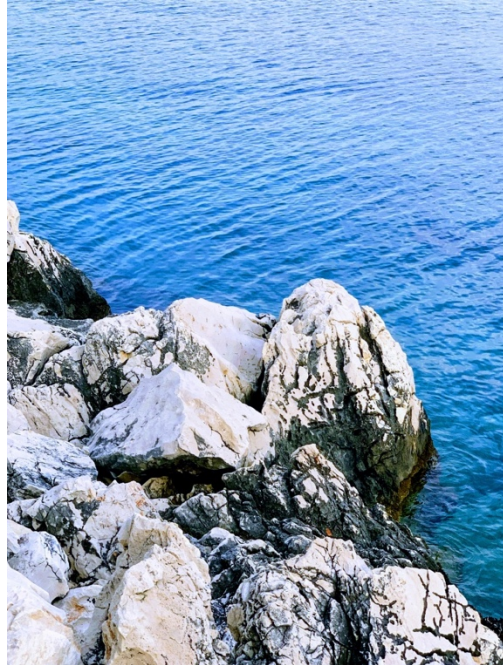
In 11 days we leave on our trip to Croatia. I haven't been there since I was in my 20s, a single, carefree graduate student enjoying her beautiful birth country. Yet, in 11 days I am the mid-40s mom of three girls returning into a time warp where everyone will remember the before picture and most likely be shocked by the after picture.



Insecurities. Anxiety. Fear. Hope. STRESS. I could erupt with 100 adjectives that wouldn't come close to explaining the emotions I feel. However, they are not quite for the reasons above. Sure, age is something many of us fear, but I am actually proud of my accomplishments in those years that I was studying and working in the United States.

When you are born in one country, brought to live in another country as a child, you essentially have two homes. Or so you would think. But in fact, you really

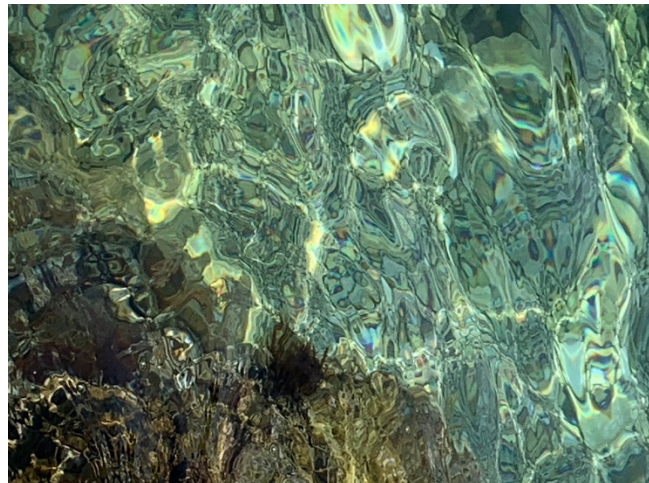
don't feel 100% native to either. Perhaps it's more akin to having no home. Maybe that's why I always loved Disney's Little Mermaid: She was caught between two worlds and two loves. A difficult choice, that one is.



Split and the Adriatic Sea have called me with its whispering, poetic melodies since I was a child. And it never quite stopped. I yearned to go back and be a part of the rich heritage that

has been mine

for thousands of years. Then again, there is Texas. Texas was home and damn I loved my amazing state. I wanted nothing more than to be a citizen of our beautiful country, to vote in the elections, to plant a seedling that just might sprout here in America.



And it did. I found my education, my career, my husband, and had my three girls, who are all native-born Texans. Consequently, as I delay packing my bags for this trip, I reminisce about how much life has changed between the last time I was in Croatia and the time to come. And yes, it startles me a bit.

My girls are Croatian citizens too. Will they love their “other” country? Will I have somehow put them in that impossible place of having to choose one over the other? *I pray not.* Will my husband see the same beauty I see and will he love this tiny country of mine at least half as much as I do?

If age has taught me anything, it is that there is beauty in everything. My hope is that my family can rediscover my old beauty, discover our own shared beauty, and enjoy each moment of this beautiful life.

The journey begins.

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