

Hi friends,

Here we are! In the heart of the Andes, in the heart of the subject!
Freshness and high mountains as far as the eye can see.

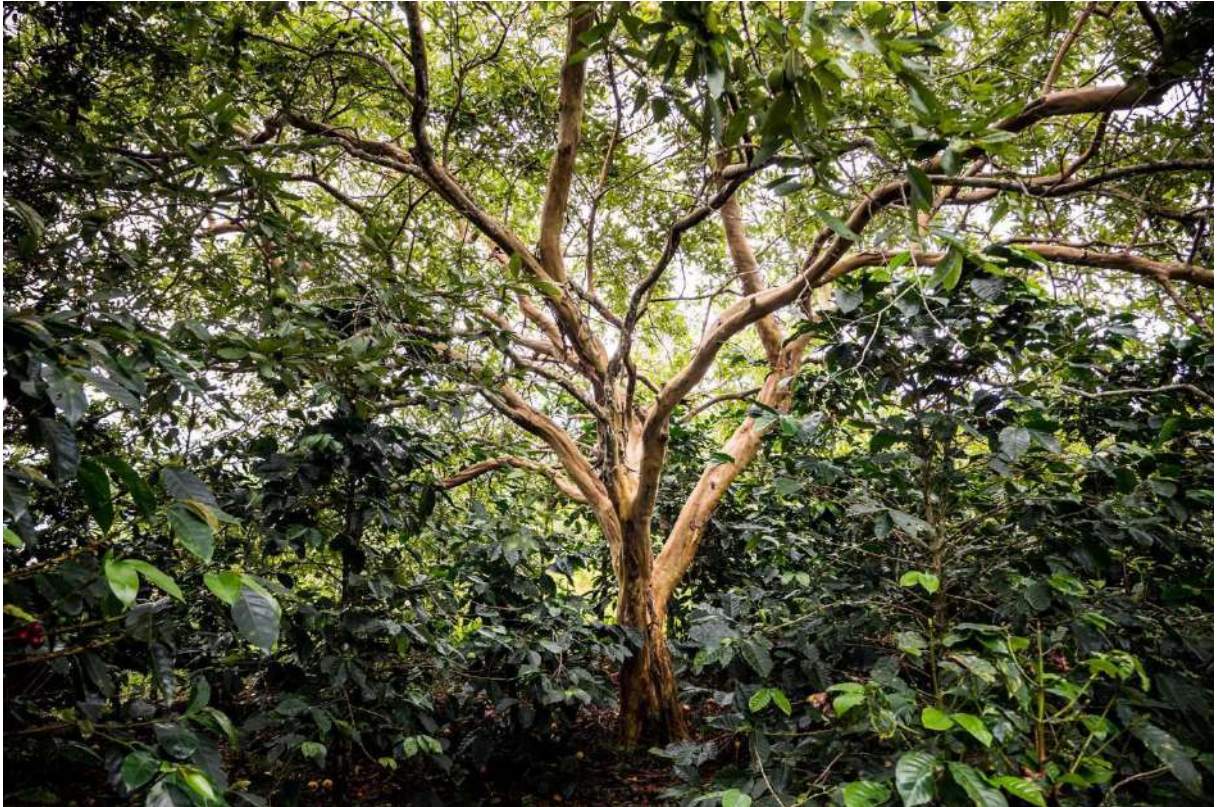


We left Colombia at the end of June after a shoot for “Pur Projet” about coffee agroforestry. Once again this shoot allowed us to meet farmers who are committed and passionate about their work.



But do you know what agroforestry is?

Agro for agriculture and forestry for the forest. The idea is to replant trees in the crops to protect the plantations from the sun, enrich the soil with the humus created by the trees, avoid the evaporation of water and diversify the sources of income of the farmer (fruits, wood trees etc.) A farming technique inspired by nature and works wonders!



Before leaving Colombia, we meet up with our longtime comrade, the well-known ambassador of maple syrup, Jean Pascal Bilodeau. It's the opportunity to do some sightseeing and discover together the church of Las Lajas, built at the very place where a blind girl would have miraculously found the sight, on a small bridge overlooking a river.



We find new energy to have beautiful bivouacs outside the main roads, in the heart of Paramo. Paramo is this rare Andean ecosystem with specific vegetation of tall grass, small shrubs and weird plants straight out of another planet. Photo in support, we present Paramo:



We have one week to go to Quito and join Agathe, a friend of Kalima who came to try cycling in the Andes with us. It's a first for her and a first for us also because it is the first person from France who comes pedaling with us. We are now a "gang" of 4 people on bikes.

