



## YAH YAH YAH in Lillehammer

Ayaka Toyota Living in Norway



*A Log House on the Outskirts of Lillehammer*

### *Now, I am YAH YAH YAH*

Once I finish writing this manuscript, I'm going to have the fight of a lifetime with a dear friend. The thought of confronting a blue-eyed friend on the other side of the world, arguing in a language that's not my native tongue, would have been unimaginable to me six months ago.

### *My Story in Lillehammer, Norway*

In the early summer of 2023, I suddenly decided to study abroad for a year. The reason was simple: I wanted to bring a new breeze into my life.

Having already moved from Hokkaido to Kochi, one might think I had already had enough of new experiences. However, I wanted even more fresh air, so I decided to head to Norway. Now, I live in Lillehammer. It seems I'm very greedy and want a life full of adventures.

The first six months in Norway were truly tough. I couldn't understand Norwegian, and even English was too fast for me to catch most of it. I didn't know how to shop or attend classes. Every day, I struggled to ask questions in broken English, often resorting to fake smiles when I still couldn't understand.

Moreover, in this Nordic region, the sun doesn't show its face at all during the winter. Surrounded by people who look completely different from me, time passed rapidly while I felt helpless, as if there was nothing I could do in this world. It was as if I had become a baby thrown into the universe. I cried on my way to classes, during breaks in the bathroom, and in bed until I fell asleep every night. However, as time passed, life began to change. Although I won't write about it here, there were moments when hearts touched beyond the barriers of language and culture. Painful memories, farewells with loved ones, and the pain I currently carry. While watching movies on the same bed, we spent many nights talking until dawn.

Undoubtedly, I owe this to my dear friends. They kept talking to me, patiently waiting for my halting words, concerned about my isolation, and gently taking me outside. At times, they opened their hearts and genuinely tried to connect with me. Now, I am about to face my dear friend with blue eyes.

The feelings of the friends I have met so far ripple out, gradually changing who I am. Can I change from the person who kept crying in a dark room to someone who takes the hand of new friends and ventures outside?

After a big argument, I must say a long goodbye, which is a bit sad. At the same time, it brings me great joy to know that invaluable friends in a faraway country will still be living their lives tomorrow.

Meeting things I can't understand, and while struggling with not being understood, finding things that bring me comfort or that I want to newly understand. Accepting a world where things I cannot understand continue to exist around me, and at times, confronting them. This past six months, though very abstract, have been a time to reflect on "where I am in the world right now, what I am facing, and what I want to face in the future.

It almost sounds like I'm about to return home soon, but it seems I still have another six months left. My heart is pounding. Outside the window, I can hear the sound of a new breeze again.



*The winters in Norway are long and cold*



*February 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics*

In the King of Ski (Nordic combined), Japanese athletes Masashi Abe, Kenji Ogiwara, and Takanori Kono won the team gold medal, and Japan was filled with excitement.

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