Walking in the Gadmen Valley felt so much like stepping into a child’s painting. As far as the eye could see, colours were splashed all over the slopes and leaves drenched in orange and red were dancing in the breeze. As we hiked up higher and higher, roses were blooming on our cheeks and our eyes were sparkling like the tumbling waterfalls around us. I have never seen such a turquoise blue before as that of the Steinsee. If someone had told me that this glacial lake had magical powers, I would have believed them without a second thought.

It was not only the vividness of the lake that surprised me; I generally had the impression that all types of sensations were stronger than ever. Washing the dishes in the ice cold river felt like cutting off my fingers. Watching the sun rising from the back of the mountains was like witnessing a child’s birth. The nights stretched into eternity, making me regret at some point that I didn’t bring *War and Peace* with me - finally, I could have read it all.

By the end of the four days, our hike group certainly experienced how great it is to leave our comfort zone and reach points beyond our limits. By an unfortunate coincidence, so did a bunch of free-spirited cows who were delighted to find the gate open after we left our camp. It is all thanks to Chris, the marathon runner and Guido, the cow whisperer that we have not been chased by a bloodthirsty farmer ever since.

If I think back to our hike, I mostly recall the coziness of our last evening. I remember how the mountains were straightening their fluffy snowcaps while dreamy sounds of ukuleles filled the black valley. We built the perfect campfire and for a few hours nothing else mattered except the melting s’mores in the flames and the starry night above us. I also started to melt, just like the tin soldier from Andersen’s fairy tale. In that moment, I burnt all my doubts and threw all my questions on the fire, until only my heart remained, wrapped within the warmth.