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## Flying

By Jeremy Quinton



It's 5.47pm where we're going...10.47pm where we've *come* from. The plane's higher than Everest, and outside the temperature's at minus fifty...

We're somewhere up in the sky between between Rio & Buenos Aires. What a thought. These are places I'd heard of & imagined as a kid... but places so distant that I never even *dreamed* of one day going there.

In a way it feels like a school outing...a trip to the countryside. Why? Now, I'm on my way to Latin America for the first time, although listening to the accents around me for the last seven hours, in a sense I've already arrived. I can't quite believe it.

The in-flight magazine that I flicked through hours ago says there are about 300 people on board, all of us heading off...I imagine... to exotic-sounding places, work-related activities, or *maybe* to see family, friends, or lovers...

Two seats away.... to my right.... there's a Dutch guy who's been sharing his biscuits with his long-haired friends next to the window. He *looks like* the chatty type, but he's had his head in a travel book on Argentina for most of the flight. *Apart from* the handful of flash photos that he's taken, that is.

Then...well... there's the girl who's squeezed into the spare seat between the Dutch guy & I, to get a better view of the in-flight film (a funny U.S film about a girl bringing home her boyfriend "to meet the in-laws". She's black, he's white. The parents are shocked).

"*Miss Betterview*" let's call her, has been reading *Mis Putas Tristes* and I've noticed (don't ask me why!!) that her reading glasses are crooked. Something tells me she's going *home*, as opposed to away on holiday.

Over on the left, near the emergency exit, there's the world's best-behaved young family, surely heading back to visit relatives in Argentina they've perhaps not seen for ages. Only now, towards the end of the flight, are the kids beginning to fidget a bit...like most of us on the plane in fact.

Ten hours sitting side by side is a long time for a school outing. It's a long time to *not talk*, too. Exotic sounding places, work related activities, and who knows what else!...Who knows.

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