

PSAC Short Story Contest 2008 -  
Homosexuality is Not a Sickness  
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Submitted by Susie Ross

"The Airplane Ride"

- 499 words

*The Airplane Ride*

Being gay didn't mean I couldn't tell a hot woman when I saw one. Big brown eyes, short blonde bob with a stylish flair. Makeup perfect, pressed designer jeans hiding thin, strong legs. She looked expensive. She looked smart. She looked kind.

"So, Jesus is your saviour?" I asked conversationally, curious about why fundamentalist Christians always sat next to me on airplanes. Was God trying to tell me something? It must be a good sign, to have faithful people helping me keep the plane in the air.

"Oh yeah," she responded enthusiastically. The first hour of the flight I learned all about the programs she taught at her church. Trainings for women on empowerment, how to be a single mom, and even how to get through divorce.

*Interesting*, I thought. *Isn't divorce a sin?* I didn't mention it. She continued.

"So, what do you do?" she asked finally.

I perked up. "I work with AIDS Yukon."

"Oh," she said flatly. Suddenly she spoke in a whisper.

"It's God's punishment, you know."

"Huh?" I responded dumbly, blindsided by her Neanderthal attitude. "AIDS is God's punishment? For what?"

"Homosexuality. It's a sin, you know."

"So a sin gets punished with a sickness?"

She looked at me with those big brown eyes. She genuinely believed what she was saying. "Homosexuality *is* the sickness. AIDS is just the proof."

"Are you kidding?" My voice rose five times as loud as anyone else's in the airplane.

"It's in the Bible," she said, sitting up straighter and pulling back from me. I was a huge man compared to her, and it bothered me that I frightened her. I tried to make my voice more gentle.

"So, you're saying I'm sick."

Her face blanched. "Do you have AIDS?"

"No," I snapped, "but I'm gay. So that means you, who calls yourself a Christian, automatically judges me because of who I love."

"It's a sin," she said blankly.

"Well, use your own heart," I replied. "Can you honestly look me in the eye and say there is something sinful about me without even knowing me?"

"Don't worry," she whispered. "*We're all sinners.*"

"Speak for *yourself*," I said hotly. She should have been able to tell I was gay from my tone of voice alone. *Jesus.*

"Look," she said in a low voice. "You need to ask Jesus to forgive you."

"Forgive me," I repeated.

*The Airplane Ride*

"Yes," she said, smiling as if a glimmer of hope had opened up for my soul. "Jesus can save you."

"From an early death?" I asked sarcastically.

"From sin."

"From sickness."

"I told you, the sickness is just a response to the sin."

"Riiight." I paused, reluctant to continue on with this crazy conversation, but unable to help myself. "So, Jesus, who in theory created homosexuals, created them flawed. With this illness?"

"Exactly," she said, smiling.

On second thought, she wasn't so hot after all. Her head was disproportionately large for such a small mind.

I closed my eyes and went to sleep.