

We Were Captains of Our Ships

Diana Márquez

BEFORE YOU READ: What does it mean to be the captain of your ship, literally and figuratively? What is the meaning of “nostalgia”?

“I miss the way I took pleasure in small things...” This quote, by the writer Neill Gaiman, makes me remember my childhood. In my childhood, I was

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very happy with small things. We were very poor. My parents had money for shelter and food but not for toys. My brother and I used

to create our own toys and games, and so did my friends. We did not have things, but we had a lot of love and a lot of imagination.

I remember my childhood with nostalgia. My friends and I used to play with little paper boats in the current created by the water that flowed through the ditches during a big rain.



Girl plays with a paper boat. Photo by Dipanka Dutter <creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>.

We had boat races, and competed to see which one came first. The most exciting thing, however, was not to win. It was to see how the little paper boats would slide along the water, and they would not sink because the paper was still dry.

That game was very exciting. We felt that we were captains of real ships navigating the Seven Seas. I remember how this game gave me that sense of freedom.

Furthermore, we were playing in the rain. I still remember how I felt when the rain touched my skin. It was an unforgettable experience.

Today, some children do not play outdoors because they prefer to play electronic games indoors. Parents should encourage children to play outdoors and to have contact with nature and feel the rain, the soil, and the breeze. Children should have the chance to create their own games, so they can develop their thinking skills and make proper decisions. Most importantly, they will be happy and have sweet memories about “taking pleasure in small things.”

AFTER YOU READ: What “small things” did Diana take pleasure in as a child? What is her opinion about children and play?

Diana Márquez is an ESL student at Bossier Parish Community College in Bossier City, LA. She was born in Puerto Rico in 1947, and she got her Bachelor's degree from the University of Puerto Rico. She has two children and worked as a teacher for 48 years. She is grateful to her teachers at BPCC. She says, “I am proud of my progress because at my age, it is not easy to start a new life and learn a new language.”