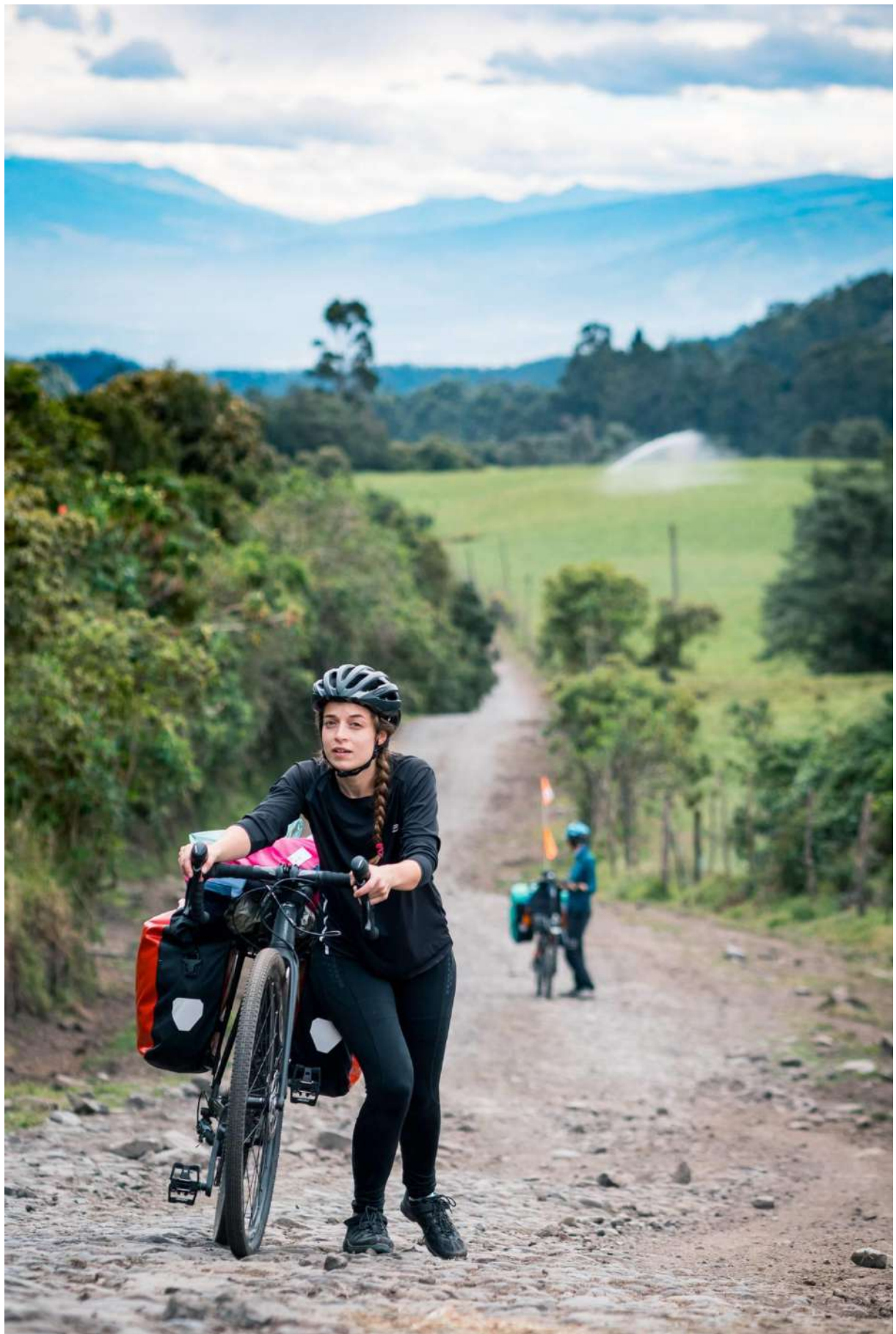


In two weeks we will live intense adventures, with breathtaking beauty (especially with the altitude) and terrifying at times:

- We have been 10 months away and we cross, at the same time as the line of Equator separates the northern hemisphere of the southern hemisphere, our 10,000 km (6.214 Miles) by bike. We have done a little more than 13,000 (8,080 Miles) counting buses and cars.



- Our first challenge together will be reaching Cotopaxi, one of the most impressive volcanoes in Ecuador. Kalima is sick and we are struggling hard on steep climbs of stones and pebbles that take our last strength. We are often forced to push to climb. We are rewarded for our efforts when we find at the end of the day a place sheltered from the wind near a stream and facing this magnificent volcano.





- Another volcano is looming on the horizon. This is Chimborazo and with it our first pass at over 14,435ft altitude. The scenery is incredible, there is no more vegetation at this altitude and each pedal stroke makes us feel that we lack oxygen here. Going through the pass an extremely violent wind keeps us from moving forward and we have trouble staying on our bikes. It's a little too intense for Agathe who has trouble breathing and starts an anxiety attack. So we took refuge in an abandoned house just to catch our breath.



- The camp at over 13,125ft will be in the sand and in the middle of a wind increasingly violent. I still take out the drone to immortalize the moment and this lunar landscape. All is well until the battery begins to run out and I decide to bring the drone upwind. I do not see it, it is more than 0,6miles faraway and the poor engine of the drone is not strong enough to fight against this wind. The battery exhausted, it crashes in the middle of the pampa very far from our camp.

Fortunately the geolocation system with the phone still works and after a long search we finally get our hands on it. It is in good condition, nicely laid between the herbs.
The following day, in the morning we could see wild vicunas!





- Sometimes we don't find camps by the river and we must improvise a solution to wash. That day a farmer agreed to let us sleep on his field. The automatic watering will be perfect for a small improvised shower. We pitch our tent very carefully between two fresh cow dung.



Back to civilization in Cuenca. This is the time of farewells, or rather the goodbyes, after more than 310 miles biking by 4 Agathe returns by bus to Quito to take her plane to France, Jean Pascal continues valiantly his way to Peru and we, we have to take two buses to join Tarapoto in Peru in the Amazon for a new shoot on cocoa, fair trade and agroforestry.

We have to travel 810miles in 3 days in the middle of the Andes which would be impossible to bike.



We hope you had a great summer and you did not suffer too much from the heat wave. We think about you. See you soon for new adventures!

Kalima & Sylvain

Written on October 4, 2019