

FEAR OF FLYING





doing this for the October prompt "afraid" for the Sticky Institute Quarantine Zine club! I was trying to think of what fear I wanted to talk about, because I have many really dark and horrible ones, but I like to set boundaries with this daily zine project and not reveal devastating shit about myself I don't want random people to know, you know? so I picked one of my more low-key fears, flying.

I don't really know how it began. I remember when I was in grade 1 at school there was a book in one of the reading boxes about this girl who was on a plane and was in the toilet and the whole bathroom FELL out of the plane, which then crashed, but because she was in the bathroom she was the only one who survived. I would remember that whenever I had to piss on a plane. It's probably also got something to do with growing up in the 9/11 era. Remember my dad got trapped in the US for months after and kids would ask me about it at school. Like I didn't really even understand it because I was like 7 but still, who knows what impact that had right? That said though, I did get long haul flights as a kid, moving from Australia to the US, then moving back, and I don't remember being scared on those. I was pretty anxious on the flight to Brisbane to my grandma's funeral maybe like ten years ago, and I think I had a series of really bad flights after that that really freaked me out.

I remember one particularly bad one, I was with my friend coming back from Japan in 2015 and we were flying over the Java sea a few weeks after another plane had just crashed there. This was also shortly after MH-370 disappeared so airline disasters were very much on the mind. It was an incredibly turbulent flight, through a pretty intense electrical storm. I remember we were above the clouds and I looked out the window and could see lightning crackling below. I was relieved by that, thinking, oh well it could be worse at least we're above that, then the plane descended into the storm clouds and we were being thrown about with lightning everywhere. I was absolutely panicking and I just remember adrenaline rushing through my body and not being able to calm down. Palms covered in sweat and legs locking up, shivering. Remember thinking like, ohgodohgodohgod I'm going to die!!



so that was pretty bad. I guess I'm either fortunate or unfortunate in that my mum lives interstate and my dad lives overseas, so flying is something which is fairly unavoidable for me, so I'm not infrequently forced to confront my fears.

of course substances help. for the most part I aim to get as drunk as I can on planes, but they never really give you much. When I was flying back from Boston last year I had a bunch of CBD gummies on my connecting flight and I feel like they were more a placebo than anything, but hey I'll take what I can get.

What I find doesn't help is people pointing to statistics. "no plane has ever crashed from turbulence." Its like no plane... SO FAR! Appeals to logic don't help because fear isn't a logical thing. I can at the same time know that I'm statistically not going to die, but also know in my fear brain that look, *I'm definitely gonna die!*



my friend who's also scared of flying says taking a big shit on a plane helps because it humbles you and brings you back down to earth if you will. Personally what I find works for me is getting my earthly affairs in order in my head and thinking to myself, "well I've had a good run, if I die I die, if I don't then I don't!" and for some reason that works for me. That said its only as good as how calm the flight is, the worse the turbulence the worse my anxiety. But I guess its a fear I've just learned to deal with, with flights being a necessary evil to connect me to family, friends, and places that I love.

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