

1. Ukraine is a terrible place at the moment - that's why I left it. The wait and risk was worth it though. The conflict had been going on for over three years by the time I left, and so many of my friends and family were already dead or missing. I couldn't take it anymore - I had to get out of there as soon as possible. We wanted - no, needed - sanctuary in Poland (I was only a few kilometres from the border). I went with my mother to seek a way out of this hell. We grabbed the barest necessities and cautiously arranged illegitimate passports with the help of one of my friend's brothers. It was a risky thing indeed and I could not stop shaking the whole time. It was worth the extreme amount of roubles and hryvnias that we paid though. It might be the last time we used them anyway.
2. The next day, after a debatably restful sleep, we started the walk to the border, knowing we'd been confronted by security guards at some point and possibly stuck in a dangerous position. We didn't stop glancing around the entire journey and we ate and drank as little as possible to reserve our limited supplies. We feared others were watching us, waiting to kill us or rob as we got closer to the border. I didn't let go of my mother's hand the entire time.

We eventually got to the border and went through security and I'm relieved but surprised my anxiety didn't give us away. The guards were rough with us and tore through our few bags for illegal substances and made us strip so they could search our clothes sufficiently. I just kept thinking the entire time that the worst thing that could happen is that they kill us - the country is a living hell right now, so it really doesn't seem worth it to stay there at all. But if we do make it out, then my mother and I get the chance to lead a happier and safer life, if only we have the courage.